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Bruce Ronkin, Editor
Northeastern University

Ben O'Hara, Associate Editor (Book Reviews)
Australian College of the Arts

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Indie Folk and Americana Triggers: An Analysis of Streaming Music, Audience Behavior, and Global Opportunity

Terry Tompkins
Hofstra University

Ulf Oesterle
Syracuse University

Charles Alexander
CEO/Founder, Systemic & Outside The Box Music

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Abstract

This paper is a study of eleven indie folk and Americana artists from a database of 2,501 tagged artists in Chartmetric, the music industry's leading data analytics platform. The study assesses music streaming, geographic location of fans, and opportunities to grow audiences in the global music marketplace. The findings will assist artists to assess the music streaming landscape and explore prospects to grow audiences. Educators will be able to utilize this research as a model in the classroom to teach data analytics and marketing strategy.

Keywords: trigger cities, indie folk, Spotify, data analytics, global music marketplace, Chartmetric

Introduction

In 2018, Chartmetric published a study by Chaz Jenkins outlining “trigger cities” in Southeast Asia and Latin America that play a role in engaging consumers on music streaming platforms YouTube and Spotify. Chartmetric's study included forty pop, R&B, electronic, and hip-hop artists and identified ten trigger cities (Mexico City, Lima, Bogota, Santiago, Jakarta, Bangkok, Guayaquil, Istanbul, São Paulo, and Ankara) responsible for driving streaming music activity. Due to socioeconomic status and lower subscription rates, these cities are not large contributors to

global streaming revenues. However, Spotify has developed sophisticated machine learning algorithms to deliver personalized content to its users and according to Chartmetric, “Algorithms drive streaming plays and the amount of streaming activity coming from “trigger cities” may now hold more power than ever to influence the hits of tomorrow by pressing play on them today” (Joven 2019).

Jenkins’ takeaway was that Latin American and South/Southeast Asian trigger cities tended to engage with new or emerging artists more rapidly, irrespective of an artist’s home market. Substantial engagement in a trigger city would often be followed by rapid engagement in other cities, eventually including the artist’s home market. When reviewing data from artists in this study it was clear that South/Southeast Asian markets are not engaged with indie folk and Americana artists. Perhaps a different set of trigger cities or trigger regions could spark activity on streaming platforms for indie folk artists.

This study begins with an overview of artist presence on Spotify, Apple, and Amazon. We sourced Spotify for artists’ data to assess editorial, algorithmic, and user-generated playlists activity on Spotify. Next, we compared geographic streaming activity on Spotify for the eleven acts versus the 2,501 artists tagged “indie folk” and “Americana” on Chartmetric. Lastly, we ran a 29-day advertising campaign on Facebook and Instagram directed to Spotify to determine trigger markets that could provide an opportunity for global expansion for the artists in the study.

Overview

This section assesses eleven artists’ performance from Chartmetric’s database of 2,501 artists tagged as “indie folk” and “Americana.” The eleven acts represent three of the six stages of career development (developing, mid-level, and established) as outlined by Tompkins in his *Six Stages of Artist Development* (Tompkins 2019). Tompkins’ methodology for assessing the stage of career includes data from live performances, social media, and streaming. Four of the artists in this study are categorized as developing, four artists are mid-level, and three are established artists in the genre of indie-folk/Americana.

Chartmetric has also developed a system to assess artist performance/stage of career called Cross Platform Performance (CPP). CPP measures an artist’s performance across multiple streaming and social media platforms relative to the performance of all artists tracked by Chart-

metric. CPP calculates artist reach and engagement through views, listens, follows, likes, and streams within Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music Unlimited, Pandora, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Deezer, TikTok, and Triller (Choi 2021). CPP scores range from as low as 1 to a max score of 100. At the time of the writing of this paper, Justin Bieber is the only act currently scoring a perfect CPP of 100. The eleven artists in this study vary in CPP ranking; developing artists score on average a CPP of 20, the average CPP of mid-level artists is 40, and established artists average a CPP score of 60. A CPP ranking of 84 for artists tagged “indie-folk” is the highest among the 2,501 tagged artists on Chartmetric. In many cases, artists in the 70+ CPP ranking have “crossed-over” into the mainstream by virtue of commercial radio airplay, synchronization/songs placed in film, television, or commercials, and/or inclusion on mainstream “hits”-based streaming playlists like Spotify’s Songs to Sing in the Car (9.8 million followers). See Table 1 for a correlation of Chartmetric’s CPP ranking system with the Tompkins’ career stage rubric.

Tompkins Stage	CPP Rank	Number of Acts	Percentage	Examples of Folk/Americana Artists (based on CPP)
Undiscovered	0-19	779	31%	Farewell Company, Katie Todd
Developing	20-39	752	30%	Will Kimbrough, Rachel Sage
Mid-level	40-59	691	28%	Jenny Owens Young, Oshima Brothers
Established	60-69	208	8%	The Shins, First Aid Kit
Superstar	70+	71	3%	Lumineers, Mumford & Sons
Totals		2,501	100%	

Table 1. Chartmetric’s indie folk and Americana artist CPP ranking, correlated with Tompkins’ career stages (note: the artists listed in the table are not the eleven artists who participated in the study).

Spotify Versus Apple Music and Amazon Music Unlimited

Spotify is the leading subscription-based digital music streaming provider with a global market share of 35%, Apple Music is second with

19%, and Amazon Music Unlimited has a 15% market share; thus the top three streaming music providers maintain a 69% share of the global streaming music market (Statista Research Department 2021). Data for the eleven artists in this study from Chartmetric and Spotify, Apple, and Amazon “Music for Artists” provide insights into Spotify and its primary competitors Apple Music and Amazon Music Unlimited. The eleven acts have generated a total of 569 million streams on Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music Unlimited. Spotify has an 87% share of all artists’ total streams while Apple (8%) and Amazon (5%) represent the remaining 13% share of streams for the acts in the study (Figure 1).

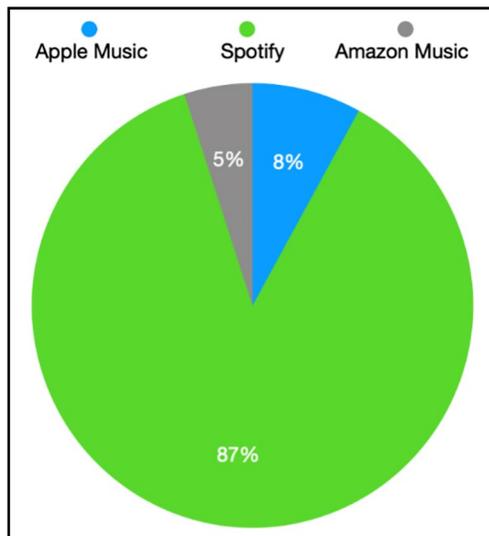


Figure 1. Distribution of the 569 million streams for the eleven artists in the study across Spotify, Apple Music, and Amazon Music Unlimited.

Despite Apple and Amazon’s 34% share of the global streaming audience, Spotify remains the primary means for artists in the study to engage with listeners. The artists’ large presence on Spotify has been boosted by inclusion on playlists. For example, the established artists in the study have been placed on 15,402 playlists on Apple, Amazon, and Spotify; 99% (15,310) of the playlist placements are from Spotify while the remaining 1% (92) of playlists derive from Apple and Amazon (Chartmetric.com). There were 597 playlist placements categorized as editorial playlists (playlists curated by the streaming platform) and 534 of these editorial

playlist placements were on Spotify (89%), 19 on Apple Music, and 44 on Amazon Music Unlimited (11% collectively between Apple and Amazon). When reviewing Chartmetric’s CPP for all eleven artists in the study, we see that CPP is closely aligned with Chartmetric’s Spotify popularity ranking for the eleven artists in the study (Table 2). Spotify is the single most impactful driver of CPP performance for artists in this study (Figure 2).

Artist	CPP Ranking	Spotify Popularity
#1	60	59/100
#2	60	58/100
#3	59	59/100
#4	41	41/100
#5	40	39/100
#6	37	37/100
#7	33	32/100
#8	30	30/100
#9	23	22/100
#10	23	20/100
#11	5	5/100

Table 2. Chartmetric’s Spotify Popularity ranking is the singular most important driver of Chartmetric’s Cross Platform Performance score for the eleven artists in the study.

Chartmetric CPP – Platforms and Metrics		
	Platforms	Metrics
Fan Base	Spotify, Instagram, YouTube, Soundcloud, Deezer, TikTok, Twitter, Pandora, Apple Music, Amazon Music, Facebook, Twitch	Followers, playlists/editorial playlists, subscribers, fans, lifetime stations added, artist track posts
Engagement	Spotify, YouTube, TikTok, Shazam, Twitter, Instagram, radio airplay, Pandora, Apple Music, Amazon Music, Deezer, Wikipedia, Boomplay, Facebook	Streams, monthly listeners, monthly video views, channel views, retweets, likes, page views, talks, playlists/editorial playlists, artist track posts, average likes, comments, and views

Figure 2. CPP (Cross Platform Performance) reflects an artist’s overall performance across multiple platforms relative to the performance of all artists in the music industry (4.5 million in the Chartmetric database).

Spotify for Artists – Deconstructed

“Spotify for Artists is a dashboard designed by Spotify that allows artists and artist teams to manage an artist profile, access music and audience data, pitch new music to editorial playlist curators, and highlight key songs, concerts, and playlists” (Tunecore, n.d.).

According to Spotify for Artists, the artists in this study have released over 813 songs collectively on Spotify generating 569 million total streams with 210 million streams from editorial playlists, 108 million streams from algorithmic playlists, and 4.2 million streams from user-generated playlists. The artists have amassed a total of 155 million listeners and 447,000 followers on Spotify. Established indie folk artists average one million monthly listeners and 150,000 followers, mid-level acts average 75,000 monthly listeners and 13,000 followers, and developing acts average 13,000 monthly listeners and 2,500 followers. The established artists have a dominant share of the total streams with a 92% share of streams and a 91% share of the listeners in this study.

Songs Released/Share of Streams

The artists in this study have assembled a vast catalog of songs in their repertoire, releasing 813 songs and averaging 76 songs per artist. Despite the deep catalog of releases, the top five songs (0.6% of releases) account for the majority share of streams on Spotify. The top five songs from each act represent a 63% share of total streams on Spotify and the top ten songs are 70% of total streams. Spotify playlists are driving streaming volume for the artists’ top songs as 57% percent of streams come from playlists.

Types of Playlists on Spotify

According to Chartmetric’s database there are 3.3 million playlists on Spotify. The three types of playlists on Spotify are editorial playlists, algorithmic playlists, and user-generated playlists.

Editorial playlists are curated by Spotify’s editorial team of music experts and genre specialists from around the world hired by Spotify to curate and manage Spotify playlists (Tools & Resources Staff 2021). Notable Spotify editorial playlists include Today’s Top Hits, Rap Caviar, and Rock This.

Algorithmic playlists are automatically created for users with Spotify’s software algorithms. Spotify monitors music listening habits by each

user and repurposes this information to produce highly personalized playlists (Tools & Resources Staff 2021). Notable Spotify algorithmic playlists include Release Radar, Discover Weekly, and Daily Mix. According to ToneDen, there are 200 million Discover Weekly playlists and 200 million Release Radar playlists created by the algorithms (Pyramind 2020).

Spotify user-generated playlists, also referred to as listener or third-party playlists, are created by Spotify users. These curators can be individuals, artists, record labels, brands, or any user on the platform. These curators can choose to make their playlists “secret” or “public” (Tools & Resources Staff 2021). Notable user-generated playlists include Sony’s Filtr, Indiemono, Starbucks, and Alex Rainbird Music.

The eleven acts average 3.65 streams per listener and 1,272 streams per follower on Spotify (all streams from release date through the date of this study). Algorithmic playlists (Radio, Discover Weekly, Daily Mix, Release Radar) have the highest streams per listener at 3.16 while editorial playlists generate the lowest streams per listener at 2.10. User-generated playlists averaged 2.67 streams per listener (see Table 3). Editorial playlists are often referred to as “lean back” or “drive by” listening experiences as listeners are passive and not inclined to convert into active fans who might follow an artist on social media, attend a show, or purchase merchandise. The lower streams per listener (2.10) for editorial playlists supports this claim. Save rate (when users save songs to their profiles) for editorial playlists are also impacted as the acts averaged a 4 percent lower save rate than their overall average. Despite the “lean back” experience, Spotify editorial playlists have a large following and can assist artists in racking up tens of millions to hundreds of millions of streams.

Algorithmic playlists are more targeted and therefore listeners are likely to engage and develop fans. User-generated playlists were once a means for artists to gain traction on Spotify which would generate algorithmic activation and ultimately lead to editorial playlist inclusion. Recently, user-generated playlists have been fraught with bots and fake streams (Boyer 2020), leading Spotify to disregard these playlists. In January 2021, Spotify removed 750,000 songs from the platform by artists

Source of Streams	Algorithmic	Editorial	Listener
Streams Per Listener	3.16	2.10	2.67

Table 3. Playlist type/source of streams/streams per listener (all streams from release date through the date of this study).

distributed through Distrokid as a result of bots and fake streams (Chill 2021). Subsequently, user-generated playlists are no longer considered a stepping-stone to leverage larger activations on Spotify.

Artist Discography “This is” Playlists

One key discovery from this study is related to artist discography playlists which are referred as “This Is” playlists on Spotify. An artist discography playlist is a collection of all songs released by an artist from their catalog combined into one playlist. For established and mid-level artists, artist discography playlists are typically curated by Spotify while emerging artists curate their own discography playlists via user-generated playlists. The average stream per listener for artist discography playlists is 26 streams per listener versus the overall average of 3.65 streams per listener for all acts in the study on Spotify. Therefore, unlike that average listener, a listener who visits an artist discography playlist will likely stream that artist an additional twenty-two times.

Source of Streams

Fifty-seven percent of the streams for all eleven acts were derived from Spotify editorial, algorithmic, and user-Generated playlists. Forty-three percent of the source of streams are non-playlist/organic streams which come directly from the artist’s Spotify profile or listeners’ own personalized playlists.

Editorial Playlists

Chartmetric’s database lists 98,344 editorial playlists on Spotify. According to Hypebot in 2019, the top followed editorial playlist on Spotify is Today’s Top Hits, currently with 28.6 million followers (Houghton 2020). See Table 4.

Established artists totaled 210 million (37%) editorial streams on Spotify from their 569 million total streams on Spotify. Spotify has 149 editorial playlists tagged as Folk & Acoustic on Chartmetric. The total playlist population/followers for the 149 Folk editorial playlists is 61.2 million (61,198,773) with 37% (55 of 149) of the playlists personalized and 63% (94 of 149) not personalized. The top indie folk, folk pop, and Americana followed playlists on Spotify are Your Favorite Coffeehouse (3.8 million), Acoustic Covers (3.7 million) and Relax & Unwind (3.6 million followers). See Table 5.

Rank	Playlist	Curator	Followers
1	Today's Top Hits	Spotify	28,657,690
2	Top 50 - Global	Spotify Charts	16,148,649
3	RapCaviar	Spotify	13,890,670
4	¡Viva Latino!	Spotify	11,024,409
5	Baila Reggaeton	Spotify	10,256,383
6	Songs to Sing in the Car	Spotify	9,806,681
7	All Out 00s	Spotify	9,415,123
8	Rock Classics	Spotify	9,094,449
9	All Out 80s	Spotify	8,647,752
10	Beast Mode	Spotify	8,087,634

Table 4. Top followed playlists on Spotify as of June 24, 2021 (Chartmetric 2021).

Rank	Editorial Playlist Title	Curator	Followers
1	Your Favorite Coffeehouse	Spotify	3,866,724
2	Acoustic Covers	Spotify	3,703,157
3	Relax & Unwind	Spotify	3,656,172
4	Run Wild	Spotify	2,422,566
5	Afternoon Acoustic	Spotify	2,362,023
6	Classic Acoustic	Spotify	2,249,111
7	90s Acoustic	Spotify	2,152,182
8	Infinite Acoustic	Spotify	2,130,506
9	Happy Folk	Spotify	1,902,812
10	Roots Rising	Spotify	1,822,603

Table 5. The top Folk & Acoustic playlists curated by Spotify on June 24, 2021. These are the playlists that most closely align with the style of music for the artists in this study (Chartmetric 2021).

Editorial playlists are categorized as frontline, catalog, and mixed. Frontline playlists are focused on new music as 75% or more of songs have been released within eighteen months. If 25% or fewer of the songs are released within eighteen months, the playlist is tagged as catalog. If 25% to 75% of the songs on the playlist are new, “release period within eighteen months,” the playlist is referred to as mixed. The top one thou-

sand followed editorial playlists on Spotify have 37.4% classified front-line, 38.4% catalog, and 24.2% mixed (Dredge 2018). The ratio of catalog, frontline, and mixed editorial playlists differs for indie folk, folk pop, and Americana Spotify editorial playlists. From the 143 editorial playlists tagged on Chartmetric in these genres, 68 are catalog (48%), 26 are front-line (18%), and 48 are mixed (34%). Accordingly, established acts with deeper catalogs in this study generate the most significant share of streams from editorial playlists (61%).

The top five performing Spotify editorial playlists for indie folk artists generated 52% of editorial streams for all acts in the study. These playlists are Your Favorite Coffeehouse (YFC), Relax & Unwind (R&U), Country Coffeehouse, Acoustic Covers, and Afternoon Acoustic. The top five Folk & Acoustic editorial playlists total 14.2 million followers averaging 2.8 million followers per playlist. YFC has 3.9 million followers and songs on YFC averaged 8,500 daily streams and 223,000 monthly streams per song. The three songs from artists in the study included on YFC gained over 42 million lifetime streams. R&U has 3.6 million followers and songs placed on R&U averaged 3,400 daily streams and 102,000 monthly streams for the acts in the study. The five songs from artists in the study included on R&U amassed 34 million lifetime streams. Those eight songs placed on YFC and R&U total 76 million streams and encompass 36% of all editorial streams for the eleven artists in this study. Playlist inclusion on YFC or R&U has elevated the artists' profile on Spotify, helping them move to the next stage of development on the platform.

Spotify rates the popularity of each song with a value between 0 and 100. Track popularity is calculated by an algorithm based on the total number of plays the track has amassed over time with 100 as the highest popularity ranking. Spotify editorial curators rely on track popularity to inform their decision to consider songs for playlists. The artists placed on Spotify's most followed playlist, Today's Top Hits, have song popularity scores ranging mainly from 80 to 90 (Figure 3).

According to Chartmetric, the average track popularity for songs on Your Favorite Coffeehouse is 54 (based on an average of 91 titles not including new releases which start with a popularity score of zero) with the most popular song rating of 66. The average track popularity for R&U (see Figure 4) is 55 and the song with the highest popularity rating is 78 (based on the average popularity of 68 tracks not factoring new releases). Artist tracks from this study placed on YMC and R&U range in track popularity

score from 42 to 61. R&U maintains 100 songs on its playlist and YFC has a total of 125 songs on the playlist.

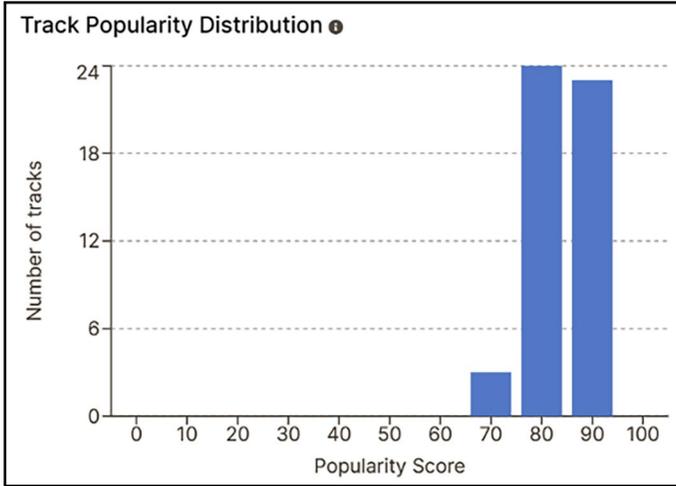


Figure 3. Spotify track popularity for the most followed playlist, Today's Top Hits. The overwhelming majority of songs on the playlist have popularity scores of 80 or higher (Chartmetric 2021).

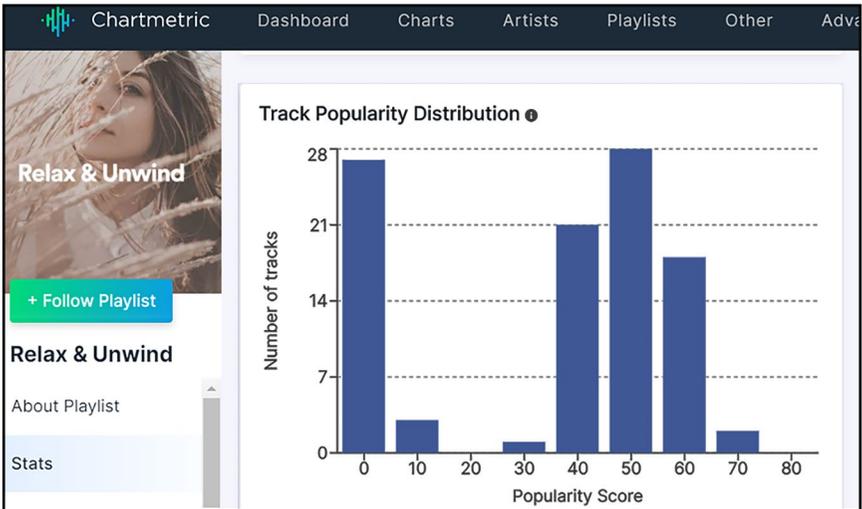


Figure 4. Distribution of Spotify track popularity on the editorial playlist Relax & Unwind (Chartmetric 2021).

Songs on catalog playlists have been released a minimum of six months before inclusion on the playlist. 93% of songs on YFC are at least six months old and 97% of songs on R&U are six or more months old and therefore categorized as catalog playlists. The average number of days songs are included on the YFC playlist is 624 days (approx. 90 weeks). 60% of the artists are U.S. based and only 16% are affiliated with major labels. R&U songs remain on the playlist for an average of 735 days (105 weeks), 41% are U.S. based and 26% are affiliated with major labels (Figure 5). Clearly there is opportunity for independent artists and artists affiliated with independent record labels to be considered for inclusion on Spotify’s top indie folk playlists.

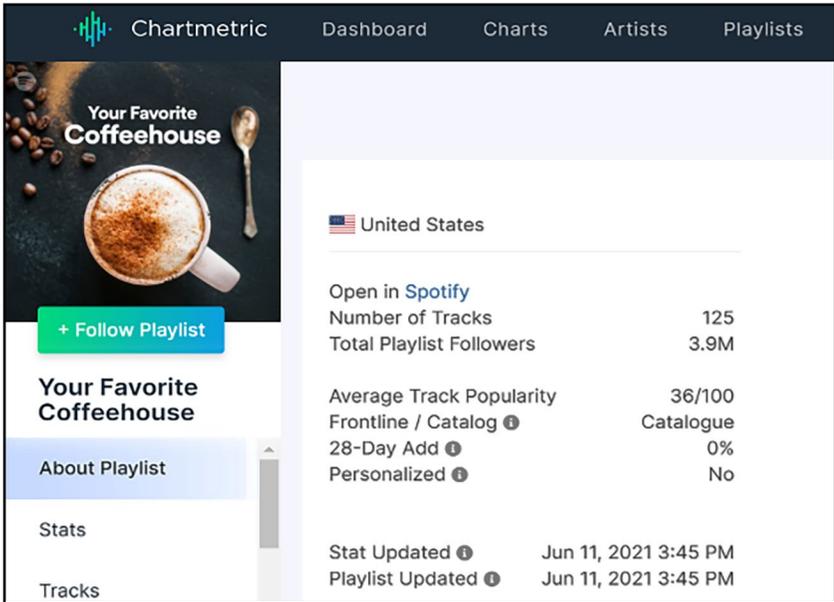


Figure 5. Chartmetric profile and data for the playlist Your Favorite Coffeehouse (Chartmetric 2021).

Spotify Payouts/Editorial Playlists

Songs on Your Favorite Coffeehouse earned an average of 8,500 daily streams and were maintained for an average of 624 days on the playlist totaling 5.3 million lifetime streams. This activity would pay out approximately US\$21,216 in streaming royalties based on \$.004 per stream (Jacob 2021). The artists in the study have tallied 42 million streams on YFC

which would total a projected payout of \$168,000 from Spotify based on \$.004/stream.

Only a handful of the songs placed on editorial playlists are driving streams for the artists in the study. The top three performing songs for established artists account for a 60% share of editorial streams. Mid-level acts' top two songs account for a 90% share of editorial streams and developing acts' top two songs account for an 85% share of editorial streams. The importance of a hit song appears to be even more vital with niche artists on streaming platforms via editorial placements.

Playlist Placement and Personalization

The number of songs maintained on a Spotify playlist vary depending on the type of playlist and genre. Algorithmic playlists may have 30 songs (Daily Mix) or 50 songs (Discover Weekly), editorial playlists range from 50 songs (Rock This, Today's Top Hits) to 125 songs (Your Favorite Coffeehouse), and user-generated playlists vary from 30 songs (Emma's Feelings) to 200 (Sad Songs) to as many as 535 (alexrainbirdMusic 2021). Subsequently, the position of song placement on a playlist greatly impacts exposure and streaming activity.

In this study, two established artists' songs were placed on the Spotify editorial playlist Your Favorite Coffeehouse (YFC), which has 3.8 million followers. One song was placed in the first third, track number 14 (out of 125 songs), and the other in the second third, track number 44 on the playlist. The track in the first third of the playlist gained 58% more streams than the song in the second third (9,500 versus 6,000 daily streams). Considering songs on YMC exist for an average of 600 days, a track in the earlier slot would gain an additional 2.1 million streams over the life of the playlist. One of the developing acts' songs placed on the Spotify editorial playlist Folk Pop (731,000 followers) experienced a 50% gain in streams from placement on the second third versus last third position on the playlist (600 vs. 400 daily streams).

Track position and length of time on a playlist is often determined by the playlist type. Frontline playlists (Fresh Folk) typically add 10 to 15 new tracks each week, thereby pushing previous tracks down the order until eventually moving off the playlist. Fresh Folk has 150 songs on the playlist; a song will cycle out of the playlist in 10 to 15 weeks. One of the developing artists in the study had two songs on Fresh Folk, the first song was placed in the top ten and the second song in the middle of the play-

list. The song in the top ten received 43,000 streams and the second song earned 19,100 streams while included on the playlist.

Spotify introduced personalized playlists with the algorithmic playlist “Daily Mix” in 2016 (Perez 2021). Spotify for Artists stated, “Playlists will be personalized based on a listener’s taste which means all music has a better chance of getting into the ears of the right listeners” (Spotify for Artists 2019). Track selection and position are different for each user within personalized playlists. Spotify also stated, “The number of artists on each playlist goes up by 30 percent and the number of tracks goes up by 35 percent” (Kastrenakes 2019). Spotify has expanded personalized playlists to editorial (Songs to Sing in the Car), algorithmic (Release Radar and Discover Weekly), and a custom hub “Made for You” including “Your Genre Mixes,” “Your Artist Mixes,” and “Your Decade Mixes.” In June 2021, Spotify released an in-app personalized experience called “Only You” which highlights artists, songs, genres, and other aspects of the music listening experience important to individual listeners. Along with “Only You” Spotify released “Blend,” a new way to create a personalized playlist with a friend. Spotify reported, “People seeking out songs is up 80 percent on personalized playlists and track saves are up by 66 percent” (Kastrenakes 2019). Currently, 220 of the top 500 (44%) followed editorial playlists on Spotify are categorized as personalized. Twelve of the top nineteen (63%) followed indie folk editorial playlists on Spotify are personalized.

Feeder Playlists

Spotify editors often test tracks on what are referred to as “feeder” playlists. Feeder playlists are core playlists on Spotify with a smaller but devout listening audience. Tracks that perform well on feeder playlists, Fresh Folk (656,708 followers) and Folk Pop (730,116 followers) for indie folk acts, graduate to the larger playlists Your Favorite Coffeehouse (3.8 million) and Relax & Unwind (3.6 million). Eight of the artists in this study (73%) have been placed on Fresh Folk and three of the artists (27%) have been included on Folk Pop. Fresh Folk is a frontline playlist totaling 150 songs and adding 10 to 15 new songs each week. Artists typically spend 10 to 12 weeks on Fresh Folk with an average total stream of 36,837 streams per artist. Folk Pop is a catalog personalized playlist and the three artists from the study included on it averaged 565,784 streams while on the playlist (Table 6).

Playlist	Followers	Listeners	Streams	Streams per Listener	Average Streams per Artist	Occurrences	Percent of Acts
Fresh Folk	656,708	224,165	294,698	1.31	36,837	8	73%
Folk Pop	730,116	814,964	1,697,621	2.08	565,874	3	27%

Table 6. Examples of feeder playlists and associated streaming data with Fresh Folk and Folk Pop.

Saves, Skips, and Completions

Spotify utilizes several metrics to determine the performance of a song on a playlist including save rate, completion rate, and skip rate. Spotify counts a stream when a song has been listened to for thirty seconds. The average listener skips is 14.65 times per hour on Spotify (once every four minutes) (Owsinski 2018). Music blogger Paul Lamere analyzed billions of streams from millions of Spotify listeners all over the world to learn about skip rates (Owsinski 2018). Lamere found that a listener is 24.14% likely to skip a track in the first five seconds, 28.97% in the first ten seconds, 35.05% in the first 30 seconds, and 48.6% skip before the song finishes (Lamere 2014).

Spotify for Artists offers data on save rate but does not provide data for completion rate or skip rate in the Spotify for Artists dashboard. Save rate is calculated by dividing the number of saves for a song by the number of listeners. A save is indicated when a listener likes a song by tapping the heart icon “saves to their library” or when someone adds a song to a playlist. A 2019 *Hypebot* article suggests anything above 10% is a “good” save rate (Donoghue 2019). Kieron Donoghue states in his article, “During my years of studying stats for hundreds of artists I typically see save rates of between 3% to 7% on average.”

The artists in this study averaged an overall save rate of 12%. The save rate for the top five most streamed songs drops 4% to 5% on average for all acts. The top 18 streamed songs for the artists in the study average a 6% save rate. Many of the top performing acts receiving editorial inclusion had save rates in the 2% to 4% range. The lower save rate for top streamed songs is largely due in part to editorial playlists’ “lean back” listening experience. Save rate is one of the indicators Spotify considers for inclusion in algorithmic playlists (Table 7).

Save Rate/All Artists	Established	Mid-level	Developing
Save Rate: All Acts, All Songs	12.1%	11.8%	12.9%
Save Rate: Top Five Songs	8.2%	7.9%	7.6%
Save Rate: Top Ten Songs	9.2%	8.6%	8.8%

Table 7. Save rates for established, mid-level, and developing artists. Save rate diminishes for top songs that receive editorial playlist inclusion.

Algorithmic Playlists

Artists in the study earned 108 million streams (19%) of the 569 million total lifetime streams from algorithmic playlists on Spotify. Algorithmic playlists are playlists that are automatically created for each user by Spotify’s software algorithms. Spotify monitors each user’s music listening habits and uses this information to produce highly personalized playlists (Tools & Resources Staff 2021). The four primary algorithmic playlists on Spotify are Daily Mix, Discover Weekly, Release Radar, and Radio.

The Daily Mix is a daily playlist that consists of six pre-mixed playlists inspired by a user’s favorite music. Spotify incorporates clustering technology to identify subgroupings within listening patterns to build recommendations for each daily mix playlist (Spotify Newsroom 2018). Discover Weekly is a weekly playlist updated every Monday featuring music the user is likely to enjoy based on artists, albums, and tracks that user likes, shares, skips, and saves to a playlist (Tools & Resources Staff 2021). Release Radar is a weekly playlist updated every Friday featuring new music by artists a user currently follows on Spotify (Tools & Resources Staff 2021). Radio is a “radio station” playlist curated by Spotify that consists of 50 songs including approximately 5 songs from the core artist and 45 songs from similar artists. Radio has the largest share of streams (52%) and the highest listener per stream ratio (5.33) for the artists in the study. Radio is the top ranked algorithmic playlist for established acts, Discover Weekly and Radio rank highest for mid-level acts, and Daily Mix ranks at the top for developing acts. Daily Mix has the second highest listener to stream ratio (4.47) among the four algorithmic playlists (Table 8).

User-Generated Playlists

User-generated playlists make up just 4.2 million streams (0.7%) of the 569 million streams from the artists in the study. The established acts

Spotify Algorithmic Playlists	Listeners	Streams	Share of Streams	Streams per Listener
Radio	9,549,412	50,888,757	51.9%	5.33
Daily Mix	7,282,312	32,582,633	33.3%	4.47
Discover Weekly	4,565,148	12,186,208	12.4%	2.67
Release Radar	962,319	2,312,620	2.4%	2.40
Totals	22,359,191	97,970,218	100%	4.38

Table 8. Share of streams and streams per listener across the eleven artists in this study.

derive 1% of their streams from user-generated playlists, mid-level acts derive 2% of their streams from this source, and developing acts derive 21%. The eleven artists in the study have been included on 672 user-generated playlists and only one of these user-generated playlists (Sony’s Filtr) gained more than 75,000 streams for a song while on the playlist. Just 6% of songs on user-generated playlists achieved more than 5,000 streams (Table 9).

User-Generated Playlists	5,000+ Streams	10,000+ Streams	25,000+ Streams	50,000+ Streams	100,000+ Streams
672 Playlists	6%	3%	1%	0.6%	0.1%

Table 9. Only one percent of songs included on user-generated playlists for the eleven artists in the study gained 25,000 or more streams.

Geographic Assessment and Trigger Cities

Overview

It was important to establish where audiences were listening on Spotify for the eleven artists in the study. In analyzing top cities, Chartmetric provided the “Top 50” cities for each artist based on Spotify’s Monthly Listener counts. We used the final reporting period of Top 50 cities on March 4, 2021 as determined by monthly listeners to establish top cities for the artists.

There are several ways to assess top cities. We explored five primary methods: Universal Cities, Average Ranking, Average Ranking of Univer-

sal Cities, Total Monthly Listeners, and finally a comparison (index) of monthly listeners to population.

**Geographic Profile:
Eleven Indie Folk and Americana Artist Cohort**

Universal Cities

In this analysis, we have the potential of 550 total cities if there was no crossover and each artist had a unique set of locations where they were most popular. Overall, there were 129 unique cities represented across the eleven artists. The distribution of appearances is indicated in Table 10.

Cities on X of 11 Artist's Top 50	Count	Percentage
X = 11	10	7.75%
X = 10	13	10.08%
X = 9	3	2.33%
X = 8	3	2.33%
X = 7	7	5.43%
X = 6	10	7.75%
X = 5	6	4.65%
X = 4	7	5.43%
X = 3	7	5.43%
X = 2	7	5.43%
X = 1	56	43.41%
Total	129	100.00%

Table 10. Distribution of the frequency of cities in the Top 50 for our eleven-artist cohort.

In this scenario, cities that appeared on all eleven artists' Top 50 were deemed Universal Cities. 7.75% of the cities in this study appeared on all artist's Top 50 lists:

1. Chicago, Illinois
2. Denver, Colorado
3. New York City, New York
4. Dallas, Texas
5. Seattle, Washington

6. Los Angeles, California
7. Atlanta, Georgia
8. Toronto, Ontario, Canada
9. Montreal, Quebec, Canada
10. Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Average Ranking of Universal Cities

As we refined this geographic data, defining the ranking for only the Universal Cities (appearing on all eleven artist’s Top 50) the most influential cities became more important (Table 11).

City	Number of Top 50s (Maximum of 11)	Average Ranking
Chicago	11	3.7
Denver	11	5.3
New York City	11	7.7
Dallas	11	8.6
Seattle	11	8.9
Los Angeles	11	9.5
Atlanta	11	10.9
Toronto	11	14.5
Montreal	11	17.4
Brisbane	11	31.9

Table 11. Ranking of cities that appeared in all Top 50 lists for our eleven-artist cohort.

In this analysis these cities are higher ranked in part because they have higher populations. Nine of the ten cities are in North America with the top seven located in the United States and two in Canada. Brisbane, Australia was the only city outside of North America to appear as a Universal City.

Total Monthly Listeners

In analyzing the total monthly listeners for each city in our data set we find that Universal Cities tend to rise to the top of the rankings by total number of monthly listeners. There were a few notable cities that only appeared on nine of the eleven artist’s Top 50 cities but ended up in the top 15 by monthly listeners: Charlotte, North Carolina (11th with 29,604

monthly listeners) and Houston, Texas (14th with 26,271 monthly listeners). Again, city population is closely aligned, though not perfectly correlated, with the cities at the top of this list.

	City	Count	Aggregate Monthly Listeners on Spotify
1.	Denver	11	63,804
2.	Chicago	11	61,766
3.	Atlanta	11	52,533
4.	Dallas	11	46,037
5.	Seattle	11	44,457
6.	New York City	11	40,317
7.	Los Angeles	11	39,659
8.	Minneapolis	10	35,063
9.	Montreal	11	31,511
10.	Toronto	11	30,522
11.	Charlotte	9	29,604
12.	Portland	10	29,053
13.	London	10	27,024
14.	Houston	9	26,271
15.	San Francisco	10	25,535
16.	Sydney	10	25,255
17.	Austin	10	21,492
18.	Brooklyn	10	21,470
19.	Washington	10	20,407
20.	Vancouver	10	20,092
21.	Calgary	10	20,012
22.	Salt Lake City	10	20,012
23.	Philadelphia	10	19,154
24.	Cleveland	8	18,128
25.	Berlin	7	16,737

Population to Monthly Spotify Listeners

For an accurate picture of the cities that stream more than others we must create an index based upon the population of each city. Using data for each city, we calculated a ratio between the population and monthly listeners. The goal is to determine whether certain cities stream at a higher rate than others. The index gives us that opportunity to compare cities on a similar metric.

In analyzing the total monthly listeners to the city population, we find there are several cities that emerge with these artists reaching five

percent or greater than the city population including Seattle, Minneapolis, Denver, Salt Lake City, and Atlanta (Table 12).

City	Monthly Listeners	Population	Value (Monthly Listeners/Population)	Percent of City
Atlanta	52,533	506,811	0.103654025	10.37%
Salt Lake City	20,012	200,567	0.099777132	9.98%
Denver	63,804	727,211	0.087737947	8.77%
Minneapolis	35,063	429,606	0.081616644	8.16%
Seattle	44,457	753,675	0.058986964	5.90%
Cleveland	18,128	381,009	0.047578929	4.76%
Portland	29,053	654,741	0.044373271	4.44%
Zurich	15,110	428,700	0.035246093	3.52%
Dallas	46,037	1,343,573	0.034264606	3.43%
Charlotte	29,604	885,708	0.033424108	3.34%
Vancouver	20,092	631,486	0.031817016	3.18%
San Francisco	25,535	881,549	0.028966059	2.90%
Washington	20,407	705,749	0.028915379	2.89%
Chicago	61,766	2,693,976	0.02292745	2.29%
Austin	21,492	978,908	0.021955076	2.20%
Montreal	31,511	1,704,690	0.018484886	1.85%
Calgary	20,012	1,239,220	0.016148868	1.61%
Edmonton	14,371	932,546	0.0154105	1.54%
Amsterdam	15,501	1,157,519	0.013391573	1.34%
Philadelphia	19,154	1,584,064	0.012091683	1.21%
Houston	26,271	2,320,268	0.011322399	1.13%
Toronto	30,522	2,731,570	0.011173794	1.12%
Los Angeles	39,659	3,979,576	0.009965635	1.00%
Phoenix	15,872	1,680,992	0.009442044	0.94%

Table 12. Monthly listeners as a percent of city population.

Note that Chartmetric defines New York City and Brooklyn as two separate markets. If we combine New York City (40,317) and Brooklyn (21,470) monthly listeners (and compare it to the New York City popula-

tion of 8,336,817 we see 0.74%. This percentage does not crack the top 25 markets but is worth noting due to how the population data was gathered.

Geographic Profile:

All Chartmetric Indie Folk and Americana Tagged Artists (2,501 Total Acts)

Universe of Artists + Geography

The entire indie folk/Americana data set consists of 2,501 artists. If we simply count which cities show up on the top 50 locations as determined by the number of monthly listeners on Spotify, we find that Chicago is present on approximately 75% of all artist's top markets. Overall, there are 2,072 cities represented within the artists' Top 50. This metric is simply a count of occurrences within the top 50 and not a measure of monthly listeners within each city. Of note, 15 of the top 25 cities are in the United States and 10 are international cities. Canada represents three of the international cities, so North America is largely responsible (18 of 25) for the most frequently represented cities appearing across all artists within the genre:

	City	Country	Count	% of occurrences in Top 50
1.	Chicago	US	1562	75%
2.	Los Angeles	US	1552	75%
3.	New York City	US	1540	74%
4.	London	GB	1515	73%
5.	Toronto	CA	1494	72%
6.	Sydney	AU	1492	72%
7.	Atlanta	US	1490	72%
8.	Dallas	US	1489	72%
9.	Seattle	US	1488	72%
10.	Denver	US	1487	72%
11.	Montreal	CA	1437	69%
12.	Melbourne	AU	1391	67%
13.	Houston	US	1388	67%
14.	San Francisco	US	1373	66%
15.	Brooklyn	US	1368	66%
16.	Portland	US	1329	64%
17.	Minneapolis	US	1311	63%
18.	Brisbane	AU	1281	62%
19.	Berlin	DE	1255	61%
20.	Vancouver	CA	1243	60%

21. Austin	US	1203	58%
22. Amsterdam	NL	1193	58%
23. Philadelphia	US	1162	56%
24. Charlotte	US	1152	56%
25. Madrid	ES	1100	53%

When we consider monthly listeners for all artists within the genre, there is a deeper international presence among the top results. International cities represent 15 of the top 25 cities as measured by the aggregate total listeners per city.

At the time of data capture, prior to the start of our campaign, there were 366,731,330 aggregate non-unique monthly listeners within the genre. We can establish which cities listen to the genre by dividing the city listeners by the aggregate total listeners to establish the city consumption percentage across all acts:

	City	Country	Aggregate Total Monthly Listeners per City	City Consumption Percentage
1.	Chicago	US	13,812,335	3.77%
2.	Sydney	AU	13,553,788	3.70%
3.	London	GB	12,907,994	3.52%
4.	Los Angeles	US	12,668,988	3.45%
5.	Mexico City	MX	10,551,924	2.88%
6.	Atlanta	US	10,239,128	2.79%
7.	Dallas	US	10,107,624	2.76%
8.	New York City	US	10,052,740	2.74%
9.	Brisbane	AU	9,789,025	2.67%
10.	Melbourne	AU	9,468,440	2.58%
11.	Denver	US	8,979,392	2.45%
12.	Seattle	US	8,048,295	2.19%
13.	Toronto	CA	7,433,793	2.03%
14.	Amsterdam	NL	7,418,393	2.02%
15.	Houston	US	7,039,636	1.92%
16.	Berlin	DE	6,994,636	1.91%
17.	Montreal	CA	6,923,387	1.89%
18.	Dublin	IE	6,737,096	1.84%
19.	Paris	FR	6,647,142	1.81%
20.	São Paulo	BR	6,360,999	1.73%
21.	Santiago	CL	6,082,268	1.66%

22. Brooklyn	US	5,899,526	1.61%
23. Perth	AU	5,755,603	1.57%
24. San Francisco	US	5,721,982	1.56%
25. Madrid	ES	5,643,864	1.54%

Share of Listening Across the Genre

Looking at the data across all acts within the genre it is clear the top 100 cities drive consumption with a 90% share of listeners. However, the top 50 cities comprise 83% of monthly listeners and one would assume it will produce diminishing returns if marketing reach is beyond the 50 cities (Figure 6). Contrary to this belief, the results of the advertising campaign we ran as part of this study demonstrates global opportunities exist for indie folk and Americana artists outside of the top 50 or 100 streaming markets.

Total Listeners by City	Share of Listeners
Top 10 Cities	31%
Top 25 Cities	59%
Top 50 Cities	83%
Top 100 Cities	96%

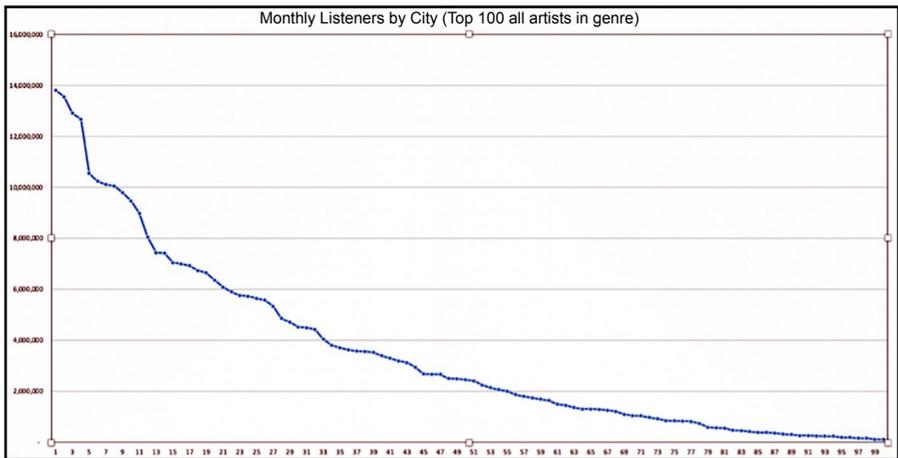


Figure 6. Visual representation of the Top 100 cities (X axis) by aggregate monthly listeners within that city (Y axis) for Indie/ Americana music.

Trigger Cities Advertising Campaign – Method and Results

Overview

We developed a comprehensive advertising campaign on Facebook and Instagram for the eleven artists in the study to determine if we could introduce the artists to new audiences in the global music marketplace. The campaign ran for twenty-nine days via Facebook and Instagram feed ads directed to artist Spotify playlists. The artist playlists were curated by Spotify as “This is” discography playlists from their catalog or curated by the artist as “This is” or “Favorite Songs” via artist user-generated playlists on their profile. Each artist playlist included a minimum of thirty songs and the call to action for consumers was to follow the artist playlist and/or stream the featured song. The ads consisted of a fifteen-second video featuring the artist’s music and image and were delivered on Facebook’s Ads Manager and Found.ee. The advertising budget ranged from twenty to thirty dollars per day, per artist, and was equally distributed between Facebook and Instagram for all artists, concluding on June 19, 2021.

Advertising Targeting – Geographic Regions

Our research from Chartmetric’s database of 2,501 indie folk artists suggested North America, Australia, and Western Europe are the primary regions for streaming activity on Spotify. When determining geographic ad targeting, we included North America, Australia, and Western Europe and expanded the geographic radius to explore advertising audiences in additional regions based on the global population of Spotify users:

Targeted regions: Antilles, Argentina, Austria, Australia, Aland Islands, Belgium, Bulgaria, Saint Barthélemy, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Switzerland, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Algeria, Ecuador, Egypt, Spain, Finland, France, United Kingdom, French Guiana, Equatorial Guinea, Greece, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Morocco, Monaco, Malta, Mexico, Malaysia, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Peru, French Polynesia, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Paraguay, Russia, Sweden, Singapore, El Salvador, South Africa, French Southern Territories,

Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Taiwan, United States Minor Outlying Islands, United States, Uruguay, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Vietnam

Advertising Targeting – Related Artists

We developed a list of targeted artists known as “related artists” to reach indie folk and Americana music audiences for the ad campaign. The ads targeted fans of these related artists on Facebook and Instagram in the geographic regions we selected. Related artists included The Lumineers, The Head and the Heart, Gregory Alan Isakov, The Avett Brothers, Mumford & Sons, Lord Huron, The Paper Kites, Rayland Baxter, Fleet Foxes, The Shins, First Aid Kit, Andrew Bird, Father John Misty, Band of Horses, Mandolin Orange, Sharon Van Etten, Phoebe Bridgers, Dawes, Lake Street Dive, and others. Each artist in the study had their own distinct grouping of related artists for the ad campaign.

Advertising Targeting – Age Demographic

The distribution of listener’s age from Spotify for Artists data displayed a broad range of listeners aged eighteen to fifty-nine years old (see Figure 7) evenly weighted between male and female. Therefore, the initial ad campaign targeted a diverse range of ages to reach a broad audience of Spotify users who listened to indie folk and Americana music. The ads were directed to a landing page that was embedded with a pixel to provide insights regarding demographic and geographic profiles. After measuring reach and impressions from the initial campaign, we refined the ad by retargeting users who watched the video or clicked on the ad previously as well as expanding the initial interest audience. Prior to the start of the

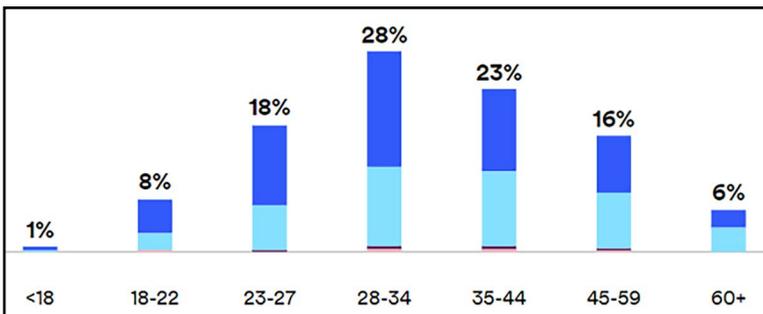


Figure 7. Distribution of listeners' ages for one of the eleven artists in the cohort.

campaign Apple launched several iOS 14 updates impacting app tracking. Due to privacy concerns, Apple provided iPhone consumers the option to opt out of tracking advertising activity through mobile devices (Miller 2021). This iOS update limited the scope of data available when assessing the results of the campaign.

Ad Campaign Results

Advertisements were served to audiences in seventy-four countries reaching 1,617,313 impressions and 23,591 total ad engagements or clicks with a 1.46% click through rate. The results outperform the average Facebook click through rate of 0.90% and indicate opportunities exist beyond the United States and Australia for indie folk artists (Irvine 2020). A total of 80% of ad clicks emanated from the top ten returning countries, all based outside of North America and Australia including Brazil, The Philippines, and Mexico; all of these regions are considered trigger cities/countries. Looking beyond these territories, Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, and Vietnam appeared in the top ten (Table 13).

Country	Total Ad Clicks	Share of Total Ad Clicks
Brazil	5,255	22.28%
Philippines	4,006	16.98%
Algeria	2,103	8.91%
Mexico	1,984	8.41%
Egypt	1,554	6.59%
Tunisia	1,113	4.72%
Vietnam	1,049	4.45%
Morocco	906	3.84%
Indonesia	569	2.41%
Peru	567	2.40%
United States of America	553	2.34%
Turkey	484	2.05%
Argentina	348	1.48%
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	252	1.07%
Guatemala	233	0.99%

Table 13. Top countries for ad engagement based upon ads served with the Found.ee landing page.

When assessing streaming activity for the artists on Spotify for Artists, there were several other territories, not listed in the top ten ad markets, over-indexing a return including Japan, Bolivia, Finland, and Spain. Several of the trigger city regions are also over-indexed on Spotify including Brazil, Indonesia, Turkey, and Australia.

Developing artists in the study averaged 2,986 clicks during the campaign while mid-level (1,614) and established (1,729) experienced similar engagement (Table 14). Advertising clearly benefited the developing artists in this study as the playing field was leveled in regions outside of the United States.

Artist Stage	Average Clicks on Their Ads
Developing	2,986
Mid-level	1,614
Established	1,729

Table 14. Average engagement for the advertising campaign by stage of artist career.

Cost Per Follower

One critical measure to establish the usefulness of a campaign is to analyze the cost per follower. Artist teams need to be sure they will be able to monetize each follower over the lifetime of an artist’s career. The cost to establish a follower is an important measure when looking at the financial life of an artist. If the cost per follower is too high, building an audience could be an expense that does not financially align. In our campaign, we realized a cost per follower of \$3.79. Many artists have pivoted to digital strategies during the COVID pandemic driving up the cost effectiveness for advertising over the past year.

If we look at the impact of the campaign on playlist growth, we see that playlist followers grew by an average of almost 350% for all artists. The range of growth varied as one artist playlist following grew by 2,500% and another grew only 2.5% (Table 15). If we segment growth by the stage of the artist career, developing artists benefited most significantly from the ad campaign. The average playlist follower growth was 736% for developing acts. Mid-level acts grew their playlists at an average of about 169%, and established acts experienced the lowest growth of 72% (Table 16).

Minimum Growth	2.49%
Maximum Growth	2,500.00%
Average Growth	349.00%

Table 15. Minimum, maximum, and average playlist follower growth for the eleven artists in the study.

Developing	736%
Mid-Level	169%
Established	72%

Table 16. Average playlist follower growth by stage of career for the eleven artists in the study.

When analyzing save rates, artists were segmented by career stage. Results indicate developing artists received the highest save rate on Spotify for songs used in the campaign averaging a 25% save rate, seventeen percentage points above the average save rate of 8% for the life of a song. Mid-level and established artists had lower save rates during the campaign (Table 17).

Artist Stage	Average Save Rate During 28-Day Study	Average Save Rate for Life of Song
Developing	25%	8%
Mid-Level	8%	13%
Established	3%	7%

Table 17. Change in save rate by stage of career.

Conclusion

This paper explores opportunities for artists on digital streaming music service providers to expand their reach through paid ads on social media. It explores geographical market expansion by considering a new set of targeted “trigger” cities. The study of eleven indie folk and Americana artists outlines the importance of playlist inclusion to build an audience and presence on streaming platforms. The type of playlist and track placement play a large role towards gaining an audience on Spotify, while only a small percentage of artists’ songs are responsible for streams from their catalog. Perhaps artists might consider a singles-based release strat-

egy spread out over a period of time to give each song an opportunity for playlist consideration. The results of the Chartmetric geographic study indicate key markets for folk and Americana artists which include many regions and cities not listed in the original trigger cities study. Artists from different genres may have a unique set of trigger cities to consider when targeting audiences globally. Paid ads on social media had the greatest impact on developing artists, supporting Jenkins' trigger cities theory that new markets and new audiences are inclined to engage with emerging talent. Considering the low barrier to entry, competition is fierce in the digital music market landscape. Artists are engaging in traditional and non-traditional marketing efforts (playlists, paid media, etc.) to build global audiences.

Future Research

Additional research targeting outlier regions derived from the results of this study could be explored to determine if these audiences are viable listeners over an extended period, therefore potentially driving additional long-term revenue. Other regions not explored in this research could be included in the geographic audience set. Niche genres (indie rock, alternative rock, metal, jazz) could be studied using this method as a baseline to explore global audiences for artists. A follow-up study could be conducted on other platforms (TikTok, YouTube) to explore their relevance and potential to build a global audience for the acts in this study.

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TERRY TOMPKINS has been a professional and professor in the music industry for the past twenty-five years. He began his career as an artist manager and worked as a talent buyer, journalist, record label president, festival organizer, A&R rep, and professor of music industry. Tompkins spent five years at Columbia Records working in A&R where he discovered the Grammy Award-winning multi-platinum recording artist John Legend. His experi-



ence in the touring industry includes talent buying for a prestigious rock club as well as a showcase director for the Philadelphia Music Conference, one of the largest music conferences in the United States at the time. Early in his career, Tompkins established Big Fish Artist Management and Consulting, managing international artists signed to major and independent labels. Currently on the faculty of Hofstra University, Tompkins' career as an educator also includes serving as a professor of music industry at Millersville University, Saint Joseph's University, and Drexel University where he developed the curriculum teaching twelve courses and supervising MAD Dragon Records, a nationally recognized award-winning student-run record label. Tompkins' area of expertise as a researcher includes analytics which have been published in the *Journal of the Music and Entertainment Industry Educators Association*, *The International Journal of Music Business Research*, and the *Journal of Instructional Pedagogies*. Tompkins earned a BA from Temple University and an MBA at St. Joseph's University.

ULF OESTERLE is a faculty member within the Bandier Program at Syracuse University. Dr. Oesterle has been teaching about the music business for the last sixteen years with courses touching on recorded music, live music, social media strategy, and data within the music business. He completed his doctorate in mass communications at the Newhouse School at Syracuse University in 2007, spent several years as the Music and Entertainment Industries Department chair, interim director of the Bandier Program, and interim chair of Audio Arts (M.A.). Oesterle is an educa-

tor and practitioner, having operated a small record label, an artist management company, and has history with radio programming and hosting a commercial specialty show for a few years. Outside of campus, Dr. Oesterle currently sits on the board of the Music and Entertainment Industry Educators Association, contributes to educational endeavors for Show Makers, speaks at conferences regularly, and consults about TikTok strategy while managing his own creator presence on the platform.



CHARLES ALEXANDER is an independent singer/songwriter, digital music and media strategist, and music technology educator. He is the founder and owner of Systemic, a label services company specializing in streaming marketing and strategy, and Outside The Box Music, a management and digital services company. He is also the cofounder and former owner/partner of Streaming Promotions. He managed the career of Keeley Valentino, whose song “Nashville” has garnered over 14 million spins on Spotify and indie pop phenom Jilian Linklater. He also has worked with such diverse artists as Ryan Cabrera, Keb’ Mo’, SHEL, Gabe Dixon, and Noah Guthrie. He has been quoted in *The Washington Post*, NPR, and *The Tennessean* and featured on the front page of the international music technology blog, HypeBot.com. He has been a speaker and panelist at SXSW, Music Biz, CD Baby DIY Conference, Leadership Music’s Digital Summit, Americana Music Conference, The International Folk Alliance, and has contributed to the national discussion on SOPA, the online piracy bill.



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The *MEIEA Journal* provides a scholarly analysis of technological, legal, historical, educational, and business trends within the music and entertainment industries and is designed as a resource for anyone currently involved or interested in these industries. Topics include issues that affect music and entertainment industry education and the music and entertainment industry such as curriculum design, pedagogy, technological innovation, intellectual property matters, industry-related legislation, arts administration, industry analysis, and historical perspectives.

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