

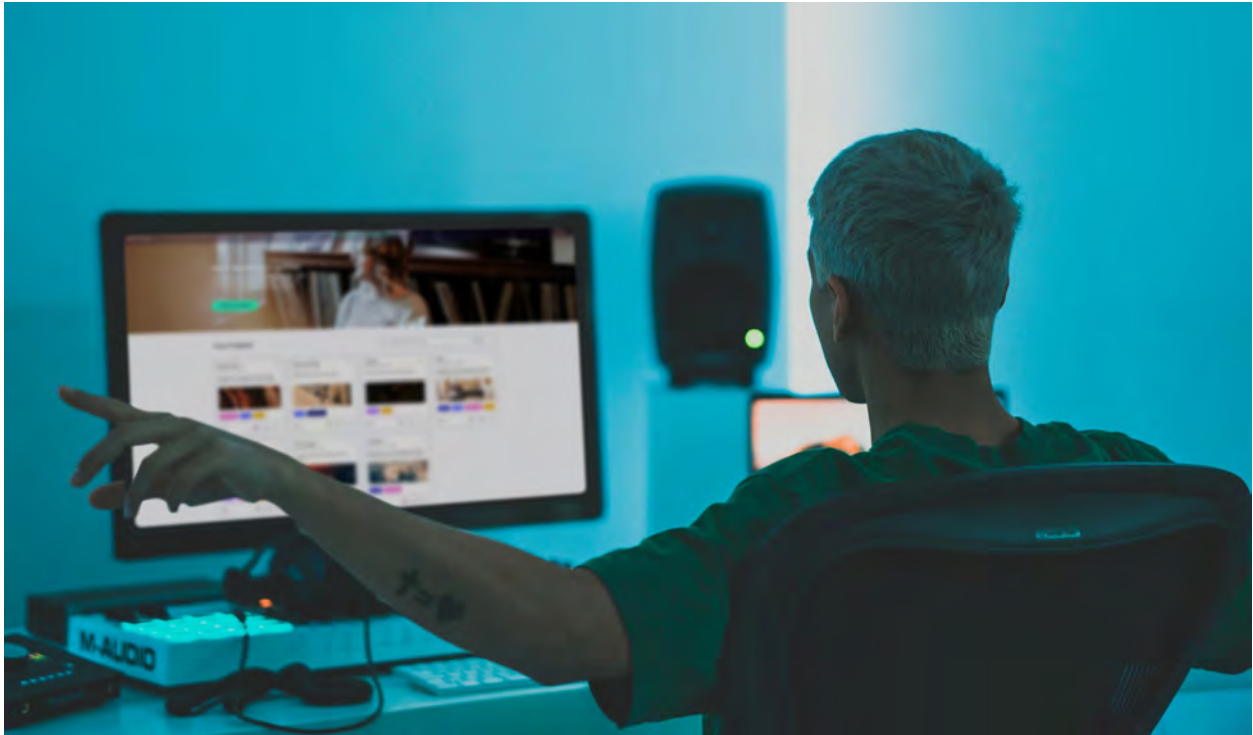


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# Exploring innovative growth of a music distribution software

Facilitating collaboration amongst independent artists by increasing trust and social capital acquisition

Master's thesis in Computer science and engineering

HANNA CERVAK

LOVISA SKÖLD



MASTER'S THESIS 2022

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Department of Computer Science and Engineering  
CHALMERS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
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Gothenburg, Sweden 2022

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Cover: Studio picture displaying the Facilitating Collaboration concept

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## **Abstract**

Being independent enables Aspiring Artists to have full creative freedom, but for those who wish to make music a full-time career, dedication and effort is needed to overcome the struggle of becoming a professional. By recognizing such challenges, this master's thesis was set out to investigate and conceptualize transformational innovation within the field of independent music distribution. By conducting qualitative user-based activities, such as interviews and a diary study, data on the topic could be gathered and compiled into user profiles, an emotional journey map and thematically pinpointed challenges. Moreover, forming trust, facilitating collaborations and conducting successful promotions was identified as the most challenging factors for Aspiring Artists. In addition, these insights were transformed into six concepts, which later arrived at one final concept through the use of evaluative research. The final concept, Facilitating Collaborations, allows artists to foster trust amongst each other in a safe environment, as a result improving social capital acquisition in that context. This can be achieved by forming the interface, as well as the collaborations, around the process of jointly building a traceable song that in a secure and controlled manner displays contributions. To conclude, the design presented aims to balance digital ownership, collaborations and social capital acquisition. When combining such perspectives with the area of interaction design, the researchers created a solid foundation for reaching transformational innovation both within the context of design and Aspiring Artists. To guide this development process, a list of requirements was created based on the insights gained. Arguably, when applied and evaluated in the final design, these can be used as design factors to consider when designing for transformational innovation in the context of Aspiring Artists.

Keywords: interaction design, user experience, emotions in design, trust in design, transformational innovation, social capital, independent music distribution, independent artists.



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Lastly, we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation towards our fellow students, friends and families supporting us during our time at Chalmers University. You made these years the best possible.

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Hanna Cervak' and the signature on the right is 'Lovisa Sköld'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hanna Cervak and Lovisa Sköld, Gothenburg, June 2022



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# 1

## Introduction

Aspiring Artists have for long been struggling to get their music out on the market. Big record labels like Universal, Warner and Sony stand for as much as 80% of the distributed music (McDonald, 2019). If not signed by one of these, artists are required to find alternative services that can aid them to reach listeners, such as the digital music distribution platform Record Union. After years of solemnly focusing on solving the users' problem of distributing music, while operating in an increasingly competitive market, Record Union has now recognized a need to enter a phase of transformational innovation (Nagji & Tuff, 2012) in order to reestablish a competitive position on the market and continue to grow organically.

With the past year's challenges and declines in revenue due to canceled live events, there has been a wide interest in adapting to a new music era. Tschmuck (2012) highlights the opportunity to increase the music industry's creative potential as well as inspire new ways of forming connections and Forde (2022) suggests actions that the music business needs to take in order to adapt. Moreover, data presented by Viberate (2022) suggests digital monetization, data insights and fan-first approaches as the trends of 2022.

Earlier research has shown a clear need for services that can empower artists to reach listeners and promote music on their own terms in line with increasing artists' digital ownership (Sen, 2010). Daniels (2019) discusses the importance for artists in general to have ownership of the creative process and suggests that an increased feeling of empowerment means that success might no longer be equal to being signed to a label. This is especially clear seeing to the younger generation, who are no longer familiar with concepts such as the fact that managers used to aid the acceleration of careers. Instead, they have adapted to the digital age and are used to seeing music creators making it on their own, without a label.

### 1.1 Research Opportunity

Despite the importance of and need for transformational innovation within the music industry, little research has yet been done on this topic. From a design perspective, this translates to investigating approaches for understanding deeper needs (Sanders, 2002) and conceptualizing potential design solutions. This research therefore aims to understand some of these deeper needs, explore how theories of trust and emotions in design, innovation and social capital can be utilized to understand Aspiring

Artists as well as conceptualize a design that can potentially solve issues by providing better user experiences for these artists.

To successfully do so, key insights and design factors to consider when designing for transformational innovation in the context of music distribution will be presented and conceptualized through a design concept intended to transform and grow the online music distribution platform Record Union. Designs will be backed and motivated by thorough user research, concept evaluation and user testing. More specifically, with a research through design approach, this research is set out to answer the following problem statement:

- What design factors should be considered when designing for transformational innovation in the context of independent music distribution?

Additionally, to help facilitate and answer the problem statement, following research questions have been formulated:

- RQ1: What are the current challenging factors for Aspiring Artists?
- RQ2: What design solutions, or interactions, can be considered to improve social capital among Aspiring Artists?
- RQ3: What potential does such solution have for transformational innovation?

In addition, the thesis will provide an opportunity to answer if the use of participatory design methodology can be successful for identifying a problem space or system from a social theory point of view. In these both cases, the result and process of the thesis have the opportunity to contribute to a wider understanding of the connection between interaction design, social theory and the music industry as well as how design approaches can be used for exploring innovation.

## 1.2 Stakeholders

In the following section, the main stakeholders involved in the making of this thesis are introduced.

### 1.2.1 Record Union

The company of Record Union today provides a service through their platform, allowing independent artist to distribute their music to a vast collection of digital streaming services such as, iTunes, Spotify, YouTube and TikTok. Currently, Record Union is only distributing already created but not released music content, meaning that they are not able to deliver non-musical content, such as podcasts, nature sound, ASMR, audiobooks, stand up comedy or spoken word. Lately, they have made the decision to direct their service toward a specific user group defined as Aspiring Artist.

As a stakeholder, Record Union has provide input on strategic business decisions as well as provided access to internal research, aiding the contact with their users. Organizationally they have also provided a supervisor, who in turn will provide help with any blockers in terms of information, product access or user contacts.

### **1.2.2 Chalmers University of Technology**

As a stakeholder of this master thesis Chalmers University of Technology has provided a framework that the thesis has full filled in order to be accepted. In addition, an examiner and academic supervisor were provided for approving and grading the work and to support the academic learning's.

Both the Industrial Design Engineering and Interaction Design and Technologies programmes educates students in a variety of skills and approaches to bring an idea from needs and requirements through research and ideation into evaluation. Researchers have utilized these skills and more in particular the courses TDA493 Graphical Interfaces, MPP036 Cognitive Ergonomics, CIU197 Information Visualization, TDA497 Interaction design methodology, IMS015 Advanced User studies and co-creation, PPU181 Designing for experience, PPU091 Design theory and research and hence fulfilled the requirement of involve significant specialization.

## **1.3 Goals & Deliverables**

Through user experience design practices the research mainly focuses on the areas of trust and collaboration amongst players in the independent music system. The performed work has resulted in a thorough background touching upon subjects such as the music industry, independent digital music distribution and the chosen target group. Additionally, theories such as Social Capital Theory, Innovation Theory and relevant Design Theories are presented. Introducing a variety of methods, a detailed walk through of the research and design process, performed steps and application of the introduced methods are also to be found.

The results provided by this work are slit into two parts, the first one being connected to user insights, finding and requirements. The second one presents the final design concept, which have been tailored to fit the specific context of the problem statement and research scope. The end result of this project is a design concept and prototype based upon conducted user research, collected data and performed user evaluation, intended to meet the target groups needs. It is believed that the use of social theories as a framework for analyzing qualitative data as well as an ideation tool can be used as future inspiration for other projects when wanting to design for transformational innovation.

Lastly, a discussion of results, the performed work, future opportunities and ethical aspects relevant for this thesis are presented, along with a final conclusion to summarise the work.

### 1.4 Delimitations

This thesis has been limited to only focus on the target group Aspiring Artists. The group has been defined by Record Union as independent artists, with the goal of making music their full-time career. Furthermore, they are likely to invest dedication and resources to reach this goal. Insights, findings and requirements formulated are therefore based on experiences, challenges and the needs of Aspiring Artists. As a result, the design solution delivered in this work targets to support Aspiring Artists using the Record Union platform. Furthermore, it was explored how to, through the design solution, connect so called *multi-creators*, i.e people engaged in a variety of creative work fields such as creating music, graphic designs and art. Due to time limitations, the design concept was limited to only focus on connecting Record Union users through the creation of and collaboration on music.

Moreover, in order to match Record Unions present graphical design and visual image, currently used fonts, sizes, colors, layout and design components has been applied to the design concept. However, modifications has been made to some of the elements such as font, background and contrast between colors, along with placement and design of buttons. This in order to improve accessibility in terms of readability, usability, color contrast and navigation.

Throughout the study, user involving activities such as interviews, diary studies and user evaluations have been limited to an online setting. This mainly due to the fact that users of Record Union are located all over the world, but also because of the Corona pandemic and at that time current health regulations. The number of meetings with users were therefore sometime limited, or meetings got held back due to difference in time-zone, language barriers, access to desktop or internet access.

To conclude, shifting the product focus from simply distributing music to exploring new growth tracks, intended to increase the number of paying customers, users experiences of Record Union will most likely change in the future. It is therefore important for creative businesses to understand the requirements of successfully expanding existing platforms without compromising the present user experience or the perception of digital ownership. Without research-based guidelines or hands-on design suggestions the risk of unsuccessful expansion increases.

# 2

## Background

The music industry is ever-evolving and so are the means used for distributing and accessing music. Over the last century, the music industry has undergone dramatic changes, spanning from the introduction of commercial recordings in 1889, through the era of LPs and rock n' roll in the 1950s, to the most recent shift towards an age of streaming (Hull et al., 2011). The change is strongly impacted by the development of new digital technologies in the music creation system, such as digital sound recording formats and streaming platforms (Koh et al., 2019). Generally, this is referred to as the shift from the industrial age, when music was a production of products (e.g. LPs, CDs and analogue instruments), to the information age in which music is a production of content and the use of information (Hull et al., 2011).

Furthermore, This chapter presents relevant background information related to the thesis context, music distribution and target group. To begin with, the terms Digital Music Distribution and Independent Artists, as used in this thesis, have been defined.

### Digital Music Distribution

Music distribution can be defined as how music gets delivered to the listener. Traditionally this meant getting albums to a physical record store. However, today music distribution refers to the distribution of music in a digital format (e.g. mp3, wav and flac) to online streaming or content platforms such as iTunes, Spotify, Youtube and TikTok. This definition will hereafter be referred to as digital music distribution. The digital music distributor handles the music licensing, the distribution and pays streaming royalties. If you are a signed artist, your record label is most likely already collaborating with digital music distribution. However, if you are an unsigned artist you can use services such as [Distrokid](#), [Amuse](#), [Record Union](#) to independently distribute your music.

### Independent Artists

The term independent is defined in the [Oxford English Dictionary](#) as “not depending upon the authority of another, not in a position of subordination or subjection; not subject to external control or rule”. In short, an independent music maker or artist is someone that is not signed to any record label. Hereafter the term independent artist will be used to referred to both independent artists and music makers.

### 2.1 The Music Industry

Inevitably, the music industry has faced both a massive decrease in revenues from physical sales (Hull et al., 2011) and a major transformation in consumer demand when it comes to music distribution (Koh et al., 2019). To elaborate, during the end of the industrial age, the music industry predominantly distributed music as a bundle of songs (i.e., albums). Entering the information age, the demand for consuming music as individual songs (i.e., singles) has started to dominate (Amberg & Schröder, 2007). In terms of supply, distributing music in physical formats (e.g., LPs or CDs) was equal to significant marginal costs (Koh et al., 2019) as well as inventory depletion. As a result, the release of albums was more profitable than the release of a single song (Hull et al., 2011). Digital music distribution has made it possible to neglect these risks and created an opportunity to release and distribute unbundled music to platforms such as Spotify (Hull et al., 2011; Koh et al., 2019).

The global distribution market has historically, as well as today, been dominated by the four big majors Universal Music Group, Warner Music Group, Sony Entertainment and EMI Music Group (Hull et al., 2011). Traditionally, success in the music industry is based on having a record deal and gaining valuable personal relationships, as well as network connections. What differentiates independents from music majors is predominantly their complex distribution structure, as well as their distribution networks (Tschmuck, 2012).

However, limitations such as time and resources prevent the scalability of majors. Tschmuck (2012) raises the question of whether majors' structures might have become superfluous. Consequently, the quantity of artists served by the major's systems has a limit, leaving many artists behind. Hull et al. (2011) suggests that digital music distribution has the possibility of leveling the playing field for independent artists to some degree. Although Record Union (personal communication, January, 2021) agrees, they still see Aspiring Artists as being underserved in their pursuit of success.

### 2.2 Aspiring Artists as Target Group

This thesis targets the user group Aspiring Artists. The group has been defined by Record Union as independent artists, with the goal of making music their full-time career. Aspiring Artists are likely to invest dedication and resources to reach this goal. Conversely, professional artists are already making a living from their music (Record Union, personal communication, January, 2021). Noteworthy, not all independent artists are operating with the intent of making music profitable. Some artists solely use music as an artistic form of expression. However, this thesis will hereby use the term Aspiring Artists as established by Record Union.

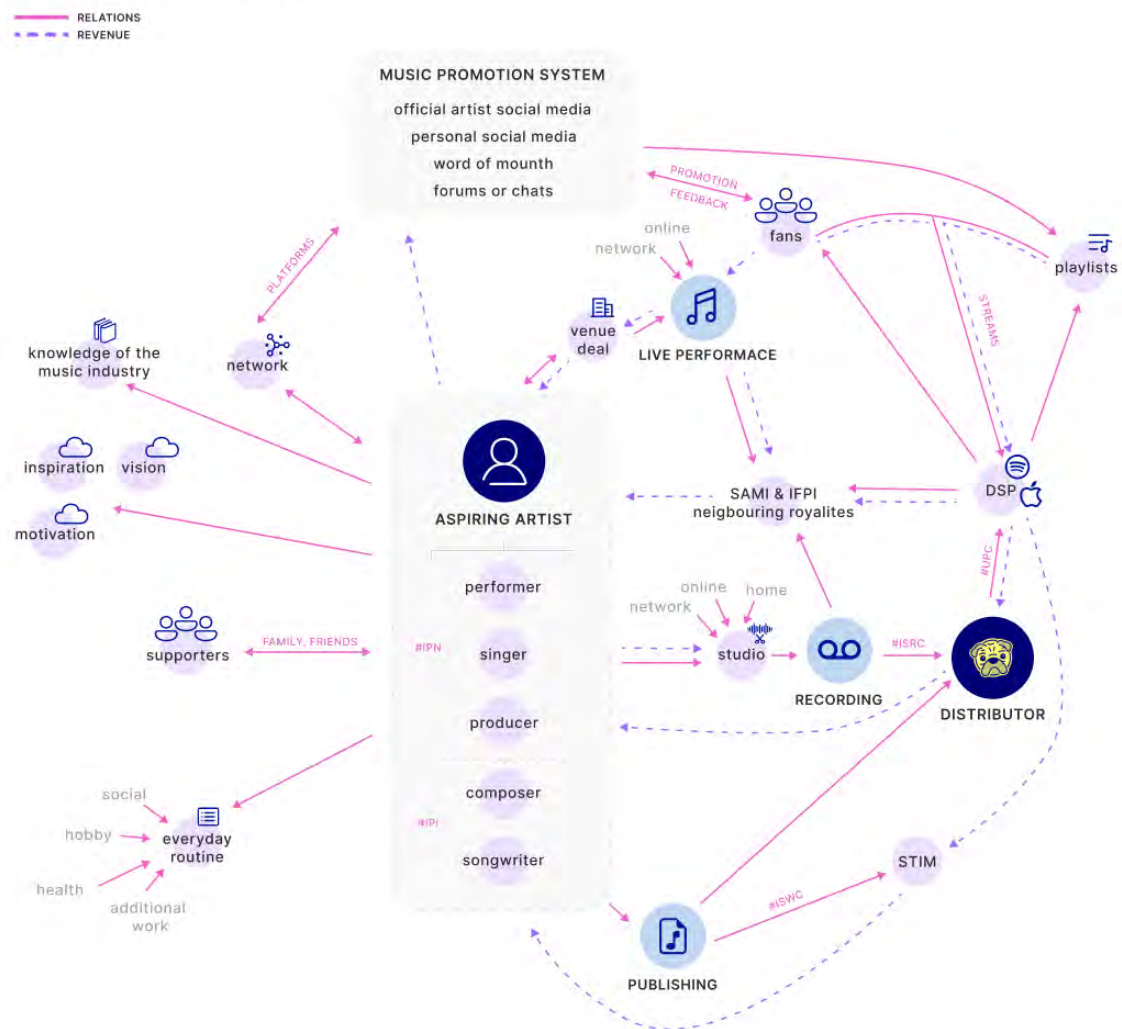
Aspiring Artists are driven by success and creative freedom, all while prioritizing their physical and mental health. Having full creative ownership and touching fans

emotionally is what artists value the most. Together with making music their main source of income, affection is how they consider being successful (Record Union, personal communication, January, 2021).

However, the road to success is often a struggle for Aspiring Artists. Through internal research, Record Union has identified several barriers and pain points. The subsection below presents such insights, but before such introduction, the system surrounding Aspiring Artists will be instituted and further substantiate the understanding of the target group.

## 2.2.1 System Context

### THE MUSIC INDUSTRY



**Figure 2.1:** The music industry system revolving around the Aspiring Artist.

Aspiring Artists are surrounded by a complex system, as illustrated by Figure 2.1. The figure is based on information provided by Record Union (personal communication, February 2021) and has to some extent been adopted from Hull et al. (2011). The system consists of several smaller subsystems, such as the Music Creation and Music Promotion systems. A simplified representation of these subsystems can be displayed in the figure.

Moreover, nodes in the visualised system have been given one out of two types of connections, relations or revenue. A solid stroke illustrates relations made within the system, whereas a dashed stroke illustrates revenue streams. Live Performance, Recording and Publishing nodes represent the three aspects of artists generating income through three various copyrights, connected to one of the nodes respectively.

### 2.2.2 Challenges for Aspiring Artists

Although it is suggested that being independent enables artists to have full creative freedom, internal research studies conducted by Record Union have shown that the main challenge for Aspiring Artists is making music their only source of income. In addition only 40% are satisfied with what independence brings to the table (Record Union, personal communication, January, 2021). To conclude, several pain points, barriers and challenges have been identified and will thematically be presented below.

#### **Marketing & Promotion**

Aspiring Artists' marketing and promotion strategies need to be tailored depending on factors such as artist profile, genre, country, fan base and relevant media. In the most common marketing and promotion toolbox, artists work with social media, PR activities, gig promotion, commercial collaborations and partnerships and industry-related initiatives. The goal of promotion is to reach the right audience and grow.

While some artists have a natural talent for promotional initiatives, others are struggling. However, excelling in marketing and promotion is a must to advance a career in music. Getting the music out on the market has never been easier, but being heard has become increasingly difficult as the number of songs released every day steadily increases. Today more than 60 000 new songs are released - every day.

#### **Financing & Funding**

Without sufficient financing and funding, artists struggle to realize the full potential of their work and risk ending up doing it all themselves. The result? Lower quality on the overall output while spending less time doing what they love - making music.

Finding a suitable partner is challenging. It's not obvious where to find them and how to reach out to them. A suitable partner would be someone that shares the creative vision, is willing to take a risk, trusts in the project and has extensive industry knowledge. As an upcoming and aspiring artist, there is often a lack of comprehensive streaming history and data, making it more challenging to find partners willing to invest in the artist's project.

### **Network & Collaboration**

Being independent means being your own boss. That sometimes also means being all alone with few people to reach out to for advice and guidance. Whether it might be about finding a session musician, promoter, PR manager or legal counsel, artists are dependent on a network to find relevant support and open doors to new opportunities. Collaborating with others is a must to succeed in the music industry. However, artists today lack a sense of belonging and community where seven out of ten wish there were better support and a stronger community for independent artists.

### **Trust**

As surveyed by Record Union, Aspiring Artists believe that having people they trust is crucial for success. But still, one out of three claims they have been fooled by someone in the industry. Today, much of an artist's success lies in the hands of global tech giants and major (record) corporations, companies with a track record of low levels of transparency. Companies such as Spotify and Apple Music have become the new gatekeepers of the industry, controlling algorithms, who get featured on playlists and ultimately the success of millions of artists. As much as artists are dependent on these platforms and services, there's an increasing demand for more transparency, fair terms and conditions from their partners.

### **Knowledge**

The music industry is a complex creature. There is a widespread lack of knowledge on how the industry and digital music distribution works, leaving artists with poor and uninformed career decisions. 95% of artists say that there are aspects of the music industry they wish they understood better and rate their music industry knowledge at 3 out of 5.

Being independent requires a wide spectrum of knowledge - from the actual music making, to marketing, financing, legal and more. And the width of it makes it almost impossible to be on top of all of it. What many artists strive for is to reduce time spent on administrative matters and free time for creative work. From doing it all by yourself to controlling it by yourself.

### **Mental Health**

As with many creative and artistic endeavors, there is no right or wrong and no given path to success. Lacking a safety net, steady financial income and a sense of belonging sometimes leaves artists with a bad aftertaste when considering going all-in on a career in music. Being independent is filled with mixed emotions - the feeling of total creative freedom, control and joy while also experiencing loneliness, stress, anxiety and even depression. In 2019 73% have experienced the above negative emotions, in relation to their music creation and only one out of five think that the music industry is working to create a sustainable climate with healthy artists.

## 2. Background

---

# 3

## Theory

In order to help motivate and aid decision-making throughout the thesis, relevant theories have served as a guide during both the user research and concept development phase. As included in this chapter, those theoretical fields are Innovation Theory, Social Capital Theory and Design Theory of various kinds. They have been included since they are believed to contribute to to the outcome of this thesis, strengthening its credibility and thereby also the overall outcome.

### 3.1 Innovation Theory

Conducting this research, innovation has been of high relevance, playing a key part. This since the main goal presented from the stakeholders was to grow the platform of Record Union outside of music distribution and the current market, transforming into new businesses areas. As new technologies rise, music distribution will have to innovate in order to follow the streams of change (Arbatani et al., 2018). The term innovation is however hard to define and its meaning varies from situation to situation.

Regardless, innovation is often related to changes within an organization or company that comes from implementing new ideas touching areas such as restructuring or saving costs, improved communication, new technology for production processes and new organizational structure. Innovation can be defined as intentional implementation of new ideas, processes, products or procedures, meant to significantly benefit the individual, the group, the organization and or the society in some way (Samad, 2012). Arbatani et al. (2018) talks about media innovation, e.g. developing new media platforms or creating new innovative digital business models, as a way of changing and innovating the current media environment. This can be done by looking at four different aspects and possible areas to innovate within this environment, namely the product, process, position and paradigmatic field.

According to Arbatani et al. (2018), product innovation relates to changes made in products and services currently offered by a media. Process innovation relates to changes made in the way products or services are created and received. Position innovation aims to create changes in how products and services are positioned within specific contexts, e.g. advertising, marketing, media, packaging and addressing new target groups. Paradigmatic innovation refers to changes in entire markets and business models, e.g. distributing music through physical CD sales drastically changing

into digital music streaming services can be considered to have been a paradigmatic innovation within the music industry. However, media innovated for social purposes does not necessarily fall into any of these aspects or imply developing new products or services. It could also mean using already existing products or services in new creative or social ways to promote social objectives, opening up the opportunity to meet new social needs, improving people's lives. Therefore, a fifth aspect, social innovation, should also be considered when analyzing or trying to reach media innovation (Arbatani et al., 2018).

#### 3.1.1 Levels of Innovation

When it comes to innovation, aspects or fields from which innovation can derive is not always enough to analyze in order to reach a competitive market position for a company. Due to intense competition on an international level, highly demanding markets and rapidly changing technologies and customer demands, innovation has become the topic on every company's table. In order to shape and create a competitive advantage, becoming a number one on the future market, organizations and companies need to level up their ability to offer products and services that meet the ever changing needs of customers faster than other competitors withing the same field (Samad, 2012).

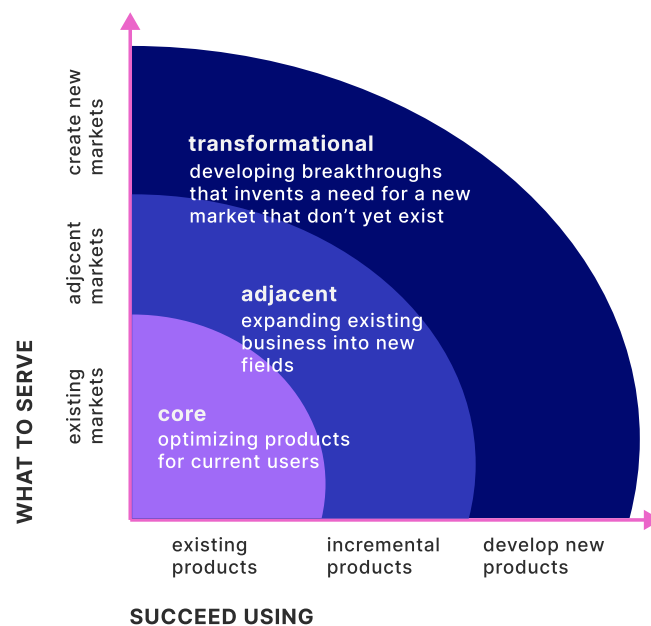
This kind of changes or transformations within a company is usually performed with the help of resources, one of them being innovation capability. Furthermore, research shows that, as a resource, innovation itself usually generates new, valuable and inimitable resources within a company, hard to apply and take after for any other competitor. Thus, creating a sustainable competitive advantage on the market which is highly important for organizational performance (Samad, 2012). Innovation therefore holds the capability to encourage organizations to change, collaborate, exchange knowledge and together envision a compelling new future (Denning, 2005).

How to reach this level of innovation is not always clear and straight forward. One way to better grasp innovation and its different levels of impact is to take to the Innovation Matrix visualized in Figure 3.1 and adopted from Nagji and Tuff (2012). The matrix divides innovation into tree sub-categories, namely core, adjacent and as before mentioned transformational. In the inner circle, core innovation initiatives, efforts to make incremental changes to already existing products and markets are placed. Examples of such core innovations are new packaging, reformulations and improved service convenience. Core innovations rely on resources that the company or organization already has access to in order to up the performance (Nagji & Tuff, 2012).

In the middle circle there are adjacent innovations, which draw benefits both from the fields or core and transformational innovations. They allow companies to use existing capabilities and resources, putting those to new uses in order to perform better. Adjacent innovations require fresh insight into customer needs, the demand for trends, current markets, competitors, new and trending technology and so on. In

short adjacent innovation means taking something the company already does well into a new space or market in order to perform better and pose a bigger threat to competitors (Nagji & Tuff, 2012).

Lastly, taking up the outer part of the matrix there are transformational innovation initiatives. These are the initiatives that get groundbreaking results, creating new offers, opportunities, business, markets and or customer needs for the company to enter, master and accord. To reach them, companies are required to investigate new fields and unfamiliar assets, create a deeper understanding of customers, users and their needs in order to develop new markets. Factor like these are reasons why, according to Nagji and Tuff (2012), innovations created on this level are usually labeled as breakthroughs, disruptive, or game changing.



**Figure 3.1:** Levels of innovation, adopted from (Nagji & Tuff, 2012)

To conclude, the availability of scientific and technical progress in the development of socio-economic systems, is the result of the accumulation and use of innovative potential, which can also be defined as the transformational potential. This potential represents a collection of resources, producer's goods and production factors, which are currently available, or which can be attracted in order to develop the system (Dudin et al., 2013). For this research it would translate to, innovating the media platform of Record Union analyzing the aspect of social innovation, trying to reach a transformational level in order to grow the platform outside of distribution.

## 3.2 Social Capital Theory

Aspiring Artists struggle with finding a network or a group in which they can exchange experiences and knowledge, learn from each other and build relationships. Therefore, it is believed that this thesis can benefit from incorporating Social Capital Theory and the approaches to trust and relationships amongst people that it advocates into the project and final design solution. In this section, Social Capital will therefore be both defined and described, along with connected to the music industry in order to make it more relevant for this thesis.

Social capital is a societal phenomenon. One way to describe it is as a resource and a variety of entities available to all, enriching society and all of its people (Qi, 2018). Social capital by itself in turn furnish resources such as connections, information and networks bringing forward a sense of identity and a feeling of belonging (Maric, 2014). Furthermore, social capital can on the contrary also be seen as a resource born from social networks, only accessible and beneficial for those who are members within this particular network. According to Qi (2018), Coleman, one of the first people to coin the term Social Capital, states that norms forming certain behaviour later becoming a part of peoples normal lives, social networks that provide knowledge, support and resources to their members and the social relationships in which every member of society participates are all elements in the formation of social capital.

In other words, the theory of social capital arises from relationships, ties and networks between and amongst people, companies and organisations. If thriving, social capital has the potential to provide people with new and improved economic opportunities born from relationship created within a network. Therefore, companies and organisations can benefit from putting effort into creating and maintaining relationships (Öztürk, 2018). Moreover, social capital can be seen as having four main traits, directly adopted from Maric (2014);

- Social capital does not wear out with use, but rather with disuse
- Social capital is difficult to observe and measure
- Social capital is hard to construct through external actions
- Governmental institutions strongly influence the type and the level of social capital available to individuals, in order to pursue long lasting development effects

Social capital as an entity is forged out of connections between individuals who are members of a social network and the norms of reciprocity, trustworthiness and cooperation upheld by that network, improving members capability to solve collective problems (Maric, 2014). From a technical and digital perspective, online communities or web based platforms facilitating social networks have the opportunity of fostering beneficial cooperation and collaboration amongst people, therefore holding the ability of generating social capital.

### 3.2.1 Bridging & Bonding Social Capital

Furthermore, the phenomenon of social capital can be divided into two different categories, namely bridging social capital and bonding social capital. According to Maric (2014) bonding social capital is social capital based on strong ties between individuals, families or relatives, close friends and as a result connects people of the same background, culture or with similar beliefs. Moreover, bridging social capital is social capital based on weak ties between individuals, superficial relationships, colleagues and as a result connects people of different backgrounds, cultures or beliefs.

Another definition is made by Claridge (2018), who states that the difference between bonding and bridging social capital corresponds to the nature of relationships within a social group or community. Bonding social capital is created *within* a group or community whereas bridging social capital is created *between* social groups, social classes, religions, cultures or other significant sociodemographic or socioeconomic aspects. Claridge (2004) describes bonding social capital as intra, among equals who live in the same or adjacent communities and exclusive with thick trust. Bridging social capital is therefore inter, amongst opposites extending to individuals or organizations that are more distant and inclusive but with thin trust.

Working with and investigating social capital it is however important to bare in mind that neither bonding nor bridging social capital are exclusively present in a social context. Groups or communities from a similar background are not similar in every aspect and therefore also may provide bridging links across generations, sexes, education and so on. Hence, in groups from different ethnic backgrounds people may find individuals of the same age, sex, educational background or interests that links them in a bonding way (Claridge, 2018). It is unclear to what extent technology has the capacity to supplement or restore "real" physical social contacts. Online contacts do bring together people who share the same beliefs or interests, to some extent. The bonding social capital of a small community enables those of different backgrounds and beliefs to exchange ideas, which may in turn lead to a bridging social capital. However, social capital created online is more often of a bonding than of a bridging nature and therefore could be used as a mean of inclusion. Nevertheless, additional research in this field is in need in order to establish how to use social networking online in a positive manner (Maric, 2014).

### 3.2.2 Trust

For a community to thrive and be successful, membership should be influenced by trust. Trust is generated from having repeatedly positive experiences. Trust and social capital are tightly connected and dependent on each other. One thrives in the presence of the other; trusting relationships generate social capital and social capital generates more trusting relationships. Therefore, trust is a necessary key component of healthy social capital (Maric, 2014). Bridging social capital is usually more closely related to thin trust, as opposed to bonding social capital which is more connected to thick trust (Claridge, 2018).

In a network where members are exchanging information, giving advice and sharing knowledge with each other, the importance of trustworthiness is hard to ignore. Trust enables better cooperation and is a main source for maintaining social order. As trust brings forward healthy relationships, trust also reduces complexity within networks. As modern networks grow and become more complex, decision making becomes more difficult and consequences more uncertain, increasing the members need for trust (Maric, 2014).

#### **3.2.3 Social Capital & the Music Industry**

To connect Social Capital Theory to the music industry, being a part of a network gives musicians a chance to foster and grow their own social capital. Being signed to a label provides the artist with the first seed of social capital. Therefore, gaining social capital as an independent artist becomes much more challenging yet crucial in order to succeed since networking skills are not enough in the professional music world. Once artists have established social capital and social credits, i.e. media attention, public appearances, cultural popularity and a reputation, the entertainment industry tend to accept their work easier compared to products made by amateurs or independent artists.

To conclude, independent artists standing without a network supporting them and generating social capital will have trouble competing with more established and signed artists. Consequently, they might find it harder to enter the music world without the help coming from collaborating with other artist, who already have social credits in the cultural world and therefore can reach a broader audience (Öztürk, 2018).

The study performed by Öztürk (2018) additionally states that without financial capital and support, the building of social capital for artists is hindered. Networks typically provide artists with an opportunity for promotion, marketing and work, ensuring better conditions for both financial and social capital acquisition. However, in order to get access to this kind of network, artists traditionally need to be economically funded by a label, which further supports the correlation between financial and social capital in the music industry.

Within the music industry, the network created between artist and audience is of high value. According to Öztürk (2018) audience and fans are a good source of social capital for artists. Loyal fans can carry musicians and provide them with job opportunities and more followers. If an artist is not supported by popular media or a major label, surviving in the mainstream entertainment world becomes tough. As a result, relationships between fans and independent artists become crucial as they can be the reason for success or not (Öztürk, 2018).

## 3.3 Design Theory

When working with user experience and interaction design, it is preferable to motivate decisions and choices. To achieve this design theories can be applied when conducting research and creating products. The theories presented below were used to aid this thesis in delivering a design solution that serves and meets user needs and thereby helping to solve problems experienced by aspiring artists today.

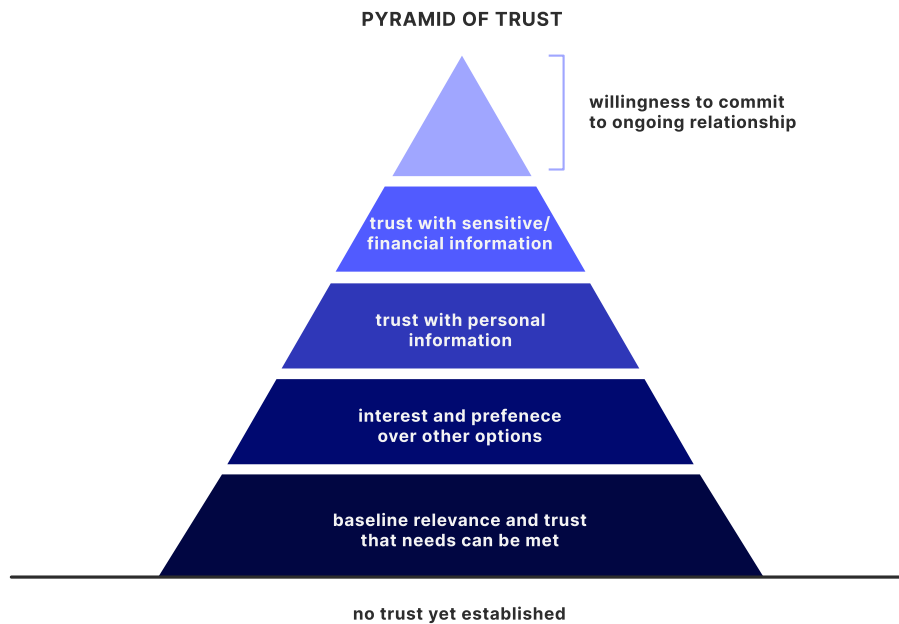
### 3.3.1 Trustworthy Design

When working with both physical and digital product development, understanding how to establish trust between product and user should always be of priority. Visiting a new website for the first time could be resembled with interacting with a complete stranger. Trust isn't something that can be bought or acquired right away, but something that grows, evolves and builds over time allowing new demands to be made in a relationship (Serwin, 2016). Trust is a long-term entity that builds slowly over time with interactions carried out as people use a site, get satisfactory outcomes and don't experience feelings of being let down or cheated on by the site. Real trust is therefore determined by customers experiences over an extended set of encounters. It is hard to gain and easy to lose, a single violation of trust can destroy years of building a trustworthy relationship (Nielsen, 1999).

According to Serwin (2016) a relationship grows and moves through various stages or levels of commitment, each dependent and built on top of the previous ones. Should a site try to fast forward and skip a few levels users most often get hesitant and quickly leaves the way to presumptuous site. Therefore it is not possible to skip steps when it comes to trust, since higher levels of commitment cannot be attained before the lower ones have been so.

Each level of trust or commitment, comes with a new set of needs. These needs should be met properly in order for users to feel satisfied and experience the trust in a website needed to be willing to proceed to the next level of commitment. In other words, that they feel enough trust to give away more information about themselves. As a result, new needs will have to be met by the website to continue nurturing the relationship. The more information or effort a site asks for, the more trust and comfort the user must have before being willing to give it away (Serwin, 2016).

In order to communicate the levels of trust present in site-user or product-user interactions, an adopted illustration of the Trust Pyramid (Serwin, 2016) was created, see Figure 3.2. Before a relationship between the user and the site has been initiated, the users have no trust for the product what so ever and are therefore placed below the levels of trust beneath the pyramid. The levels of commitment the start from the very first interactions made. Site-user relationships progress through five levels of commitment, starting from the bottom and moving up towards the top of the pyramid. Reaching a higher level requires all lower levels to be satisfied.



**Figure 3.2:** Pyramid of Trust adopted from Nielsen Norman Group (Serwin, 2016)

In 1999 Jakob Nielsen listed four ways to communicate trustworthiness on a website; through design quality, up-front disclosure, comprehensive and current content and connection to the rest of the web. (Nielsen, 1999). Speaking of design quality for a web page, it is important to strive towards a professional appearance. This could be achieved by including a clear navigation structure, conveying respect and an implied promise of satisfactory service. Typos or difficult navigation communicate disregard and will make it harder for users to build trust.

Secondly, up-front disclosure when it comes to customer-site relationship is to be upheld at all times. For example, transparent sharing of information such as revealing shipping charges immediately is always more beneficial than hiding it to the very end of the payment process. Withholding information like this will in most cases result in users leaving the site and losing trust, rather than blindly accepting the hidden extra cost.

Thirdly, comprehensive and correct content and product selection and display should feel solid and follow a set pattern. A site should display its products or offer in such a way that it is clear how they differ and what paying for it would result in. Lastly, making users feel connected to the rest of the Web providing them with links in and out of the web-site is a good way of accruing trust. Sharing information about other sites is usually a sign of confidence, as third-party sites are often deemed much more credible (Nielsen, 1999).

It is however always important to see beyond design guidelines and look into why they are of importance, rather than blindly applying them without any considera-

tions. Understanding why people care about design quality, upfront disclosure of information, comprehensive content and a connection to the rest of the web, will make adapting to new user expectations and new web-design styles much easier (Harley, 2016).

### 3.3.2 Emotions in Design

According to Desmet (2007), emotions emerge from encounters with individuals or events that are expected to have either a positive or negative effect on a persons concerns or apprehension. Meaning, the persons goals, dreams, values, motives, health or other similar areas that have a life impact. When discussing goals, they are often defined as a thing or outcome that a person, or desires, to happen in the future. Seeing to the human-product relationship, the need for a product is most often connected to the meet of a goal that the user possesses, whether this goal is met directly or indirectly by interacting with the product. We therefore own, rent, use, buy or loan products whit the hope of them aiding us to reach goals and to achieve a purpose or meet a need (Desmet, 2007).

When it comes to the relations that are connected to human-product interactions, along with the emotions that arise with them, Patrick Jordan advocated for a pleasure-based approach to what he called human factors, in which pleasure with products is defined as the emotional, hedonic and practical benefits which are associated with products and their use. In his framework, Jordan specifically points out four types of pleasure that may be the underlying factor why people seek to use products, namely; physical, social, psychological and ideological pleasure (Desmet, 2007).

Looking more closely into the category of social pleasure, Desmet (2007) explains it as the enjoyment which derives from having relationships with others. This type of pleasure becomes relevant when using products that have the goal of facilitating social interactions amongst people, whether online or in a physical setting. Examples of such products could be something that attracts comments like a nice watch, or something that acts as a source for social gatherings.

Desmet (2007) continues to provide a second framework for affect and emotions when using products, this time established by Donald Norman. It points out three different types of affect. Overall, affect is considered as the various information processing levels called the reactive level, the routine level and the reflective level. When developing affect and emotions for a product, each processing level is thought to be involved and connected to a specific type of affect that relates to three different design focus namely visceral, behavioural and reflective. Visceral design focuses on instant automatic behavioral and emotional reactions. These reactions are driven by perception and triggered through stimuli connected to appearance and physical features. Looking deeper into the behavioral design focus, affect or emotion in this field is said to be expectation-based and therefore corresponding to what Norman calls ‘behavioural design’. This design focus is connected to the pleasure and effec-

tiveness of use when interacting with a product. Lastly, reflective design is driven by cognitive thoughts, connecting products to the user's self-image, memories, judgment, cultural context and consciousness on an intellectual level.

To conclude, the framework of Jordan focuses on different types of concerns and the framework of Norman focuses on different types of stimuli. Even though the frameworks were first thought to focus on physical product design, they could and should be considered even when working with affect and emotions in digital design (Desmet, 2007).

#### **3.3.3 Digital Ownership**

Dealing with independent artists distributing and sharing their work online, it is of highest importance to try and understand what factors makes an artist feel ownership over a digital asset, like a song. Wang et al. (2006) defines Digital Ownership within the field of Human-Computer Interaction as the psychological ownership of digital entities. In other words, a state where an individual feels that a digital object or interface is theirs (Wang et al., 2006). In the context of music creation, this would refer to the ownership of music digitally created or distributed. In particular, completed audio files, compositions built using digital audio workspaces and other digital entities connected to music creation.

Moreover, people treat objects they feel ownership of differently than other objects. Increased emotions and changed behaviors connected to enhanced responsibility and increased value can be seen in correlation with the feeling of ownership. Motives for initiating feelings of ownership can be divided into three main categories; perceptive (social-cognitive), instrumental (efficiency and control) and symbolic (self-identity). All three categories should be considered when designing for digital ownership (Wang et al., 2006).

# 4

## Methodology

The methodology presented in this chapter represents the selection of methods used throughout the entire design project and are structured into four main sections, Design Approaches, User Research Methods, Ideation and Design Methods and Evaluation Methods. The first section describes approaches used throughout the entire project and the remaining three represent methods used in specific phases of the project. The methods are ordered by use in the different design phases based on an adaption of the Double Diamond. However, as the project follows an iterative process, the methods may not be presented in chronological order.

### 4.1 Design Approaches

The design approaches Research Through Design, Double Diamond and Participatory Design have been used to establish the core process of this thesis and have influenced the selection of methods throughout the entire project. The thesis has widely adopted a Research Through Design approach by making use of the design process to understand situations and communicating results through design artifacts. The process of this thesis is based on the divergent and convergent phases of the Double Diamond, however, adaptations have been made to better suit the project at hand. Lastly, Participatory Design has served as a guide for the selection of methods, making sure the thesis reaches a deeper understanding of the problem at hand.

#### 4.1.1 Research Through Design

Research through Design (RtD) focuses on building on other design researchers' results, suggesting alternative solutions as well as creating new ones. RtD has the intention of improving design practices and creating positive societal change (Zimmerman et al., 2010). By using the strengths of design processes when framing and interpreting situations, the result of RtD can be communicated through the creation artifacts and systems. This result is knowledge with the goal of improving the state of the world through modifying the current state instead of confirming or rejecting a hypothesis (Gaver, 2012).

In this thesis RtD is used as the core approach to reach, present and communicate results. By utilizing design processes this study gains a deeper understanding of the targeted context as well as present insights through a contextual interface design.

### 4.1.2 Double Diamond

The iterative process of Double Diamond is centralized around divergent and convergent stages. A divergent stage refers to the aim of opening up and broadening, while a convergent stage refers to the aim of defining and narrowing down. A Double Diamond can be separated into two phases, each consisting of one divergent and one convergent stage. The first phase, the problem space, consists of the stages discover (divergent) and define (convergent). It is during this phase the designer discover information to create an understanding of the problem and use these insights to define the problem. The second phase, the solution space, consists of the stages develop (divergent) and deliver (convergent). It is during this phase the designer develop possible solutions to the defined problem and further deliver these solutions to users so they can be tested and analysed (Council, 2019).

The process used for this thesis is based on the Double Diamond framework, making use of divergent and convergent phases all throughout the project. However, adaptations have been made in order to better suit the project at hand and a third diamond has been added to the initiating part of the project, as further elaborated in Chapter 5.

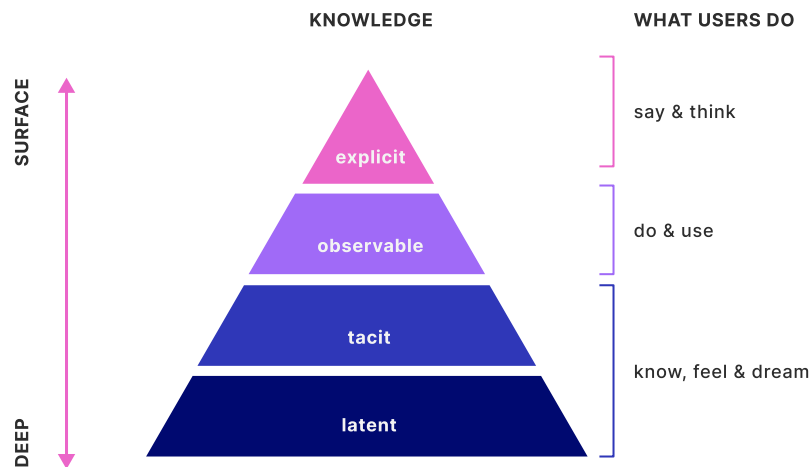
### 4.1.3 Participatory Design

Participatory design can be defined as a mindset or attitude towards people rather than as a set of methodologies. According to Sanders (2002) given relevant and applicable tools to express themselves, all people can be creative as well as contribute to the design process. This belief is the foundation on which participatory design is built upon (Sanders, 2002). More recent use and adaptations of participatory design can be seen through Lopez et al. (2018) work of developing the CreativeVoice method and through Razak et al. (2021) utilization of the approach when researching the improvement of interpretability of fuzzy logic systems. Going toward this thesis will refer to the definition given by Sanders (2002) when referring to participatory design.

By accessing people's past, current and potential experiences, one can make user experience the main source of both inspiration and ideation for a design. However, as Sanders (2002) stretches, accessing these experiences is the challenge. In interviews, researchers can learn from people's explicit knowledge (i.e. what they express in words and what they want us to hear). Through observations, one can learn what people do and use. However, it is not until researchers are provided with tacit knowledge (i.e. knowledge that is more difficult to express worldly) and starts to discover what people think and feel, that they can understand the perception of experiences as well as empathize with them, see Figure 4.1.

Tacit knowledge can be discovered using methods where users create something that expresses their feelings, thoughts and dreams. Accessing and appreciating dreams can aid to imply how users' futures can change for the better and reveal latent needs, i.e. needs not recognizable until the future. It is further suggested that only these deepest levels are accessed, researchers have the ability to really empathize with

users (Sanders, 2002).



**Figure 4.1:** Levels of knowledge, adopted from (Sanders, 2002)

To conclude, exploring what people say, what they do and what they make, simultaneously creates a deeper understanding and empathy for user experiences. Sanders (2002) suggests letting users tell a story through the creation of an artifact and then re-tell the story through words as an approach effective approach. Making artifacts like collages or diaries is an effective approach to discovering emotions and unspoken feelings. Creating artifacts such as mappings of functionalities, systems of relations or process flowcharts is an effective approach to discover intuitive connections between system components. Methods like this is referred to as generative methods and balance visuals and verbal literacy (Sanders, 2002).

## 4.2 User Research Methods

Through the collection and analysis of data surrounding the problem area, results can be utilized to motivate design choices further on in the project. (Tidwell et al., 2020). In this thesis, a variety of methods for both collecting and analyzing data are used to understand and empathize with the targeted user group and are presented in this section.

First, methods used for collecting data, such as Online surveys, Desk research, Interviews and Diary study will be presented. In this thesis, the first two were used to establish a research group and to collect previous research done by Record Union. The latter two were used to collect data from aspiring artists.

Second, generative methods used to aid a deeper understanding of aspiring artists, such as Sensitizing and Geneva Emotion Wheel, will be presented. The first is to aid users' reflection before an interview and the second is to aid the communication

around emotions in the diary study. Lastly, methods used for data analysis, such as KJ-analysis, Experience mapping and Heat map matrix, will be introduced.

### 4.2.1 Online Survey

Surveys distributed online are a well-suited way to get answers to specific questions from a large group of people. When creating a survey, the questions should be well defined and clearly formulated. This is to help the users answer them as well as generate valuable results and make collected data easier to efficiently analyse. The questions can either be close-ended which lets the person answering select from a limited range of options or they can be open-ended with a free-range response. Open-ended answers often provide richer, personal responses resulting in more qualitative data but have the drawback of making the results more difficult to analyze while close-ended answers are good for gathering statistics and more quantitative data (Sharp et al., 2019).

### 4.2.2 Desk Research

A desk research is executed by collecting data from existing resources and is therefore often considered to be a low-cost method compared to field research. It can be divided into two types; internal and external desk research, where the difference lies in whether the data is being gathered from within the organization or from other external sources. Internal desk research is typically a common starting point for a project, later moving on to external desk research and other research techniques in order to collect a broader and more accurate set of data (Juneja, 2001).

In this thesis, both internal and external desk research has been performed. The internal researched focused on getting to know the company, their view on potential growth possibilities and on previously performed studies and work. External research was performed in order to understand the market, gain insights and learn about potential new areas to explore and use in order to reach transformational innovation.

### 4.2.3 Interview

Interviews are a method that provides an opportunity to investigate and gather data regarding other people's experiences, opinions and attitudes toward a product or service. The method can be used during several stages and phases of the process and is well suited for creating a good understanding of the targeted system or user group and their situations (Wikberg Nilsson et al., 2015). Interviews can be performed in a structured, semi-structured, or unstructured way. Structured interviews are carried out using predefined questions. Semi-structured interviews allow some room for improvisation and unstructured interviews are performed without any prepared questions at all (Wilson, 2014). Notably, researchers should strive to be unbiased when interviewing to avoid affecting the interviewee's answers and opinions (Blomberg, 1993).

#### 4.2.4 Sensitizing

Sensitizing prepares participants for upcoming sessions or workshops. Participants are prior to this planned session via sensitizing triggered or motivated in different ways to access, reflect, express, question and explore different aspects of their personal or professional lives and experiences, in their own time and environment. Sensitizing is usually done by letting participants carry out a number of small exercises or activities at home, designed as a food of thought about past and present experiences connected to a certain context or system. This process of sensitizing increases the expected quality and quantity of contributions that participants will later make in following sessions. However, the quality of the contributions in these sessions heavily depends on the depth and length of sensitizing. Sensitization is therefore usually carried out over a longer period of time, typically one or more weeks (Sleeswijk Visser et al., 2005).

#### 4.2.5 Diary Study

Diary study, or journaling, is a powerful tool to use when wanting to investigate and understand peoples feelings, thoughts and behaviours in their every-day lives. Traditionally, diary studies were conducted using pen and paper. However, technology opens up for new possibilities and creative ways of using this method, such as digital creative work spaces, photos, video and audio. Content can both ways easily be shared via email or social media and be uploaded on provided sites (Hanington & Martin, 2012).

Moreover, Diary Studies are a useful tools when performing exploratory research, as it helps the designer to form a deeper understanding of the user group. To help the participants conducting the diary study, the format of the journal should provide some sort of guidance or example with a brief question or prompt, along with appropriate space for encouraging wanted length of text or media entry. The format of the journal can as mentioned be quite creative, inviting participants to practice other forms of recording outside of plain text, such as sketches, drawings, photographs, visuals that can be circled or checked or the use of provided stickers etc. (Hanington & Martin, 2012).

#### 4.2.6 Geneva Emotion Wheel

In order to rate, estimate and specify what role and part different emotions play in artists every day lives when for example making music, interacting with Record Union, or promoting their songs, a modified version of the Geneva Emotion Wheel model was used (Sacharin et al., 2012). The wheel model used in this thesis combined a more traditional emotion wheel consisting of 16 emotions with varying intensity (Sacharin et al., 2012) with a modern approach where emojis and more emotional terms have been added in order to increase ease of use and understanding.

The created wheel model consists of 8 emotional breaches represented by a color. Each branch has 3 levels of intensity containing its own emotional term, color sat-

uration depending on the intensity of the emotion and a corresponding emoji. In addition to that, 8 outer and linking emotional terms have been placed between the branches to allow for a more nuanced interpretation of emotions. The illustration was inspired both by the wheel used by Sacharin et al. (2012) and by MARCoTechnologies (n.d.), using a wheel model established by psychologist Robert Plutchik.

### 4.2.7 KJ-analysis

The KJ-analysis method which originated from Japan is a very useful method for analyzing collected data and extracting core information from large amounts of data. It is usually performed using sticky notes where one item of data is put on each sticky note. Notes are then sorted by participants, starting by doing so individually in silence. When all notes are sorted into bigger groups the different groups of data get named accordingly. Finally, everybody participating votes on the group they feel is the most important. If deemed necessary, all groups can be put in a hierarchy, ranked after their importance (Spool, 2004).

### 4.2.8 Experience Mapping

Experience mapping is a method used to build empathy for the user's feelings and situation within the research team or as a stakeholder. It is performed by choosing a scenario and starting from the first action, from there you list each action necessary to achieve the goal of the chosen scenario. On each step, you highlight needs and pain points (GV, 2019).

### 4.2.9 Heat Map Matrix

The Heat Map consists of a rectangular tiling of a data matrix. Within a relatively compact display area, it facilitates inspection of row and column. By applying the method, large amount of data matrices can be displayed effectively (Wilkinson & Friendly, 2009). Individual values are represented by a color and connected to a subject (ThinkDesign, n.d.).

Applying the color-coding technique makes the matrix easier to understand, since colors are easier to distinguish and interpret than raw numbers, providing a more generalized view of numeric values. The method can be used to represent many things, some being population density, tracking website traffic, average temperatures (ThinkDesign, n.d.).

## 4.3 Ideation & Design Methods

In this section, ideation and design methods used with the aim of broadening and diversifying the solutions space are presented and described. Initially, methods used for divergent ideation, such as Brainstorming, Braindrawing and Sketching, are introduced. In this thesis, such methods were used to quickly create a quantity of possible solutions. Furthermore, methods used to incorporate new perspectives,

such as Workshops and Cultural Probes, are presented. The use of these methods was influenced by the theory of participatory design and served to reach a higher level of innovation.

Lastly, the section arrives at the method of prototyping. In this thesis, prototyping is used throughout the ideation phase to create various levels of visualizations that were used for both communication and understanding of each concept.

### **4.3.1 Brainstorming**

Brainstorming is a method where the results are very dependent on performance and execution. If done right, it can generate a great amount of ideas per session and create feelings of motivation and optimism within the research team. It can also produce a more creative environment overall, outside the actual brainstorming session. To achieve a valuable brainstorm it's important to involve all the participants and let everybody contribute in some way. If only the boss talks or if there is too much focus on critiquing and debating ideas it limits the creative capabilities of the session. Most often everybody participating can contribute in some way and you don't have to be an expert for your opinion to be valuable (Kelly, 2000).

### **4.3.2 Braindrawing**

Braindrawing is a design method that is closely related to brainstorming with the difference that the participants visualize the ideation steps by creating and then together modifying rough sketches to generate ideas or solve design problems in a fast-paced manner. For example, braindrawing can be used to explore layouts or create ideas for icons for the interface. A useful method during the early stages of the concept development that complements group brainstorming sessions well. A positive with this method is that each participant gets to work on every idea, avoiding that one idea "belongs" to a certain individual (Wilson, 2013).

### **4.3.3 6-3-5 Method**

6-3-5 is a variation of the brainwriting method and is used to rapidly generate and exchange ideas using sketches rather than using verbal communication, as in brainstorming. In the original 6-3-5 approach, six participants are given five minutes to write down three ideas related to a specific topic of ideation. Participants then pass the sketches around them for a new iteration. This step is repeated six times until all participants have written down three ideas on each paper. This method is very useful for quickly generating a big amount of ideas, as one session only takes 30 minutes, optimally generating 90 ideas (Wilson, 2013).

### **4.3.4 Sketching**

Sketching is the creation of quick drawings focusing on exploring new ideas, formats and features for a concept. It can be seen as a visual medium used to explore different designs and functionalities and is a useful tool for visualising and communicating

ideas during various ideation methods and discussions. The important aspect of sketching is not the result but the process of it. Iterations of this method can create an overview of the design process that conveys the evolution of a concept in a clear and traceable way (Hartson & Pyla, 2012).

### 4.3.5 Workshop

Workshops are a creative way to meet and gather different people in order to create, develop and evaluate different ideas or concepts. By using different kinds of workshops, the participants are allowed to express and use their creative sides and knowledge within a specific field (Wikberg Nilsson et al., 2015).

### 4.3.6 Cultural Probes

Cultural Probes are a provocative tool with the aim to inspire new perspectives connected to the consideration of various contexts and circumstances. Cultural probes consist of artifacts designed and composed specifically for this aim. The artifacts are often intentionally open-ended and flexible and they serve as initiators of a discussion regarding possible design solutions. Postcards, cameras and maps are examples of cultural probes previously used. When done well, cultural probes have the potential to create further engagement among participants as well as inspire innovative designs (Hanington & Martin, 2012).

### 4.3.7 Prototyping

Prototyping Methods have been used in order to generate, develop and explore different ideas emerging throughout the project. By prototyping on different levels of fidelity, the chance to test, evaluate and visualize concepts is improved, both with stakeholders and users. It also brings forward the opportunity to evaluate different aspects of the concept at various stages in order to discover user needs and experiences from interacting with the thought of a future product. Prototypes have been categorized in three levels of fidelity, ranging from low to high (Hanington & Martin, 2019) and are described in more detail below. In this thesis, prototypes have been created physically using pen and paper but foremost using the digital prototyping tool Figma in order to produce both wireframes of the design along with clickable prototypes. Low and mid fidelity prototypes will be presented in Chapter 5 and the final design concept in the form of pictures of a high fidelity prototype will be presented in Chapter 7.

#### **Low-fidelity**

This kind of prototype is usually made in the form of quick sketches or simple storyboards. Low-fidelity prototypes are a good fit for early stage concept testing, when specific details have not yet been established and there is still room for improvement and change. By keeping the prototype on a lower level, the threshold and reluctance to abandon an idea that does not show sufficient potential is not that high (Hanington & Martin, 2019). Furthermore, low-fi prototypes are a good food of thought during the ideation stage where there is freedom to explore and generate

new ideas and potential solutions based on previous sketches and thoughts (Dam & Siang, 2019). However, as a result of the low level, users might find it hard to take the prototype seriously. Thus, pitching the idea and being clear of its purpose should be of high priority.

### **Medium-fidelity**

A prototype at this level still has limited functionality, but clickable features and functionalities has been established, presenting intended interactions and navigation possibilities thought to be a part of the final concept. Prototypes at a medium-fidelity level can usually provide the user with a better overview and understanding of what the final solution might look and feel like in the end. They're great for refining solutions whilst still being cheap enough to provide room for complete changes in direction after testing (Dam & Siang, 2019).

### **High-fidelity**

Compared to prototypes at lower level, high-fidelity prototypes comes with much more details, therefore having a much closer resemblance in look and feel to the finished product than other prototypes (Hanington & Martin, 2019). Hi-fi prototypes are created as a mean to help evaluate, refine and decide the final design decisions before implementations of the concept goes into action. Despite demanding more time to produce, prototypes at this level are still less expensive and faster to create and test than coding or producing the final product itself (Hartson & Pyla, 2012). They are also a great tool to catch potential last minute errors or missteps in need of correction before going into production.

## **4.4 Evaluation Methods**

Evaluation methods are used as a means for evaluating both findings, ideas and concepts in various stages. The result of the methods presented should serve as a guide on how to proceed with the project. In this section both Formative and Summative Evaluations are presented, but due to the conceptual result of this thesis, methods presented and used primarily target the first type.

The Formative evaluation methods presented and used in this thesis are done so with the aim of either evaluating concepts internally or externally. Internal evaluation, such as Concept Evaluation Matrix, seeks to provide measurable data on the level of innovation for each concept. On the other hand methods such as Evaluation Research, Design Critiques and Usability testing aims to provide qualitative insights of the concepts from external users and stakeholders.

### **4.4.1 Formative Evaluation**

Formative evaluations occur throughout an iterative process and provide information to gradually improve an interface. The main focus is to determine the performance of a specific design, which aspects work well and why. In terms of digital interfaces formative evaluations involve iterative prototyping and user testing (Jocye, 2019).

### 4.4.2 Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluations can occur after a product is live in production. The aim is to evaluate the performance, often compared to a benchmark or prior version. The result of a summative evaluation is an assessment of the holistic experience and overall usability of a live product and its system. One example of a summative evaluation is A/B testing (Jocye, 2019).

### 4.4.3 Concept Evaluation Matrix

A concept evaluation matrix is used to evaluate and prioritize concepts based on predetermined criteria. In turn, each criterion is given a weighted numeric value based on its priority. Furthermore, each concept is then weighted towards the estimated fulfillment of each criterion. The total sum of each concept can then be compared with other concepts (Wikberg Nilsson et al., 2015).

### 4.4.4 Evaluation Research

Evaluative research is used during the phase of design development and aims to test and evaluate a product or interface with potential users. The method aims to determine whether a product or interface is useful, usable and desirable from a user perspective. Compared with performance-focused evaluation, Evaluative research is more comprehensive and empathizes to collect more emotional resonance and aesthetic responses from users. The method can be performed using both formal and informal structures, e.g. users can be informally invited to a display of prototypes and asked to share spontaneous feedback (Hanington & Martin, 2012).

### 4.4.5 Design Critique

Design Critiques are defined as the activity of analyze and give feedback on whether a design meets its objectives. Most often it is manifested as a group conversation, bring designers as well as other stakeholder together. Design critiques can be conducted with the purpose of improving a particular design or evaluate a design based on a predetermined framework, such as usability heuristics (Gibbons, 2016).

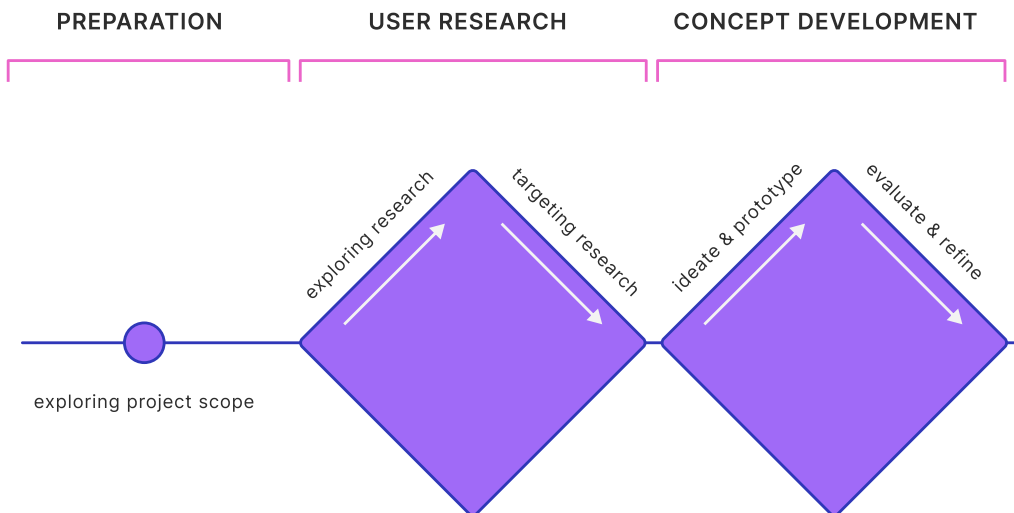
### 4.4.6 Usability Testing

Usability testing is used to gain empirical evidence about a product's or interface's performance. Researchers often seek to identify troublesome parts of an interface to develop and improve the user experience. During a usability test, users are asked to perform predetermined tasks, which are then observed by researchers. Tasks given during usability testing should be concrete and could be contextualized through scenarios. As an evaluation method Usability Testing can be used on both high-fidelity prototypes prior to launch and live products (Hanington & Martin, 2012).

# 5

## Process and Execution

In this chapter, a thorough walk-through of the process, important milestones and applied methods that helped generate results and brought the project forward are described. A visual representation of the overall thesis process model is displayed below in Figure 5.1. The proceedings of this thesis have adopted the Double Diamond framework. Although, prior to the Double Diamond a preparation phase was added, as illustrated below. This phase was added to better fit the needs of the project, more specifically allowing desk research to take place with the aim of defining the problem space explored in this thesis.



**Figure 5.1:** The process of this thesis, consisting of an opening preparation phase followed by a Double Diamond.

Initiating the thesis, the preparation phase explored previous research, including internal studies retrieved from Record Union. Additionally, the main objective of the preparation phase was to perform a literature study and researchers intended to learn about theories, frameworks and studies related to the context of this thesis. The result of such can be seen in Chapter 3. The first diamond, User Research,

relied on qualitative user-based activities such as interviews and a diary study. The aim was to establish empathy for Aspiring Artists through an investigation of their experiences, emotions, challenges and dreams. Furthermore, data analysis was used which resulted in insight shared through user profiles, a user journey and thematically pinpointed challenges.

Lastly, the project entered the second diamond, Concept Development. During this phase, insights concluded from the preparation and user research phases were transformed into tangible solutions. The designers used ideation methods such as individual brainstorming and workshops intending to explore and broaden the solution space. Moreover, refinements and iterations were made based on matrices and discussion-based evaluations. Prototypes of the most promising solutions were used for informal evaluation research and user testing. This last diamond resulted in a final concept, supported by both aspiring artists and the potential for product growth.

### 5.1 Preparation

During the preparation phase, information and knowledge from Record Union were compiled in order to provide an understanding of the problem brief. Such learning's were used to define the research questions and plan the execution of the remaining parts of the thesis.

#### 5.1.1 Internal Research, Theory & Academic Perspective

Prior to the work of this thesis, Record Union conducted several surveys and a smaller number of interviews using third-party researchers. The research aimed to understand pain points and challenges experienced by their users, independent artists. As a result, the company created a persona for their target group, labeled Aspiring Artists. Chapter 2 presents a thorough introduction to this target group and a summary of experienced challenges.

Moreover, the initial weeks of this thesis were spent performing desk research and analyzing the forenamed data. Such activities aided the predefinition of the problem space explored in this thesis. In addition, acquaintances with the company were made, including stakeholders such as the design team. Furthermore, the researcher made use of these already established relationships in design workshops and critiques performed later in the project.

Next, after establishing a knowledge base and stakeholder relations, it became clear that the value for Record Union was gaining user insights. However, the academic perspective of this thesis needed to be further defined. Hence, an additional literature review was performed.

Through such review, it became clear that by utilizing participatory design approaches, the research performed had the potential to uncover deeper needs nec-

essary to design for future growth. User involvement and utilizing creativity are essential for participatory design. Due to this, methods enabling such activities were investigated in the preparation phase. The methods researched were used in both the context of user research and concept development and have been presented in Chapter 4.

## 5.2 User Research

The objective of the User Research stage was to empathize with aspiring artists and further define challenges, needs and opportunities within the project scope. This was achieved by exploring the everyday life, emotions and dreams of aspiring artists, using qualitative research methods such as semi-structured interviews and diary studies. Data analysis was performed on the collected data along with defining user profiles, journeys and new knowledge of the context. At the end of the user research phase, tacit and latent needs were defined and the project scope was narrowed down.

### 5.2.1 Research Group

A research group was established at the beginning of the research phase with the aim to collect a group of users interested in participating in various user involving activities throughout the project. An online screening survey was distributed to approximately 2000 Record Union users, see Appendix A.2. The selection was based on users who had distributed a song, EP, or album within the past two years using Record Unions services. With the use of multiple-choice questions, the survey gathered information such as age, gender, years of music experience, current way of working, current market and aim with one's music career. The last, aimed to be used when screening for Aspiring Artists in particular and required respondents to *Choose the statement that fits your situation the most* using one of these three alternatives:

- I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards it
- I make my living off my full-time career as an artist or music maker
- I make music for fun with no further desire to have a music career beyond that

With a response rate of about 3.5% a research group consisting of 72 Aspiring Artists was established. A summary of the research group based on aim with their music career, gender and age is presented and split between Table 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3. Different segments of the research group were used for different activities throughout the thesis. Because Aspiring Artist had been identified as target group, the sample used primarily consisted of artists falling into that category, as presented in Table 5.1.

## 5. Process and Execution

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**Table 5.1:** A summary of segment *I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards it* within the established research group

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO EARN MY LIVING OFF MY MUSIC AND AM WORKING TOWARDS THAT GOAL		
GENDER	AGE	SAMPLE
F	< 18 yrs	2
F	18-25 yrs	5
F	26-35 yrs	2
F	36-45 yrs	2
M	< 18 yrs	2
M	18-25 yrs	19
M	26-35 yrs	10
M	36-45 yrs	6
M	46-55 yrs	4
M	> 65 yrs	1
M	> 65 yrs	1
Non-binary	18-25 yrs	1
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>54</b>

**Table 5.2:** A summary of segment *I make my living off my full-time career as an artist or music maker* within the established research group

I MAKE MY LIVING OFF MY FULL-TIME CAREER AS AN ARTIST OR MUSIC MAKER		
GENDER	AGE	SAMPLE
F	18-25 yrs	1
M	< 18 yrs	2
M	18-25 yrs	1
M	26-35 yrs	2
M	36-45 yrs	2
M	46-55 yrs	1
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>9</b>

**Table 5.3:** A summary of segment *I make music for fun with no further desire to have a music career beyond that* within the established research group

I MAKE MUSIC FOR FUN WITH NO FURTHER DESIRE TO HAVE A MUSIC CAREER BEYOND THAT		
GENDER	AGE	SAMPLE
M	< 18 yrs	1
M	18-25 yrs	3
M	26-35 yrs	1
M	36-45 yrs	2
M	46-55 yrs	2
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>9</b>

The first presented table, Table 5.1, represents the respondents who selected the first alternative presented in the list above and thereby, as previously mentioned, was identified as the target group Aspiring Artists. The total sample within this group consisted of 54 artist, in which 1 identified as non-binary, 11 identified as female and the remaining as male. The second, Table 5.2, represents respondents who selected the middle alternative and hence was identified as professional artists. Within this group as sample of 9 artist can be found with a ratio of 8:1 between men and women. Lastly the third table, Table 5.3, represents respondents in the category of "making music for fun". Such groups demonstrates a more homogeneous sample consisting of 9 artists identified as male.

Additional data collected such as age and gender was used ensure the use of a broad segment in terms of these factors. To better understand what market the artists were active within and to scout participants for potential non-digital activities users were asked to provide brief information about their location. As collaboration already had been pointed out as an topic of interest, the survey gathered information to further understand to what extent respondents collaborated in their music-making. The full set of responses, excluding contact information, can be seen in Appendix A.3.

## 5.2.2 Selection of Participants

Interviews and journal studies were conducted with ten and five participants respectively. A representation of the participants including their profiles and what activity they participated in can be seen in Table 5.4. The initial criteria used was that all participants needed to define themselves as Aspiring Artist, i.e the provide the following multiple-choice answer, as presented in the subsection above, *"I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal"*. The selection aimed for a spread of age and genre groups.

## 5. Process and Execution

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**Table 5.4:** Selection of participants for various research activities.

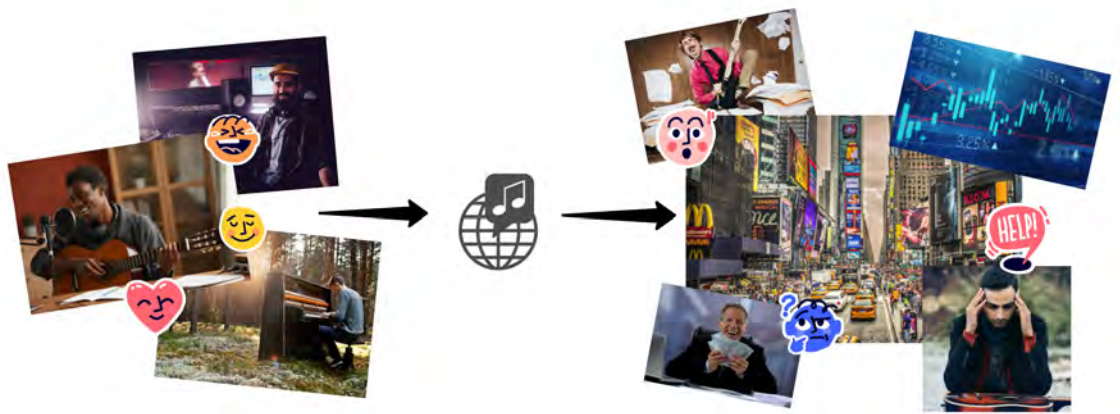
	AGE	GENDER	COLLAB	EXPERIENCE	ACTIVITY
Participant 1	18-25 yrs	M	Low	6-10 yrs	INTERVIEW
Participant 2	18-25 yrs	F	N/A	N/A	INTERVIEW
Participant 3	18-25 yrs	F	N/A	N/A	INTERVIEW
Participant 4	26-35 yrs	M	Very Low	< 1 year	INTERVIEW
Participant 5	18-25 yrs	M	Very Low	1-5 yrs	INTERVIEW
Participant 6	44-55 yrs	M	High	1-5 yrs	INTERVIEW
Participant 7	18-25 yrs	M	Very Low	1-5 yrs	INTERVIEW
Participant 8	26-35 yrs	M	High	> 10 yrs	INTERVIEW
Participant 9	36-45 yrs	M	Low	< 1 year	INTERVIEW
Participant 10	18-25 yrs	M	Medium	1-5 yrs	INTERVIEW
Participant 11	26-35 yrs	M	Very High	6-10 yrs	DIARY
Participant 12	26-35 yrs	M	High	6-10 yrs	DIARY
Participant 13	18-25 yrs	F	Very Low	1-5 yrs	DIARY
Participant 14	> 65 yrs	M	High	> 10 yrs	DIARY
Participant 15	46-55 yrs	M	Very Low	> 10 yrs	DIARY

Because of the uneven ration between genders in the research group, an additional two female artists were separately invited to participate in the study. Thus, these two participants, Participants 2 and 3, are not user of Record Union. Moreover, they have been identified as Aspiring Artists.

The level of experience varied amongst the selected participants. Some participants had just begun their journeys, some were pursuing an education in music and some had been working with music for years or decades.

### 5.2.3 Interviews

To investigate experiences, mental models and dreams connected to the music industry and the Aspiring Artists music career, ten semi-structured interviews were conducted. All interviews were performed in a digital setting, allowing users from different geographical locations and various time zones to partake. An interview script was prepared, focusing on questions such as *Describe your process of making music?*, *Explain more about the music community you are in?* and *What happens after releasing a song?*. For the full interview script see, Appendix A.1. In addition to the prepared questions and as a mean for reaching more tacit and latent needs, the method of sensitizing was used. More specifically, interviewees were asked to prepare an artifact representing their experience of the music industry. Figure 5.2 displays an example of such artifact created by one of the participants prior to their interview.



**Figure 5.2:** Example of an artifact created by an artist and used for sensitizing.

### 5.2.4 Diary Study

With the objective to get a deeper understanding of the everyday life experiences of being an independent artist, a diary study was carried out with five participants during a period of two weeks. The study was focused on both reflection and emotions connected to the experience of being an Aspiring Artist. The diary consisted of three different types of days called blue, green and pink days, see Figure 5.3. Blue days focused on sharing snippets from that day through experiences and images. Green days focused on analyzing past experiences and the participants were asked to break down a specific situation, for example, something they found challenging and how they dealt with it. Pink days were typical journal days, i.e. the participant was asked to write an entry about that day. For the full set of diary days see Appendix A.4.

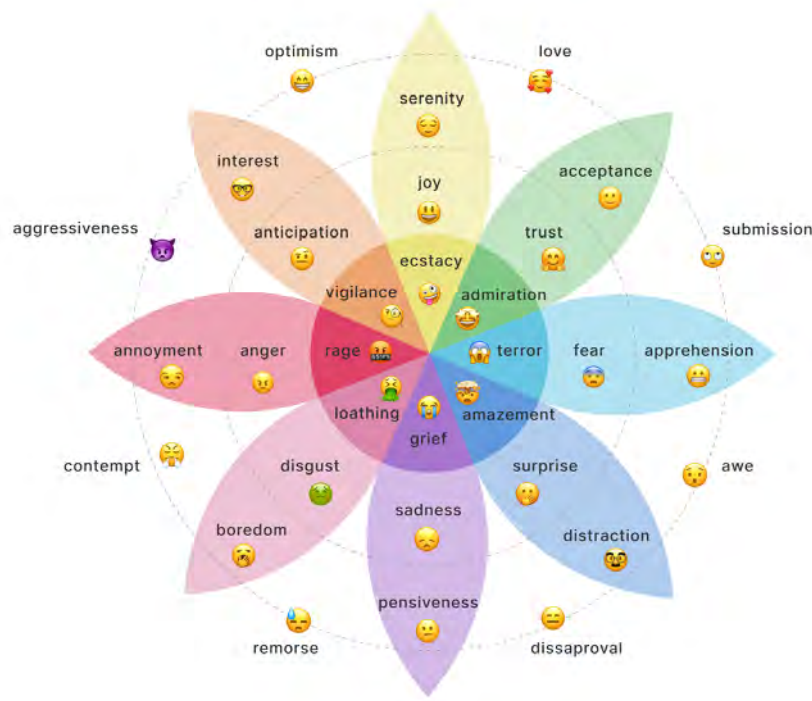
The figure displays three distinct diary templates, each with a unique color theme and layout:

- Blue Day:** Features a blue border and a light blue background. It includes a welcome message, two boxes for 'Everyday' reflections (feelings and music), a section for '1 Show us your inspiration!' with a photo upload area, a section for '2 Track of the day' with a song link input, and a 'P.S. interested in burr?' section with a small image and a 'Great work!' feedback icon.
- Green Day:** Features a green border and a light green background. It includes a welcome message, two boxes for 'Everyday' reflections, a section for '1 A challenging situation' with a text area, a section for '2 Your role' with a text area, a section for '3 Your emotional reaction' with a text area, and a section for '4 Take Away' with a text area. It also includes a 'Great work!' feedback icon.
- Pink Day:** Features a pink border and a light pink background. It includes a welcome message, two boxes for 'Everyday' reflections, and a section for '1 Write your diary!' with a 'Dear diary...' header and a large area of horizontal lines for writing. It includes a 'Great work!' feedback icon.

**Figure 5.3:** Three of the diary days - one blue, one green and one pink.

To ensure consistency in the data collected, each day also had two recurring questions. The questions were *How are you feeling today* and *What role did music play in your day today?*. To aid the identification as well as communication around emotions an Emoji Emotion Wheel was used as illustrated in Figure 5.4. Throughout the diary study users were encouraged to use the emojis to communicate their emotions and a toolbox of emojis was therefore provided with each diary day to make

it as easy as possible.



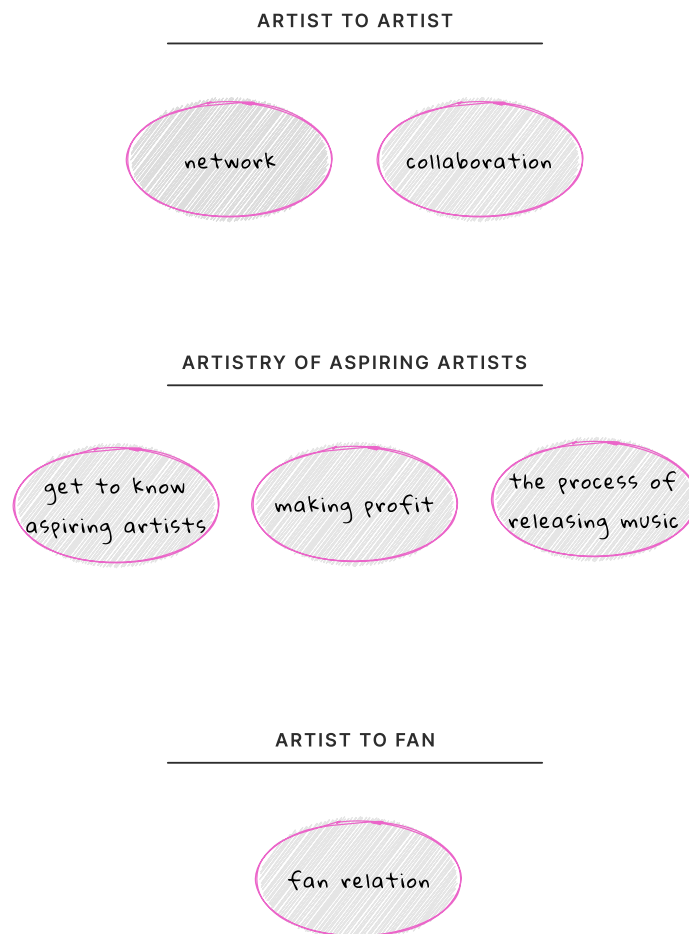
**Figure 5.4:** The Emoji Emotion Wheel used in the diary study, initially adopted from the Genewa Emotion Wheel (Sacharin et al., 2012).

For each participant an introduction session was held, focusing on setting expectations and going over the structure of the different days, the emotion wheel and the digital workspace Miro. In addition, the session gave the participants a chance to ask questions. After the initial meeting, the participants were given access their personal Miro board, containing eight diary days spread out over a period of two weeks. The script for such introduction can be seen in Appendix A.5. The diaries consisted of three blue, two green and three pink days following the same pattern for all participants. Reminders and motivational messages were sent to the participants on each diary day, a general schedule and drafts of such reminders can be seen in Appendix A.6. To conclude the study, each participant was invited to a longer evaluation session during which an unstructured interview was performed using the diary as sensitizing which triggered discussion, questions and reflections. The final session also worked well as a motivator for participants to finish all days of the study.

### 5.2.5 Data Analysis

In order to process information, get a deeper understanding of challenges as well as user experiences connected to being an independent Aspiring Artist and to be able to conclude these as user insights, a data analysis took place. The main method used was KJ-analysis, categorizing information from the interviews as well as the

diary study into three different themes as visualized in Figure 5.5. The first theme, Artist to Artist, includes insights that circle around the need for both a network and having collaborations in order to grow as artists. The second theme, Artist to Fan, is focusing on building deeper fan relations, however, the research showed that artists already feel connected to fans, even when only interacting through data. Lastly, the third theme Artistry of Aspiring Artists includes both a deeper understanding of Aspiring Artists, their view on the music industry and the process of releasing music. The full result of the analysis can be seen in Chapter 6.



**Figure 5.5:** Results from KJ Analysis - Three themes.

Adapting the method of experience mapping, the data collected on the process of both creating and releasing music later resulted in an experience map, hereby called emotional journey, see Section 6.2. The journey captures a step by step process, touch points, emotions and pain points experienced by aspiring artists when creating and releasing music.

In addition to the KJ-analysis, a mapping of present emotions in the form of a Heat Map Matrix was performed. Such a method is performed to visualize the result and the correlations between values and subjects, in this case emotions to specific situations, such as *worked on music* and *joy*, or *collaboration and building relations* and *trust*. For more examples see Figure 5.6. The heat map was used as a tool to validate the emotional journey by pinpointing the strongest, most reoccurring, correlations between situations and emotions.



**Figure 5.6:** Heat Map representing the correlation and recurrence of specific emotions connected to specific situations.

## 5.3 Concept Development

Deriving from the insights gained and growth opportunities identified, a concept development phase was entered. The initial ideation, called Discovery Ideation, aimed to broaden the solution space. A broad range of methods such as brainstorming, mindmapping and the 6-3-5 method were used to perform the ideation, both individually and in collaborative workshops. Such activities resulted in several different concepts, out of which the concepts with highest potential were selected for proceeding into the Defining Ideation stage.

Intending to diversify the solution space, still within the boundaries of the selected concepts, each concept was generalized and later used as a probe in a design workshop. The workshop was followed by another brainstorming session as well as a discussion to narrow down the solution space. The discussion resulted in a decision to focus on two of the concept tracks, revolving around the artist to artist relations. To further substantiate the decision a survey was sent out to validate the connected insights on a bigger scale.

Moreover, various levels of digital wireframes were created to communicate and test the concept in the Design and Prototype phase. These designs were tested and evaluated with stakeholders as well as users. Lastly, based on these insights, a final solution was selected. A more thorough description of each phase will be presented in the following subsections.

### 5.3.1 Discovery Ideation

The Discovery Ideation aimed to go from several possible growth tracks to a smaller number of more tangible concepts. Subsequently, the identified growth tracks, Artist to Artist, Artist to Fan and Artist to Artistry were used as subjects in the initiating internal theme-based brainstorming session. During the session the different themes were passed around the table, structured in intervals of five minutes for each theme and designer. The session resulted in a broad variety of concepts. To organize such design ideas, a thematic analysis was performed and different clusters of solutions were shaped. Figure 5.7 illustrates the making of such themes. Furthermore, these clusters were the foundation of the concepts presented later on in this chapter.



**Figure 5.7:** Thematic analysis performed after a brainstorming session.

Separated from the opening ideation, an on-site workshop was conducted with stakeholders from Record Union as participants. The session was initiated by presenting a summary of the insights gained during the User Research. The workshop was structured in such a way that participants were divided into groups of three or four. Each group was given a set of user resources, see Figure 5.8, which included one of the two user profiles, the emotional journey as well as three main challenges to solve.

The workshop gave the participants, employees at Record Union, an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas based on the insights presented. The ideas presented by the participants were mainly on a core innovation level. However, the workshop provided a bigger understanding of the company's business perspective and highlighted a more circular perspective of the music creation process and the effort it takes to reach transformational innovation.



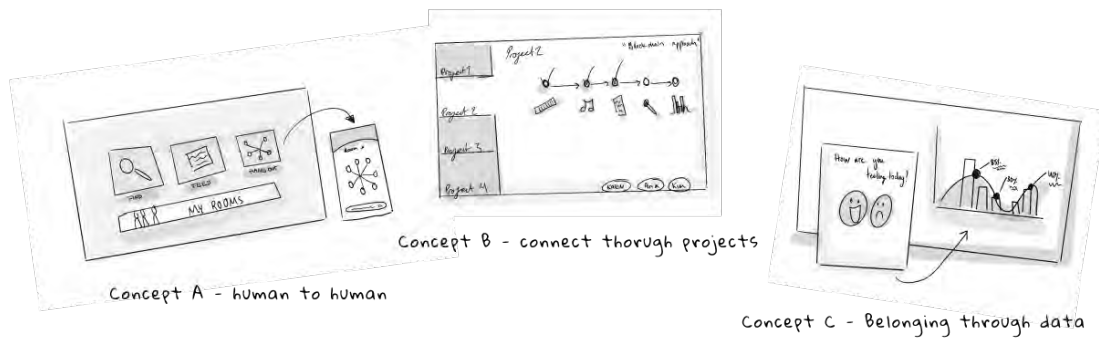
**Figure 5.8:** User Resources handed out to participants during the workshop.

Moreover, a discussion was held including concepts and perspectives gained at the workshop. The discussion focused on the potential to design for transformational innovation and to target user needs at the same time and aimed to narrow down the solution space yet again. As a result, six concept tracks were selected and further developed in the next phase of the project.

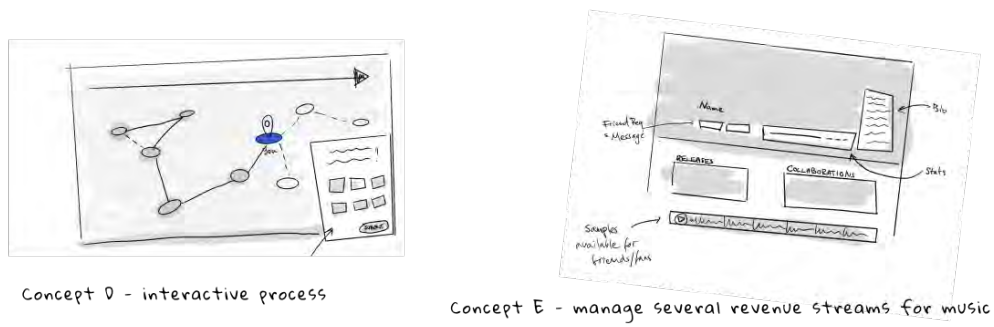
### 5.3.2 Initial Selection of Concepts

As displayed in Figure 5.9, all three main themes mentioned priorly in Figure 5.5 are represented through the six selected concepts, labeled A-F. The Artist to Artist theme resulted in three concepts that explore how to create relations between artists and increase the feeling of belonging inside a digital application. The two concepts within the Artistry of Aspiring Artists theme targeted an increased control in both the creation of music and after a song is released. Lastly, the Artist to Fan theme resulted in a profile concept developed with the aim to build a deeper relationship and engagement between the artists and their fans.

ARTIST TO ARTIST



ARTISTRY OF ASPIRING ARTISTS



ARTIST TO FAN

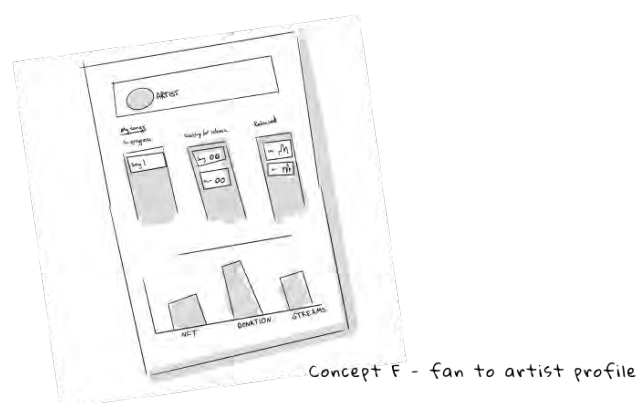


Figure 5.9: Initial sketches of Concept A-F.

Furthermore, in order to develop a more precise and accurate understanding of boundaries as well as opportunities with each concept, questions regarding user value, possible stakeholders and business value was answered. A summary of the six concepts A-F is presented below together with an illustration displaying important core attributes and goals for each solution.

### Concept A. Human to Human

According to performed research, it is today a struggle for Aspiring Artists to build networks consisting of deeper connections and real relations. They seek like-minded people with whom they can discuss music, collaborate with or simply exchange experiences and knowledge.



**Figure 5.10:** Core Attributes for Concept A.

The Human to Human concept originates from such insights and aims to connect artists with each other and be a facilitator for building relations. This is done by designing attributes that contribute to a feeling of trust between two users of a digital application, e.g. images, a personal description and interests could be used as initiators of trust. The core attributes for Concept A are illustrated in Figure 5.10.

### Concept B. Connect Through Projects

Aspiring artists often work on several different projects at the same time, all based on a variety of emotions and experiences. They seek collaboration as a way to find inspiration, gain new knowledge and grow in their artistry. However, collaborations can also make the artist vulnerable and compromised when it comes to ownership and integrity.



**Figure 5.11:** Core Attributes for Concept B.

The Connect Through Projects concept has hypothesized that project-centered collaborations can aid the feeling of control for individual artists when collaborating, especially when taking inspiration from the blockchain approach. This can be done by designing a concept focusing on project structure and implementing interactions between project members that would increase the feeling of ownership, e.g. could incorporate approvals and elements increasing transparency and traceability within a project aid this. The core attributes for Concept B are illustrated in Figure 5.11.

### Concept C. Feel Belonging via Data

Working long hours alone, feeling like outcasts and not knowing who or how to connect with others, are often reoccurring situations amongst aspiring artists. It was discovered that artists often lack a place, space or platform to which they feel like they belong. Today, the most common way for artists to feel a connection to other people is through interacting with data, usually provided to them by different digital steaming platforms.



**Figure 5.12:** Core Attributes for Concept C.

With this in mind, the concept Feel Belonging via Data is set out to create a feeling of belonging amongst users of a digital product. The core attributes for Concept C are illustrated in Figure 5.12. It is believed that enhancing the social presence in a product using data presentation and visualisation can amplify positive experiences and result in the threshold for future collaborations being lowered. Such a concept sought to be designed to present and customize data using a visual approach that increases the feeling of belonging, e.g. using organic shapes and presenting relevant data.

### Concept D. Interactive Process

The joy and excitement of the creative process are what drive aspiring artists. However, while many positive emotions are present, aspiring artists are often self-doubting, as they lack a proper strategy for music-making and struggle with managing administrative tasks for their releases. An opportunity for decreasing these negative feelings and the level of stress experienced through the concept Interactive Process has as a result been identified.



**Figure 5.13:** Core Attributes for Concept D.

The concept revolves around creating a process that can guide users and aid them in building a strategy. The base of such a process tool should be interactive and designed in a way that makes it easy to both follow and manage, e.g. clear visual steps and a good overview. The core attributes for Concept D are illustrated in Figure 5.13.

### **Concept E. Revenue Streams Management**

The phase that comes after releasing a song is experienced as the most emotional troublesome and confusing phase. This derives from the lack of strategizing on how to promote your music and build fan relations, i.e. where to distribute your music and what revenue streams to use.



**Figure 5.14:** Core Attributes for Concept E.

To make the artist stay in control over their music and ownership of it in the ever-changing music industry it is desired to offer traceability and flexibility when it comes to released songs. Such a concept should be designed with scalability in mind and could include, but is not limited to, NFTs and donations business models. The core attributes for Concept E are illustrated in Figure 5.14. Furthermore, additional attributes to include are a clear overview and visualizations of various properties and states connected to a released song.

### **Concept F. Artist Profile**

In addition to the struggles with promotion mentioned in connection with the previous concept, many artists have a hard time seeing themselves as artists. A concept that will aid their confidence as artists and create a more professional approach to their artistry is believed to be the first step towards improved fan relations.



**Figure 5.15:** Core Attributes for Concept F.

The concept Artist profile aims to initiate better contact with fans without having the validation approach of social media and have the opportunity to increase the retention of both artists and fans on such a digital platform. All design attributes considered should be both flexible and customizable to cater to each unique artist's needs and graphic style, e.g. a selection of color themes and a flexible layout. The core attributes for Concept F are illustrated in Figure 5.15.

### 5.3.3 Defining Ideation

The second ideation, called Defining Ideation, gradually evaluated and explored the six concepts. The aim was to define one to three concepts for further design and development. To initiate the new ideation phase a Concept Evaluation Matrix was created. The matrix evaluated the potential for reaching transformational innovation, the potential to meet the user needs in focus for each individual concept, the design potential from a feasibility perspective, the academic potential and how appealing the concepts felt from an overall perspective. For each concept, a score on a scale of 1-5, one being the lowest and five being the highest, was given individually by the researchers on each of the four questions. The total score for each concept was added at the bottom of the matrix. As seen in Table 5.5, the lowest total score was given to Concept F, Artist Profile. Hence, the concept was removed motivated by this low score. In addition, such a concept was not seen as a stand-alone concept or a concept reaching the needed level of innovation. Instead, it was seen as a side feature that could be incorporated into the remaining concepts.

QUESTION	CONCEPT A	CONCEPT B	CONCEPT C	CONCEPT D	CONCEPT E	CONCEPT F
What is the potential for transformational innovation?	4   4	4   3,5	3   3	3,5   3	3,5   3	2   2
What is the potential for solving concept goal?	5   5	4   4	4   4	3,5   3,5	5   5	4   3
What is the academic potential?	4   4	4   5	5   4	4   4	3,5   3,5	2   3
How appealing is the concept overall?	3,5   4	4   4	3,5   3,5	3,5   3,5	4   3,5	2   3
<b>TOTAL SUM</b>	<b>33,5</b>	<b>32,5</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28,5</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>21</b>

**Table 5.5:** Evaluation Matrix containing Concept A-F.

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Moving forward, Concept A to E were generalized and presented along with a summary of insights to five design students during an ideation workshop, see Figure 5.16. The workshop aimed to bring new perspectives to the concepts and reduce the risk of biases from previously discovered ideas either by the project group or Record Union. The ideation method used was a variant of the 6-3-5 method mixed with cultural probes. The probes took the form of five concept cards containing targeted challenges and value propositions as well as key questions to be answered in a design solution. Each card was based on one of the five current concepts and handed out to the participants. In a rotating schedule, participants ideated on each card for five minutes.



**Figure 5.16:** Image portraying workshop setup.

To end the workshop an open discussion lifting and reflecting on some of the results from the ideation was held. Altogether the workshop resulted in ideas similar to what had previously been explored as well as some new discoveries.

With the results from the ideation workshop in mind, a new discussion session was held through which two main concepts were selected. The discussion yet again focused around defining the potential for transformational innovation and the potential to solve user challenges. With the insights from the user research in mind, the project group chose to solely focus on the Artist to Artist design track, since Concept A and B was identified as the highest potential ideas.

However, it was further identified that the structure of Concept A also could be adapted to an Artist to Fan relation and Concept B to the Artist to Artist if wanted. This ensured further scalability and potential within the selected concepts. An additional motivation for dismissing the other three concepts was the belief that they could be integrated into the now two main concepts in various ways, e.g. the Feeling belonging to data concept could be kept in mind when designing visualizations of statistics. A brainstorming was performed in order to explore possible incorporations from the dismissed concepts into Concepts A and B. Such a session resulted in a redefinition and further development of the two concepts, which will be presented in the following subsection.

### 5.3.4 Concept 1 & 2

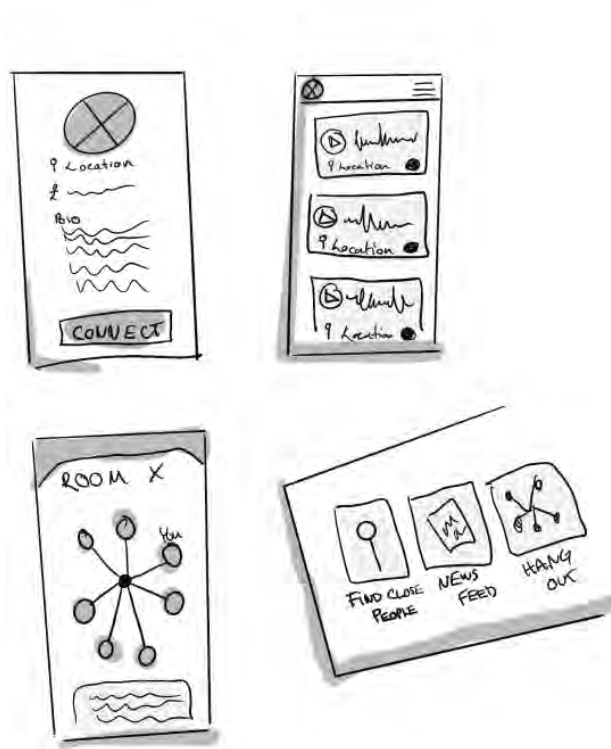
In this section, the two selected concepts that took part in the last iteration before deciding on a final design solution are presented. In addition to a description of functionality and purpose of the concepts, sketches, illustrations and mid-fi prototypes to visualize the two concept ideas are also to be found below.

#### Concept 1. Initiating Relations

Throughout the thesis, the Human to Human concept has revolved around designing attributes that have the possibility to initiate and contribute to trust between two, or more, users. Sketches of four approaches from the initial ideation can be seen in Figure 5.17. The top left wireframe illustrates the approach of making connections through profiles. By highlighting a set of artists' attributes users can potentially discover other users who they feel an appeal to initiate a connection with.

The top right wireframe represents the approach of making connections through music. In such interactions, users share released or unreleased snippets of their music. It was believed that relations initiated through music would have an advantage when it comes to connecting with people whom one respects and finds like-minded, since music are very personal, emotional and intimate for most artists. The bottom left wireframe showcases the approach of connecting over common interests. In such a solution, users can either create or join existing rooms with a preset topic of discussion. Moreover, the bottom right wireframe illustrates an approach separated from making connections. Instead, it focuses on creating trust between the user and

the platform. This is done by using visual elements such as images to communicate a feeling of safe collaborations, as well as establish a clear differentiation between the collaborative and personal Record Union space.

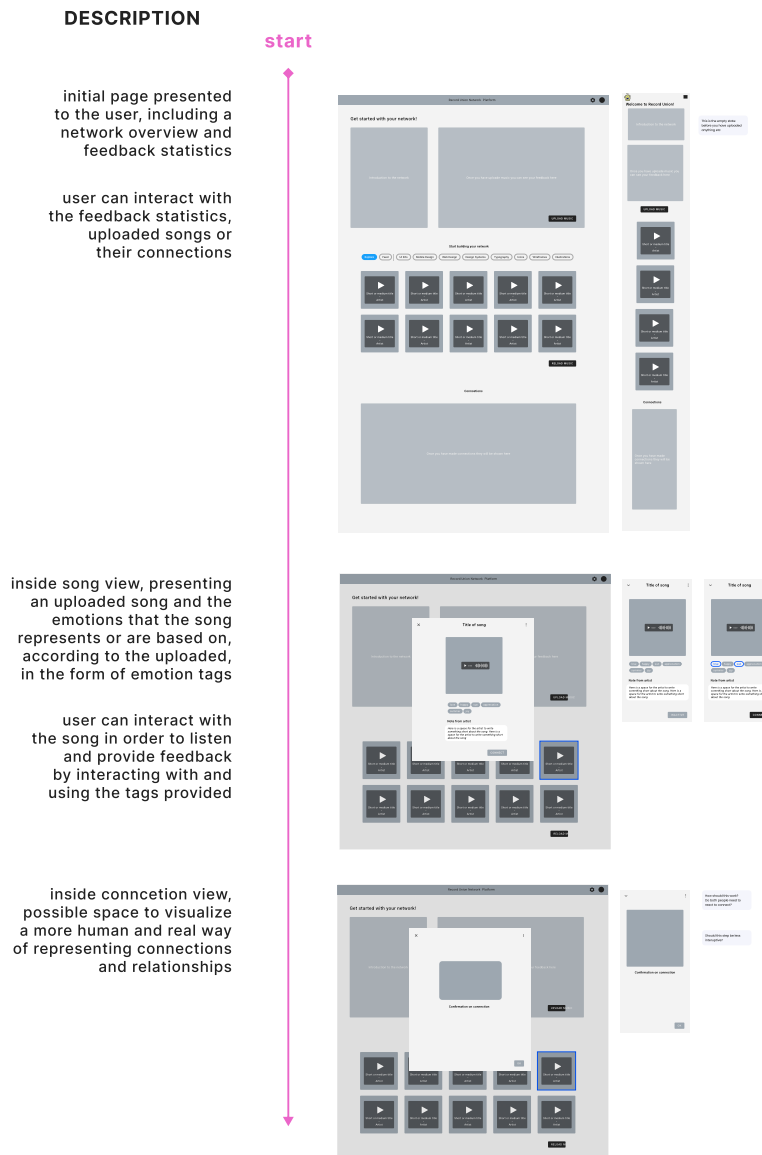


**Figure 5.17:** First iteration sketches - Four different approaches to the Initiating Relations concept.

The second iteration focused on establishing a user flow and page structure that would ensure feasibility on both mobile and desktop web platforms. The flow was created around the idea of making connections through music and is illustrated in Figure 5.18. Top-down, the first screen displays a landing page for the network feature consisting of three key elements, data visualization, music thumbnails and a list of connections. The data visualization was adopted from the previous Concept C and is displayed as a placeholder for data connected to relations or emotions. The aim of such visualization is to evoke both visceral and reflective reactions connected to a network, or music. Furthermore, the music thumbnails are structured in a grid pattern and can be filtered based on various entities such as styles or emotions. Through a click interaction, users can listen to other people’s music and provide feedback through a preset assortment of emotions. Such a modal is displayed as the second screen in the figure.

To further emphasize the positive experience of providing valuable feedback, as well as making connections, users will reach a confirmation modal. Such a modal can be seen on the third screen and assures the user that they provided feedback

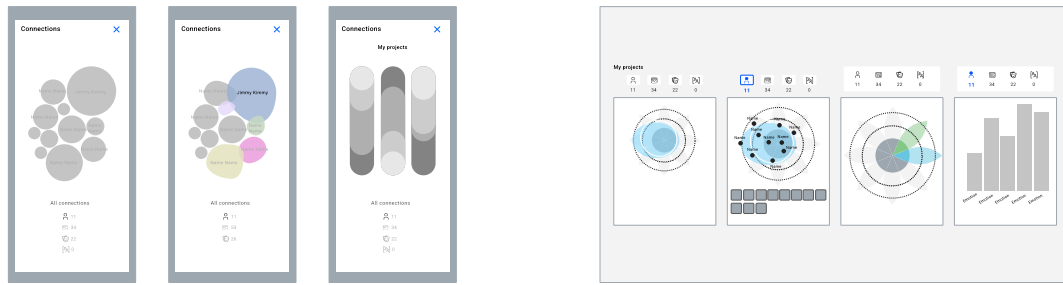
successfully. From the modal there is a possibility to provide various options on how to connect. Some people might just want to give feedback while others are looking for a deeper connection. In the latter case, such connections will be displayed, using a list pattern at the bottom of the first screen.



**Figure 5.18:** Second iteration wireframes - Potential flow of the Initiating Relations concept.

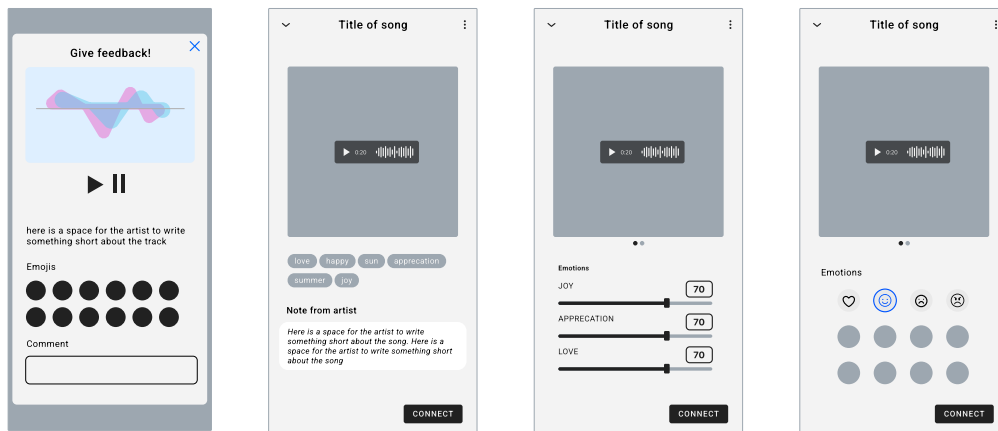
Moving forward, the third iteration focused more deeply on key elements of the interface. At this stage, the key elements were: data visualization of emotions or connections and giving feedback using emotions. The Data visualization exploration targeted shapes and structures that can be used to showcase data. A visual representation of the exploration can be seen in Figure 5.19.

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**Figure 5.19:** Third iteration wireframes - Key feature Social Connections.

Furthermore, giving feedback using emotions can be done through a variety of structures and forms. However, the exploration in this research targeted the presentation of and interaction with, a preset group of emotions. Figure 5.20 illustrates the explorations made.



**Figure 5.20:** Third iteration wireframes - Key feature Feedback.

Notably, because of the time frame of this thesis detailed user testing of the key elements presented above were only performed on the final concept. However, to further conceptualize and evaluate the full concept a decision to showcase an emotional based data visualization was made and applied to the design work in the fourth iteration. Overall, Concept 1 was thoroughly investigated and the result can be seen in Figure 5.21. The figure showcases a possible approach for initiating relations through both music and emotions.

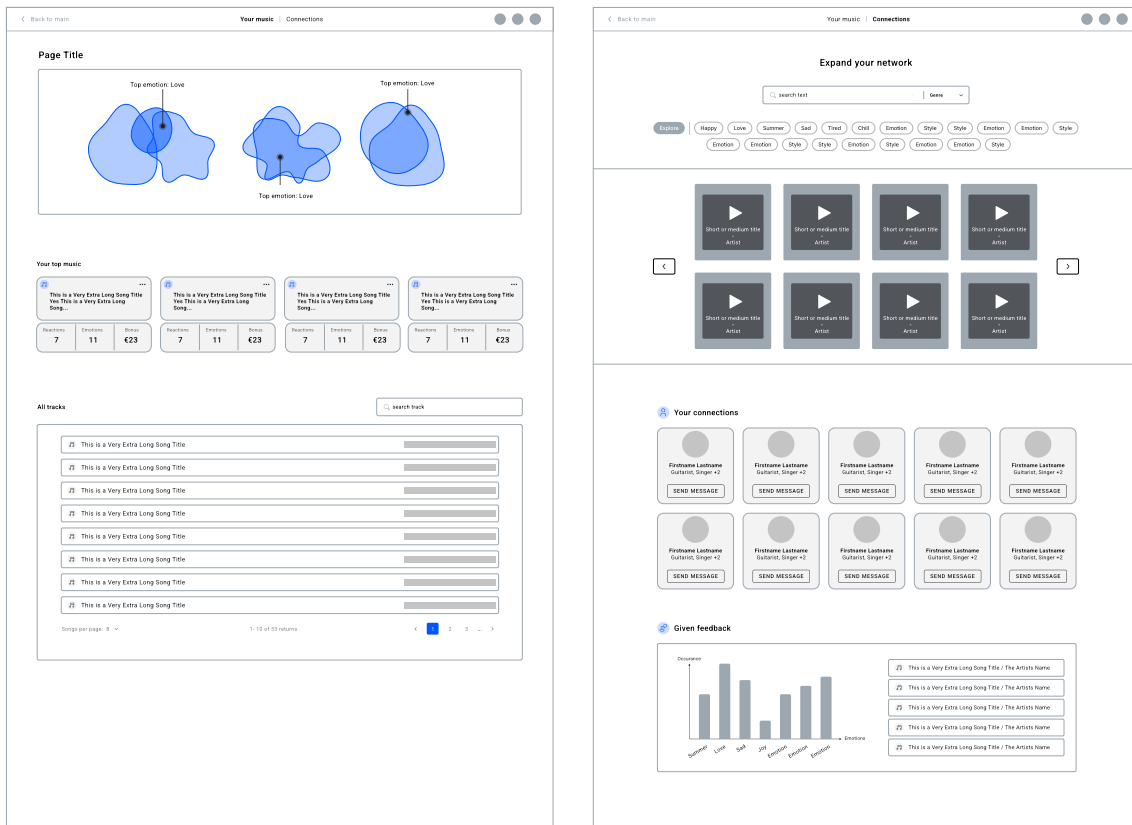


Figure 5.21: Last iteration wireframes of the Initiating Relations concept.

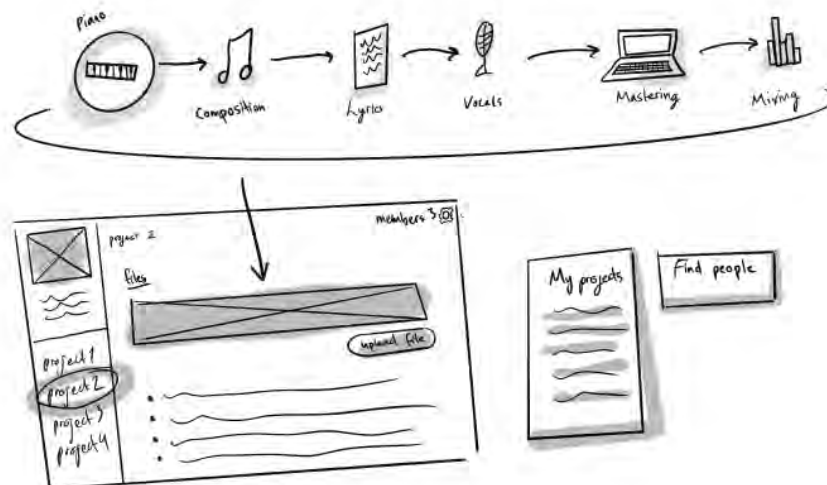
## Concept 2. Facilitating Collaboration

Similar to Concept 1, the Facilitating Collaborations concept has too evolved around trust and how it impacts both the will to collaborate but also the collaboration itself throughout the thesis. It was discovered that artists feel hesitant towards collaboration and sharing their work due to fear of being taken advantage of and losing control. With Concept 2, it has been granted that a connection between two or more users has already been made. This concept, therefore, focuses on deepening and facilitating trust amongst artists, creating good experiences, rather than initiating trust in new connections as in Concept 1.

Designed attributes have been centered around key words such as digital ownership, integrity, communication and control. The concept has therefore been directed to provide artists collaborating in a project with a good overview of the track, ownership and contributions. Low-fidelity prototypes in the form of initial sketches from the first iteration can be seen in Figure 5.22. The top wireframe illustrates the approach of dividing a track or a song into parts or blocks of contribution. Inspired by Blockchain Technology and how data can be stored and turned permanent and traceable in order to lower the threshold for collaborating artist to artist was explored. The idea evolved around the belief that a collaborative platform facilitating projects amongst users of Record Union could help with administrative work, ensure safe collaborations and help to create trust by a transparent design approach.

The bottom left wireframe illustrates how a common space for an artist's project could look like. Since artists struggle with structure, a platform on which users could gather files and documents in order to organize a project in a better way was explored. This could also be proven beneficial in solo projects, aiding solo artists personal structure when creating music, even though the main idea was to involve multiple artists interacting, gathering and uploading material connected to a project using one digital space.

Lastly, the bottom right wireframe displays a layout option for a landing page, showing active projects, option of creating a new project, finding collaborators and general statistics showing either data regarding an artist's own projects, or data connected to the entire platform and all of Record Unions users.



**Figure 5.22:** First iteration sketches - Different approaches to the Facilitating Collaboration concept.

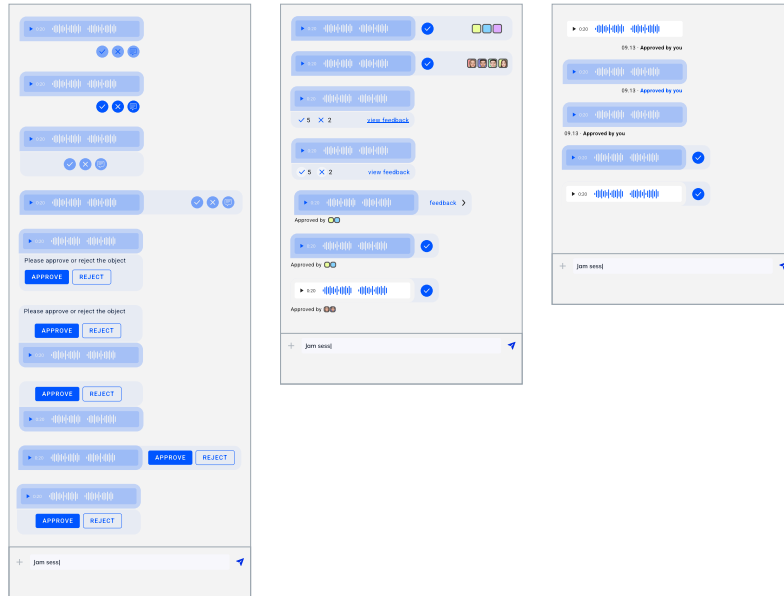
Moving forward with the concept, the second iteration meant further refinement of design features, interactions and the overall product. From a holistic perspective, the focus was put on creating a good and easily understood layout for the landing page of such a collaborative platform, as seen at the top of Figure 5.23. A segment providing the user with a good overview of both active projects as well as a possibility for presenting data, showing statistics connected to users site-wide could increase the feeling of an artist to artist connection. Showing comparative statistics surrounding one's projects is another approach to this page, which could be more suitable for artists not interested in collaborating.



**Figure 5.23:** Second iteration wireframes - Potential flow of the Facilitating Collaboration concept.

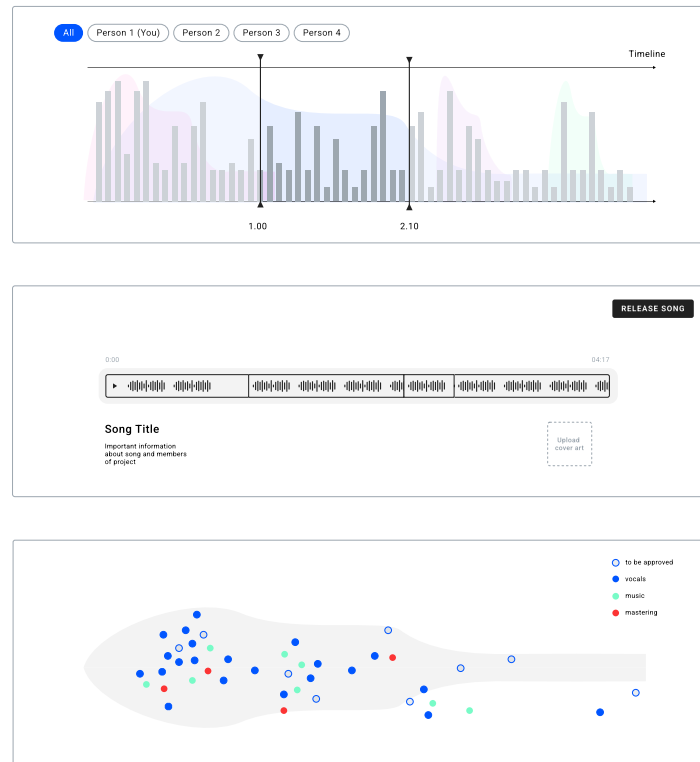
Inside an active project, the main focus has been to develop a design feature that lets artists collaborate seamlessly and safely. The flow is built around an overview of the song as well as a list displaying each member’s contributions as seen in the middle wireframe in Figure 5.23. Functions such as uploading material for approval as well as being able to approve or reject other artists’ material were believed to increase trust, the feeling of control and transparency amongst artists. This kind of concept was also thought to decrease negative feelings directed towards collaboration. In brief, collaborators will together build a traceable song consisting of themed blocks that in a safe and controlled manner displays contributions and ownership, thereby

lowering the risk of being deceived and having material getting stolen. Wireframes displaying one option to this kind of block approach, along with a members and release song page can be seen at the bottom of Figure 5.23



**Figure 5.24:** Third iteration wireframes - Key feature Approve or Reject.

A third iteration was performed on key features such as song overview and the logbook containing information of each contributor's uploaded material. As seen in Figure 5.24, aspects such as how to design a feature for approving, rejecting and viewing status of tracks were explored. The aim was to find a look that felt secure and trustworthy without hindering creativity or motivation. Furthermore, the need to clearly and effortlessly design the feature of what stage a song is currently at, as well as who owns which parts of it, was identified. Various ways of visualizing song status and project members contributions to it can be seen in Figure 5.25.



**Figure 5.25:** Third iteration wireframes - Key feature Song Overview.

Overall, Concept 2 was thoroughly explored and the final result for the last iteration can be seen in Figure 5.26. The figure showcases a possible approach for facilitating collaboration, along with structuring and organizing projects. To the left, active projects are shown in a square pattern. Above, general user statistics are placed as a greeting as well as a way of creating a sense of belonging.

In the right wireframe, the approval feature has been combined with a logbook, allowing an overview of each project members contribution, details about it, ownership and lastly the approve or reject function. Above the logbook, a visualisation of the song created, showcasing the progress and status of the project. Filtering features by both persons who made a contributions along with characteristics regarding each contributions are thought to be included.

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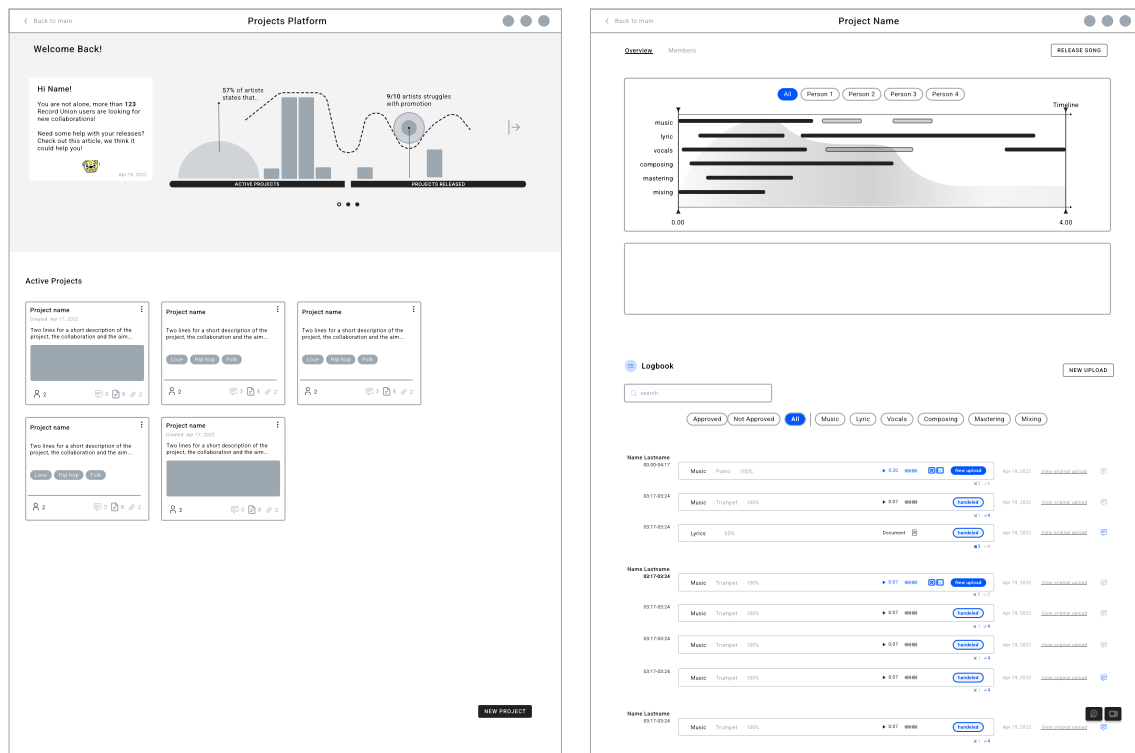


Figure 5.26: Last iteration wireframes of the Facilitating Collaborations concept.

### 5.3.5 Design & Prototype

The design and prototype phase focused on the development and evaluation of the two concepts selected during the defining ideation. Using validation and evaluation activities the phase aimed to result in a final validated high-fidelity concept. Throughout the phase prototypes of various fidelity levels and interactions were developed using the digital prototyping tool Figma. The design of such prototypes progressed through an iterative process altering design and evaluation.

In addition to the design work a validation survey was conducted, validating key insights connected to the two selected concepts, see Appendix A.7. The survey used a between-subjects sample based on the research group, i.e. it was distributed to the 49 aspiring and professional artists whom had not previously participated in the research. Because of a quite low response rate of 20.4%, equal to a total of ten responses, the survey was also distributed to music and independent artist related Facebook groups. All in all, a total of 20 responses was given to the validation survey, whereas 55% were female artists, see Appendix A.8.

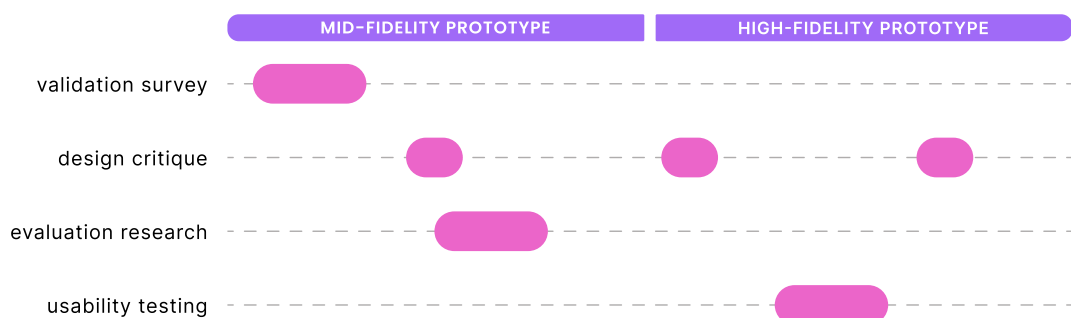
Formative evaluations were then used to further narrow down and guide the design work. Table 5.6 shows a summary of the sample used during the different activities in this phase. The method evaluation research was used on within-subjects, i.e. the two concepts were evaluated with participants that had already partaken in previous user research activities. The method of user testing was used on both within- and between-subjects. Furthermore, the method of design critique was used on stake-

holders from Record Union in order to get both user and company perspectives of the two concepts.

**Table 5.6:** Sample for Evaluation Activities.

	AGE	GENDER	COLLAB	EXPERIENCE	ACTIVITY
Participant 2	18-25 yrs	F	N/A	N/A	EVALUATION
Participant 6	46-55 yrs	M	High	1-5 yrs	EVALUATION
Participant 7	18-25 yrs	M	Very Low	1-5 yrs	EVALUATION
Participant 13	18-25 yrs	F	Very Low	1-5 yrs	EVALUATION
Designer at Record Union					DESIGN CRITIQUE
Total of 20 responses					VALIDATION SURVEY
Participant 1	18-25 yrs	M	Low	6-10 yrs	USER TESTING
Participant 16	36-45 yrs	M	Low	>10 yrs	USER TESTING

All evaluations were performed in a digital setting and the choice of method for the evaluation shifted from informal evaluation research for mid-fidelity prototypes, to user testing for high-fidelity prototypes. Design critiques was held throughout the concept development in order to evaluate from a business and brand perspective. The more tangible the concepts got, the more detailed and specific could the evaluation session be, as displayed in Figure 5.27.



**Figure 5.27:** Fidelity level for each evaluation activity.

For the informal evaluation research, a sample of four participants was used and divided into groups of two. The evaluation was split into two parts, starting with an

informative presentation and ending with a discussion. The informative presentation included key insights connected to the designs as well as a walk through of the two concepts and the discussion was structured as an open interview. However, a few guiding questions such as *What are your initial thoughts on the concept?*, *What do you think you would use?* and *What do you think you would not use?* were used.

Based on takeaways from the evaluations potential adjustments for each of the two concepts were listed. By doing so, an overview of the prospective concepts could be communicated amongst the designers and further used as an aid in the proceedings of this thesis. Due to the time limitation, this thesis aims to present only one conceptualized high-fidelity design, hence a decision to prioritize one concept needed to be made.

Such a decision was made based on feedback from the evaluation research and in congruence with Record Union. Thus, both users' and business perspectives were considered to capture the potential for transformational innovation and served as motivation for the decision. The decision to proceed with Concept 2, Facilitating Collaborations was made.

Furthermore, the prototype of Concept 2 was adjusted based on the listed insights and then used in the second evaluation, User Testing. The sample used for such testing consisted of two participants and was conducted in individual sessions. Once participants were introduced to the project and briefed on the concept at hand, semi-structured user testing began. Users were asked both general questions, such as *What do you think this page does?* and more specific questions, such as *You want to know more about a song, where would you look?*. The user testing aimed to both evaluate the usability of the interface as well as further understand user requirements to increase the feasibility for the concept.

### 5.3.6 Refine for Delivery

The phase Refinement for Delivery makes up the final step of this thesis. The phase included detailed improvements of the user insights and design factors presented in Chapter 6, as well as the final design concept presented in Chapter 7. Formulations of the items in the needs and requirements lists were improved and similar entities were merged to avoid confusion. A high-fidelity prototype was created and used to exemplify how Facilitating collaborations can be adapted to the context of Record Union's distribution platform.

To conclude, this final stage aimed to summarize, as well as package the essence of this thesis. These results have culminated from the variety of research, analysis, ideation and evaluation activities performed during the Preparation, User Research and Concept Development phases.

# 6

## Findings & Requirements

The results presented in this chapter derive from the interviews, diary studies and validation surveys conducted, split into four main parts. First, the two identified User Profiles are introduced. Secondly, an Emotional Journey portraying the process of creating and releasing music is presented. Thirdly, key insights connected to the everyday life of aspiring artists will be described. Through these parts a deeper understanding of aspiring artists, including their everyday struggles as well as hopes and dreams, is provided. Thus, proposing an answer to the first research question *RQ1: What are the current challenging factors for Aspiring Artists?*.

Moreover, the fourth part serves as a summary of user insights presented in previous sections. Subsequently these insights culminate in a list of needs and a list of design factors to be considered when designing for transformational innovation in the context of independent artists and music distribution.

### 6.1 User Profiles

Throughout the works of this thesis, empathy for Aspiring Artists have been built. The conducted interviews and diary studies, previously presented in Chapter 5, shed light on the variety within the user group. Although the sample used defined themselves as aspiring, a variety in terms of goals, work areas, personalities, experiences and career level was established. Deriving from the various communications with users, it was concluded that one point sets Aspiring Artists apart; whether or not they wish to become publicly recognized or not. Other properties such as sound, genres, images and values can evolve or change with time. However, the standpoint of wanting to become either a famous celebrity, or a superstar in the industry is very clear.

To further communicate the two different approaches to becoming famous, a user profile diagram was created, as seen in Figure 6.1. The diagram showcases two profiles, figuratively separated by color and literally separated by the artist's goal, as well as the levels within each profile. The left side, called professional performer, represents artists aspiring to become publicly recognized. The right side, called, professional music creator, represents artists aspiring to become known within the industry.

Professional performers want to perform in grand locations and travel the world while spreading their music. The group seeks a close connection with their fans and wishes to see the impact that their music has on them, be able to help people both emotionally and become one with their artistry. Conversely, professional music creators want their fame to stay within the music industry and keep their professional life as artists separated from their personal. They seek travel and a worldwide spread of their music, but more importantly, they want to be able to work with other respected people within the industry. Having introduced the two user profiles, the next subsection will go deeper into the different career steps.

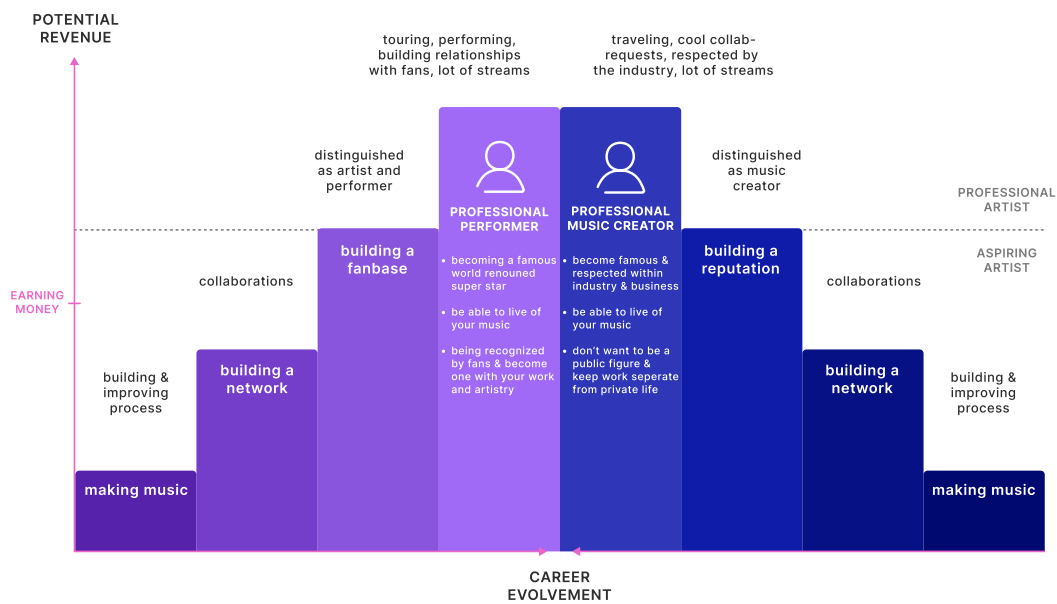


Figure 6.1: User Profiles Diagram - Levels of Aspiring Artists.

### 6.1.1 Professional Performer & Professional Music Creator

In Figure 6.1, the left and right outskirts represent the starting level for Aspiring Artists and are referred to as the lowest level. Notably, the first two levels do not vary much between the profiles. Moreover, the lowest level focus on acquiring the skills and equipment needed to create high-quality music that represents what you want to portray as an artist. Once artists have established a process and strategy that works for them, whether it is having a detailed step-by-step guide or having no strategy at all, the next step is building a network around their artistry. Collaborations have been defined as the core of such a network.

Working together with other artists can be helpful for many reasons, such as receiving second opinions, gaining inspiration, or building a reputation. On top of that, the data analysis showed that, without collaborations, it becomes hard for Aspiring Artists to move forward and level up their artistry. More detailed insight on this matter is presented in Section 6.3 below.

The third level before becoming professional differs between the two user profiles. However, it has been concluded that any Aspiring Artist encounters challenges in this step. On the left side, Professional Performers seek to build a fan base. Furthermore, this can be described as having people who are dedicated followers and generates streams, promotion and live audiences. On the right side, Professional Music Creators focus on building a reputation within the industry. A good reputation increases the chances for collaboration with other respected artists, hence bringing the artist closer to reaching the highest level of achievement.

Reaching the goal of becoming either a Professional Performer or a Professional Music Creator, means that the Aspiring Artist has turned music into a profitable business. Indeed, there is a clear milestone of being financially secure by only working with music. However, as further elaborated in Section 6.3, there are always new levels to reach within this category.

## 6.2 Emotional Journey

Through the User Research presented and explained in Chapter 5, it was found that within the different steps of making and releasing music, a variety of emotions are present and influence the work of Aspiring Artists. To further demonstrate such insight, an Emotional Journey Map was created. The emotional journey aims to build an understanding for Aspiring Artists and exhibits insights connected to their everyday lives. Such insights have been communicated through the journey.

Figure 6.2 illustrates a generalized representation of the emotional journey for Aspiring Artists, including essential elements, emotions and steps in the music process. Notably, the figure uses a linear structure, but one should keep in mind that the music process is utmost iterative and unique for every individual creator. Furthermore, a diverse sample of emotions is represented throughout the journey and emotions displayed in the figure become more or less intense depending on the artist, the project and other surrounding factors. Indeed, an Aspiring Artist faces both new peaks and challenges in each phase of the process. Moreover, the emotional journey can be split into two parts, the Creative Process and Song Released, as shown in the figure. Investigating the first part, the creative process has been identified as accordingly; Starting a new project, Creating draft, Working in studio, Getting feedback and Finish project.

Seeing to the emotions in the creative process, there is undoubtedly a lot of joy, excitement and other highly positive feelings present. Artists who participated in the Diary Study mentioned that these feelings are the reason why they keep doing what they do, despite the many challenges they face as Aspiring Artists every day. The excitement that comes with inspiration and motivation yields a feeling of freedom and being untouchable that almost becomes addictive to the artists. These positive feelings remind them of their dreams and goal of one day becoming a professional.

## 6. Findings & Requirements

Moreover, negative emotions are often present in the creative process. Such emotions often derive from the pressure artist put on themselves. Aspiring Artists are perfectionists, often second-guessing and doubting their work and themselves. Working with music takes time, patience and knowledge and it is a struggle for artists to get a song to sound the way it does in their imagination.

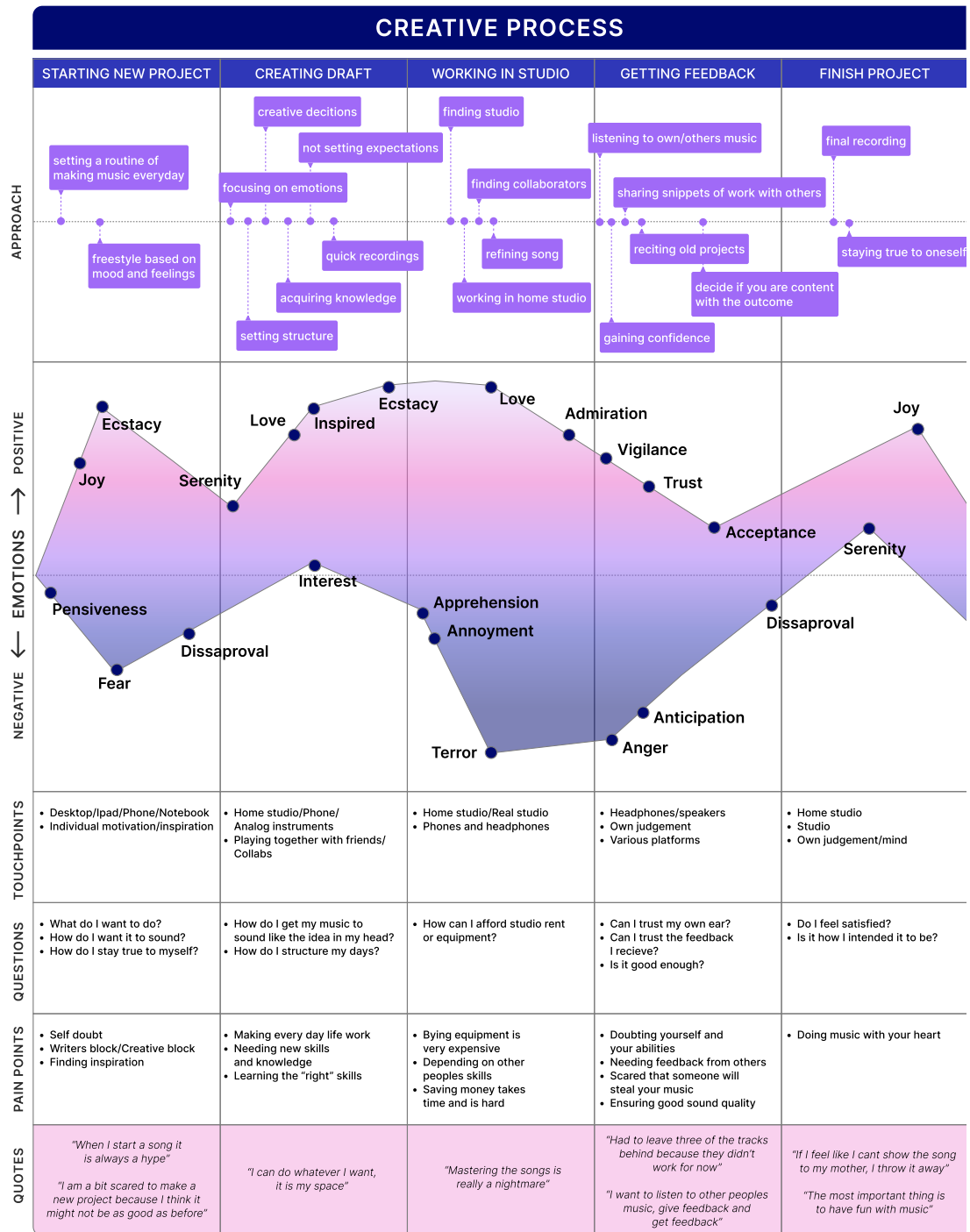
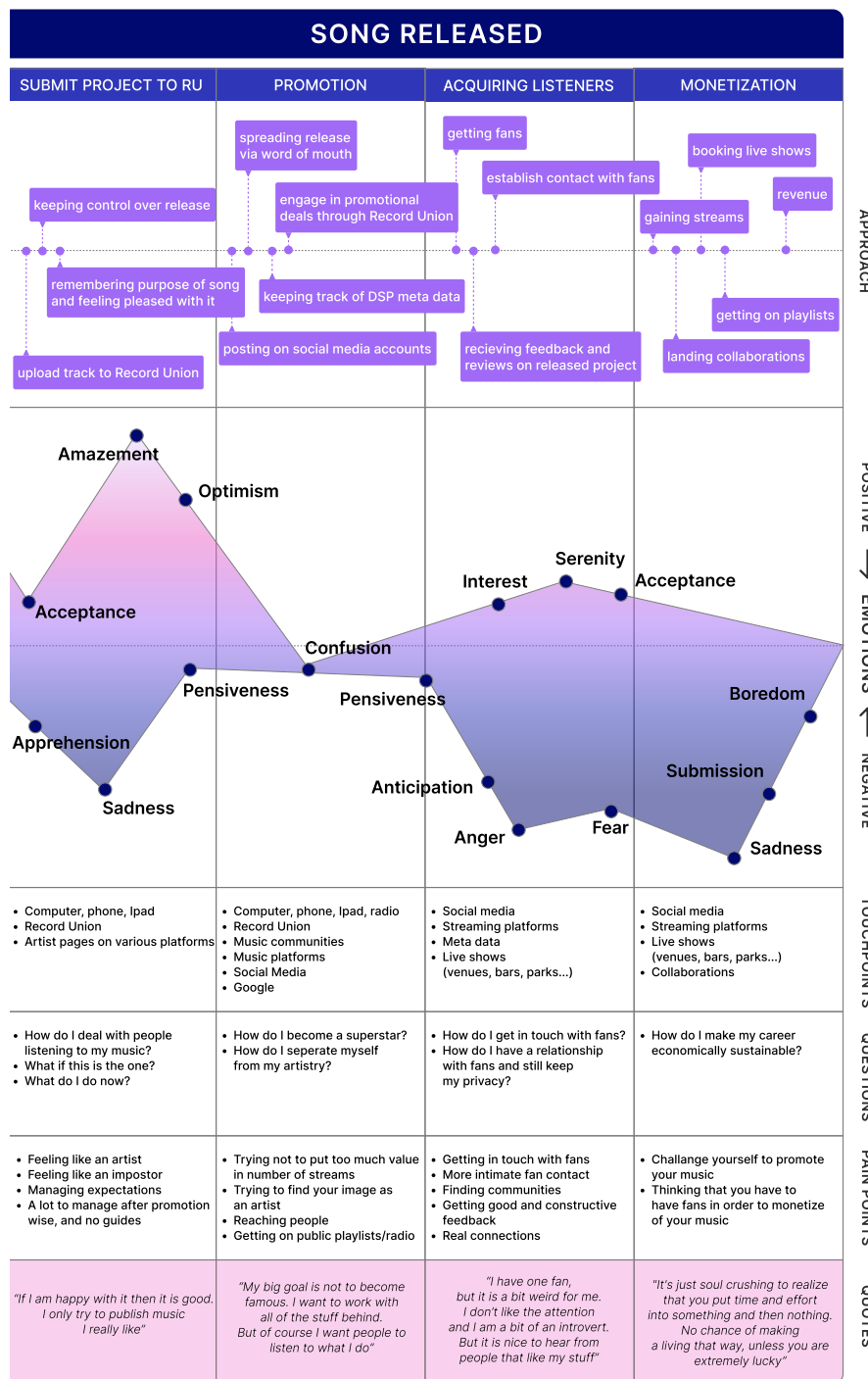


Figure 6.2: Emotional Journey used for effective communication.



Looking at the second part of the Emotional Journey, called Song Released, more negative feelings are present. In comparison with the first part of the journey, the average magnitude span lies much lower than it does during the first part of the journey.

The different phases of Song Released have been identified as Submit project to RU (Record Union), Promotion, Acquiring listeners and Monetization. In contrast to the anxiety felt before releasing a song, Submit project to RU was described as a step of relief and accomplishment. Through this action, Aspiring Artists can accept that a project has been finalized. In this stage, all that matters is that they feel pleased with the project and that it represents them in the way that they wanted it to.

Unfortunately, the relief is very short-lived for most artists. The confusion and frustration that comes with trying to promote music, acquire listeners and gain attention become more and more pressing. Not one artist that participated in the Interviews or Diary Study explicitly expressed a positive emotion when talking about the step Promotion. To conclude, promotion is a challenge for many Aspiring Artists and comes with a high risk of being taken advantage of, particularly in terms of money, trust and lack of experience.

Lastly, even though artists continuously hope that their next release “might be the one”, there is no denying the sadness and defeat they experience when realizing it won't. Even though the song might be played on the radio and get a couple of thousand streams, all it will give them is the money equivalent of a beer or a coffee.

### 6.3 Key Findings

During this section, insights in the form of challenges and opportunities connected to the everyday life of aspiring artists will be presented. The results derive from interviews, diary study and analysis performed in the User Research phase as well as the validation survey and concept evaluation performed during the Concept Development phase. The full set of responses for the validation survey can be seen in Appendix A.8

#### 6.3.1 Emotions Driving Creation

Although all artists participating in the qualitative research of this study identified as aspiring artists, a variety in terms of both achievements, experience and education was found within the sample. As presented through the User Profiles, within the group of aspiring artists different levels exists and the thing uniting all levels are emotions. Above all, the role emotions play during the creative process of making music.

As shown below by Participant 7, music is more than a project, it is something that has to be felt and experienced. Artists spoken to, such as Participant 1, said that

emotions and experiences are always the seed to starting up a new project and hence heavily influence their work.

*“It can’t just be a project, I have to feel it too. In each project I do, I am trying to be more emotional (...) It is music you can understand just through simple chords or melodies, music that can make you feel something” - Participant 7.*

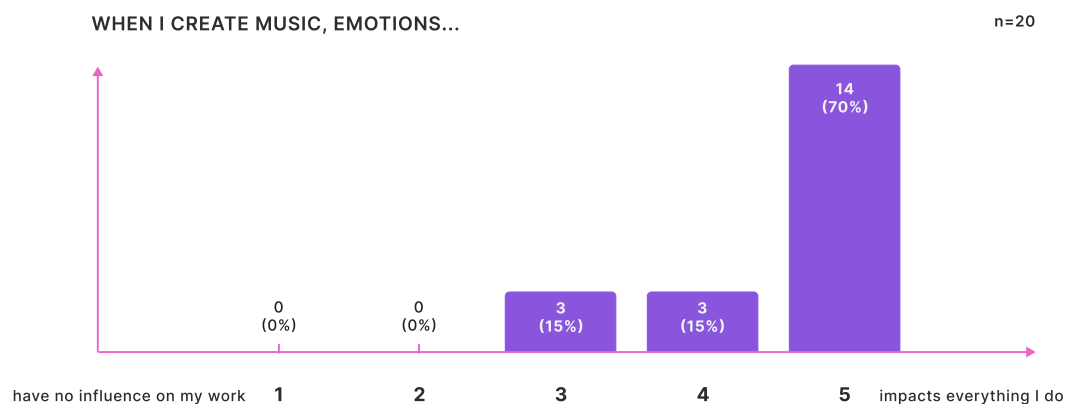
*“I will just see how I feel and then just freestyle that feeling” - Participant 1*

That emotions plays an important role for artists was further confirmed through the validation survey. As seen in Figure 6.3, 70% stated that emotions impact everything in their music creation. Conversely, none selected that emotions have no or little influence over their work. On the other hand, emotions tend to fluctuate during the creative process and staying on track with the initial emotional message of a song is of high importance for artists. When emotions do change considerably, or artists experience a decrease of inspiration for a project, they might put the project on hold, as illustrated by Participants 3 and 5.

*“(...) it became a lot of frustration and I had to put it on ice.” - Participant 3*

*“I definitely take my time with each project(...) as far as feeling out the project as I am creating it, seeing if it flows naturally and if I have a good feeling about it. Those are projects I want to take my time with, put more focus on and take less time away from those I really struggle with.” - Participant 5.*

To conclude, emotions are often the core of artists music creation and consequently, most artists work with multiple projects at the same time to be able to match alternating emotional stages.



**Figure 6.3:** Visualisation displaying the results of the statement *“When I create music, emotions...”*, asked in the validation survey.

### 6.3.2 Staying True to Oneself

Professionally recognizing oneself is a struggle for many Aspiring Artists and creating or releasing music is often not enough to evoke such feelings. According to Participant 6, surrounding activities, such as assembling an artist page, can increase the feeling of being a real artist.

*“Setting up your artist pages on different platforms is a buzz and you feel like a real artist” - Participant 6*

In addition to the challenge of feeling like a professional artist, Aspiring Artists struggle with creating long-term strategies. The underlying cause of such a problem is most often prioritizing time for it. The challenges specifically apply to promotional activities. As highlighted by the Emotional User Journey, this is the most confusing phase for Aspiring Artists. Furthermore, Participants 2 and 6 emphasized the confusion on how to gain traction.

*“As soon as I have released a song, it is like, ok, now I have released it“ - Participant 2*

*“As soon as you cross that line and release the tracks you realize that: how am I going to get people to hear this?”- Participant 6*

In the absence of a defined strategy, artists often adopt the strategy *Staying true to oneself*. Such a strategy revolves around integrity and ownership of music. In other words, one can say that Aspiring Artists have a need to find a unique sound and style that can define who they are as artists. As an example, Participant 8 has engaged in such pursuits. Likewise, Participant 7 has the mindset and confidence that if one keeps working hard and improving the process of music-making, success will follow. Such hard work seems to be crucial according to Participant 10.

*“I am in the fleshing out phase, finding out what works and what doesn't work in my music career” - Participant 8*

*“I keep motivated by knowing that I will be better in time if I keep pushing through. I try not to think too much about it and just do instead. “ - Participant 7*

*“If I don't keep up the pace and move forward, it is all just gonna stop.“ - Participant 10*

To summarize, staying true to oneself is the utmost strategy used by Aspiring Artists. Since it focuses on creativity and music personality, it takes pressure away from publicly recognizing oneself as an artist.

### 6.3.3 Experiencing Success

Despite various career levels, Aspiring Artists share similar views on success. The definition of success within the music industry is progressive, meaning that goals develop gradually along with accomplishments. As highlighted by Participant 7, an artist's goals are ever-changing.

*“(...) to live on my music and collaborate with people. But I will then start to have more goals. People want to have more and more and more... I think the goals evolve.” - Participant 7*

To further illustrate, less experienced Aspiring Artists could feel that getting a song played by a radio station would mean making it as an artist. Conversely, for more experienced artists, hearing one's music on the radio could be something already achieved, whereas making it as an artist is something they still have not accomplished. To conclude, less experienced Aspiring Artists often have a more naive approach to success. However, the definition of success is ever-evolving.

### 6.3.4 Staying in Control

No matter what career stage they have reached, being in control of their music is the essence for independent artists. In addition, the need for ownership and integrity is what motivates artists to become and remain independent. In practice, illustrated by Participant 5, this could be as simple as having the ability to set own deadlines.

*“The benefit of being an independent artist is that I set my own deadline. I don't have someone on my back saying: Hey, can you get this done, we are expecting this many people to listen to it and we are expecting this profit” - Participant 5*

Furthermore, the need for control is a threshold in collaborations. Creating music together is inspirational for Aspiring Artists. However, in conjunction with the strategy of staying true to oneself, music needs to feel personal and Aspiring Artists, exemplified by Participant 8, need to have a say in the creative process. To further substantiate, Participant 5 provides an example of how fruitless collaborations can leave an artist with compromised integrity and a lack of control. In general, as long as all parties feel like valuable contributors, a collaboration is successful.

*“I can do whatever I want, It is my space.” - Participant 8*

*“Past experiences with collaborating did not meet his expectations and he felt like the song did not match the vision he had and did not sound the way he wanted it to sound. Collaborations has pushed him outside his comfort zone in a negative way“ - Participant 5*

In addition, the need for control is often connected to the artist's view and experiences of the music industry. While some, such as Participant 10, have great trust in the industry, others, such as Participant 9, bring up a more cynical point of

view. For those, control in the music industry revolves around the financials. As elaborated by Participant 3, there is a wish for a change within the industry today. Foremost, such change should strive to increase the percentage of revenue that goes back to the creators.

*“There are no laws in the industry, no regulations. It’s like the wild west. Everyone is by themselves and you have to look out for yourself and only trust your closest.” - Participant 9*

*“At this point I am pretty trusting, everything has been pretty straight forward“ - Participant 10*

*“No industry brings in as much money as the music industry does and still, it is impossible for artists to live on streams” - Participant 3*

In brief, staying in control captures the need for contributing and having a say in the creative phase. Moreover, it highlights the lack of control some Aspiring Artists have experienced within the music industry.

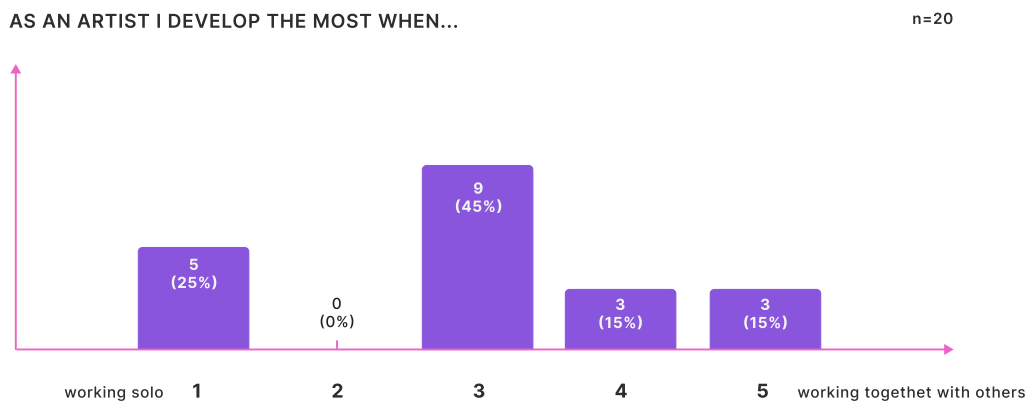
### 6.3.5 Desiring a Community

In the early stages of their music career, Aspiring Artists spend long hours working alone on music. Such efforts make it possible to enhance their general music-making process and improve specific beats or compositions. Although, while making improvements, it eventually becomes a challenge to be the judge of one’s music creation. As elaborated by Participant 7, it is hard to differentiate between what is good enough and what needs development. Therefore it is suggested by Participant 10 that a community could aid the growth of an artist, both personally and professionally.

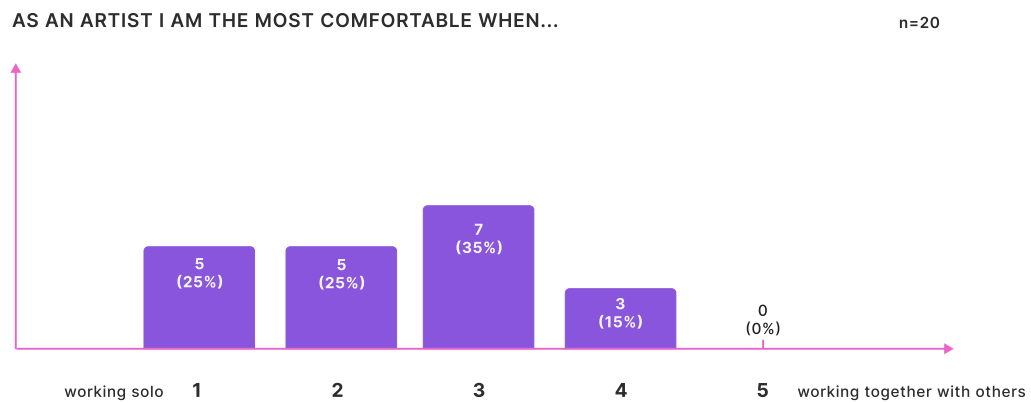
*“Working alone can be hard, just sitting with your own ears and eyes” - Participant 7*

*“I would love to be a part of a community of some sort, so that I can get out of my shell.” - Participant 10*

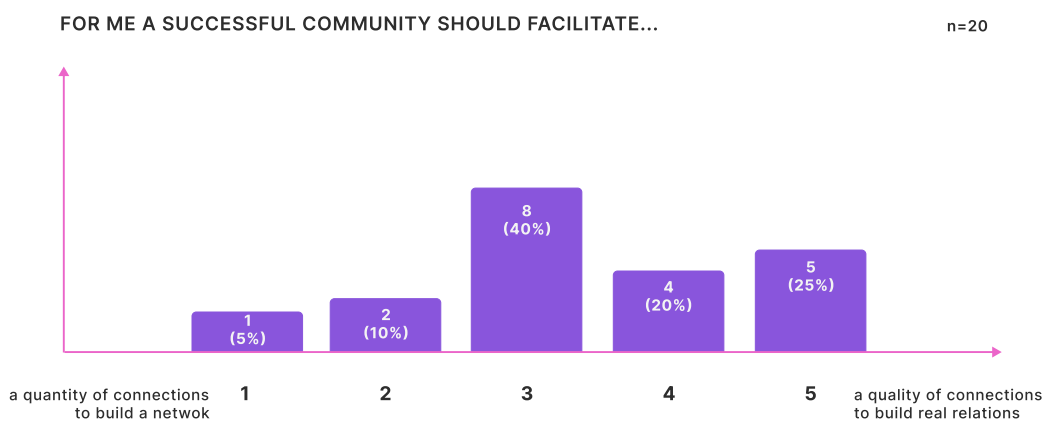
Moreover, as seen in Figure 6.4, the validation survey concluded that artists’ perceptions of when they develop the most are spread between working alone or in collaborations. 30% was favorable for working together with others and 25% for working alone. Notably, as illustrated by Figure 6.5, artists feel the most comfortable working individually. Results show that 50% feel more comfortable working alone, whereas only 15% do it in collaborations.



**Figure 6.4:** Results of the statement *"As an artist I develop the most when..."*, asked in the validation survey.



**Figure 6.5:** Results of the statement *"As an artist I am the most comfortable when..."*, asked in the validation survey.



**Figure 6.6:** Results of the statement *"For me a successful community should facilitate..."*, asked in the validation survey.

As brought to attention by Participant 3, most artists see collaborations as a way of getting new inspiration. Aspiring Artists are curious about exploring various styles and collaborating across genres can then provide creative benefits. Moreover, not limiting collaborations to genres was recognized by Participants 8 and 10, as seen below. Furthermore, skills, values and personal connection are the most important traits for a collaboration.

*“I want to work with a group I feel inspired by.” - Participant 3*

*“I don’t have a genre I try to be original.” - Participant 8*

*“I mix and match different genres to find unique combinations.” - Participant 10*

Personal and close connections are the relations Aspiring Artists desire in a community. Thus, they are looking for like-minded people with whom the connection can lead to musical collaborations and development. The result shown in Figure 6.6 confirms that artists value quality over quantity in their relations. However, the struggle for artists is finding link-minded people to connect with.

Through Participant 4, it emerged that artists, particularly at the beginning of their journey, are left to themselves to figure out how to proceed and build a network. The reason artists struggle is because they don’t know where to start looking. On the other hand, artists pursuing an education in music, for example, Participant 2, are instantly provided with the opportunity to build a network. Moreover, the need for a network varies from person to person within the different levels of Aspiring Artists, as mentioned in Section 6.1. Some might want to learn a new set of skills, gain a deeper understanding of the industry or solely share their knowledge, whereas others might seek promotion.

*“Since I am a beginner, I do not know other people in the music world who make music. I would very much like to get to know other people in the music industry in order to create a network and meet people who can help with promotions” - Participant 4*

*“I did not know anyone before I started my education, so now my community is there” - Participant 2*

Establishing a network for both creative and promotional purposes takes time and effort. Such an endeavor is a challenge for any artist in this digital age. To exemplify, many spend years building a network, such as Participants 6 and 9, who both previously pursued a career in music.

*“Back in the 90s, everything was much more face to face, you actually met people in the record shop (...) None of that is left now, everything is online. It makes this easier but it also makes things so much harder. We can’t replace human-to-human contact.” - Participant 9*

*“A lot of contacts from the 90’s when touring with my cover band.” - Participant 6*

To summarize, Aspiring Artists desire a community that provides guidance and inspiration. Such a network is built with close connections and requires time and effort to establish. However, most artists today do not know where to start looking for collaborators.

### 6.3.6 Receiving Feedback & Validation

Connected to communities and collaborations, Aspiring Artists seek feedback as a tool for development. According to Participant 3, success factors for music-making are quick feedback and collaboratory building ideas. Furthermore, as highlighted by Participant 10, there is a distinction between valuable feedback and sole validation. Constructive criticism, targeting specific beats or parts of a track or process, would aid music-making and is something aspiring artists lack.

To absorb and process feedback, it must come from someone respected and trusted, preferably from the music industry. This person is often like-minded and has similar values as the Aspiring Artists. As brought up by Participant 6, feedback of this kind can be seen as a measure of success.

*“Like to write together, to be able to spin off and build on other people’s ideas” - Participant 3*

*“I do get feedback, but it is more along the lines that it is not the feedback I am looking for. I am looking for constructive criticism.” - Participant 10*

*“I want to be recognized by peers and people I respect in the music world” - Participant 6*

Conversely, communities focusing on validation, such as getting likes from followers on social media, are not valued as something that would help Aspiring Artists with growth and development. Moreover, the research discovered trends for the opposite. Participant 9 expressed feelings connected to being tired of social media and indicating a lack of trust in any feedback provided on such a platform. Whereas Participant 5 felt that the pressure of getting likes and keeping an account up to date was causing stress and negative emotions. To conclude, validation does not severe as a growth factor and the feedback provided to Aspiring Artists should be constructive.

*“Social media doesn’t really reward you, everybody just causes validation and re-posts everything, without even listening.” - Participant 9*

*“Social media is not my thing. I don’t use social media that much because I get stressed out by using it and it becomes a distraction.” - Participant 5*

### 6.3.7 Lacking Focus on Fan Relations

Aspiring artists, such as Participants 6 and 7, spoke about the desire to have a close relationship with their fans. Yet surprisingly, participants felt a connection to their fans, even though the only interaction was through data provided by various streaming platforms. To conclude, by knowing basic demographics, such as where listeners live, Aspiring Artists feel they have established a relationship with their fans.

*“Want to be able to get more information about my fans - know how they are and be able to communicate with them.” - Participant 6*

*“If there will be more people listening to my music I would definitely like to know what they like and also have relations with them”- Participant 7*

Moreover, a growing fan base can feel accomplishing or unusual and almost intimidating, creating more pressure on the Aspiring Artist. Participant 8 felt discouraged by the attention. Such feelings can be recognized by introvert Aspiring Artists and artists aspiring to pursue a career within the music industry rather than become a superstar.

*“I don’t like the attention and I am a bit of an introvert, but it is nice to hear from people that like my stuff” - Participant 8*

To conclude, artists do not put much effort into building fan relations. It is spoken about as something that will come later after they have built a network and started collaborating with people.

## 6.4 Identified Needs & Design Requirements

The user profiles, emotional journey and user insights have been summarized and framed in the list of identified needs, see Table 6.1. The needs are categorized into two areas; needs surrounding the individual artist and needs surrounding collaboration. Artist needs are focused around keeping their integrity, control, ownership and creating meaningful relations. Collaboration needs are focused on the interaction between artists, finding artists, building relations and facilitating trust.

**Table 6.1:** List of Identified Needs.

NEED	AREA
Users need to keep their integrity as artists.	ARTIST
Users need to keep structure and track progress of creations.	ARTIST
Users need to stay in control of their music and creation.	ARTIST
Users need to develop in their artistry in order to meet their goals.	ARTIST
Users do not seek a new social media platform.	ARTIST
Users seek close connections with other artists.	COLLAB
Users seek connections with like-minded people.	COLLAB
Users need to be able to collaborate with other artists.	COLLAB
Users need to trust their collaborators.	COLLAB
Users seek constructive feedback from their connections.	COLLAB
Users seek to build long-lasting relations that can evolve over time.	COLLAB
Users seek to collaborate across genres.	COLLAB

The list of design requirements frames the design requirements to follow when moving forward, see Table 9.1. The list has been categorized into areas, namely core, general and design. Core requirements are important to the growth of Record Union regardless of the concept at hand and should therefore be kept in mind and applied to any future design solution. General requirements are concept-bound and focus on aspects that future concepts could evolve around. Lastly, the design requirement focuses on, for example, the user experience, usability and visualization of the solution.

## 6. Findings & Requirements

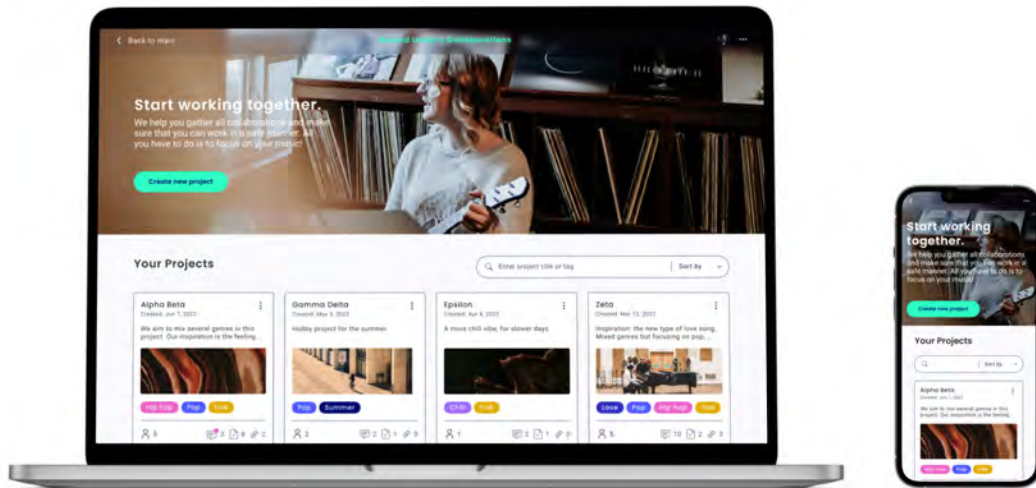
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**Table 6.2:** List of Identified Requirements.

REQUIREMENT	AREA
The solution needs to be integrated in the existing Record Union Web application.	CORE
The solution needs to gain users trust.	CORE
The solution needs to always strive to support artists integrity.	CORE
The solution needs to clearly communicate its purpose and offer to users.	CORE
A concept should ensure safe collaborations.	GENERAL
A concept should provide a possibility to track progress.	GENERAL
A concept need to facilitate long-term connections.	GENERAL
A concept should strive for social capital acquisition.	GENERAL
A concept should strive to effectively facilitate trust between users.	GENERAL
A concept should not interfere with users music career.	GENERAL
A concept should strive for not being a new social media platform.	GENERAL
A concept should strive to facilitate growth and development for users.	GENERAL
A concept should provide connections with both known and unknown artists.	GENERAL
The design solution should visualize relations to provide a feeling of human to human interaction.	DESIGN
The design solutions should provide a mean of communication.	DESIGN
The design solution should create trust by providing customized features.	DESIGN
The design solution should provide an feature for artists to find like-minded artists.	DESIGN
The design solution should be scale-able and create a possibility to build close connection even when their network grows.	DESIGN
The design solution should use data presentation and visualisation to create a feeling of belonging.	DESIGN
The design solution should use data presentation and visualisation to create trust between users.	DESIGN

# 7

## Final Design



**Figure 7.1:** The final concept, Facilitating Collaborations, in both desktop and mobile format.

The user interface presented in this chapter aims to conceptualize the utilization of emotions in design and social capital theory as a tool for facilitating trust and collaborations. The concept has been created as a way of answering the second research question, *RQ2: What design solutions, or interactions, can be considered to improve social capital among Aspiring Artists?* This research has identified that musical collaborations provide Aspiring Artists with inspiration and growth. Today, the lack of work structure and trust between artists are the major thresholds for initiating collaborations. By designing for a change in the process and structure of collaborations, the result of this work seeks to increase the feeling of control and ownership of music in a digital setting. Cooperation built on trust and control is intended as a consequence of such design.

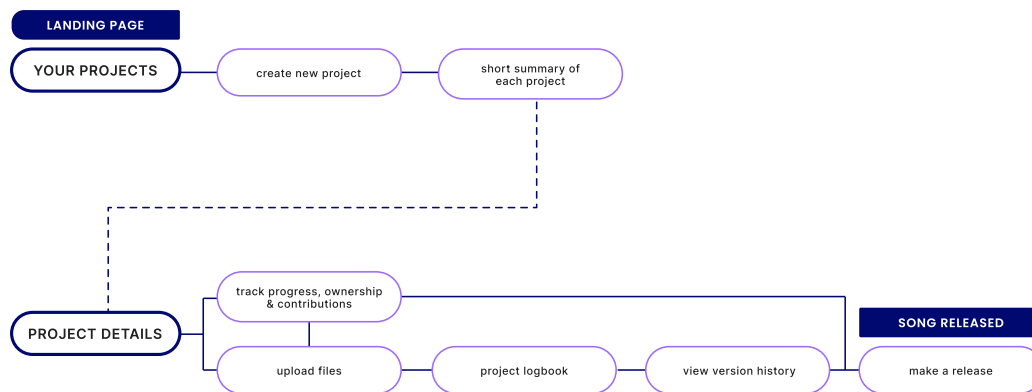
Throughout this chapter, explicit descriptions and visualizations of the concept's key elements will be presented. Such key elements include a condensed overview of all active projects and a detailed view of each project in which information displaying

ownership and contribution to the specific project are presented. Responsiveness of the concept is manifested through the introduction of mobile as well as desktop designs and the visual identity has been adapted to the proposed context of use, which is the current Record Union web application. Lastly, the design presented will be the base for attempting to answer the third research question, *RQ3: What potential does such a solution have for transformational innovation?* in the discussion, see Chapter 8.

## 7.1 Facilitating Collaborations

The concept Facilitating Collaborations derives from the idea that designing for transparency and building trust amongst Aspiring Artists are the fundamentals when providing safe collaborations on a digital platform. With this in mind, interaction flows and wireframes presented as a result in this thesis, are limited to already established connections. In other words, the concept has been limited to not include a feature for artists to initiate contact with other aspiring artists. However, this does not mean that there isn't a need for such a feature to be explored and included in a future version of the product.

As illustrated through Figure 7.2, the user flow revolves around two main views, *Your Projects* view and *Project Details* view. From the main views of the interface, a profound level of interactions and information can be reached.



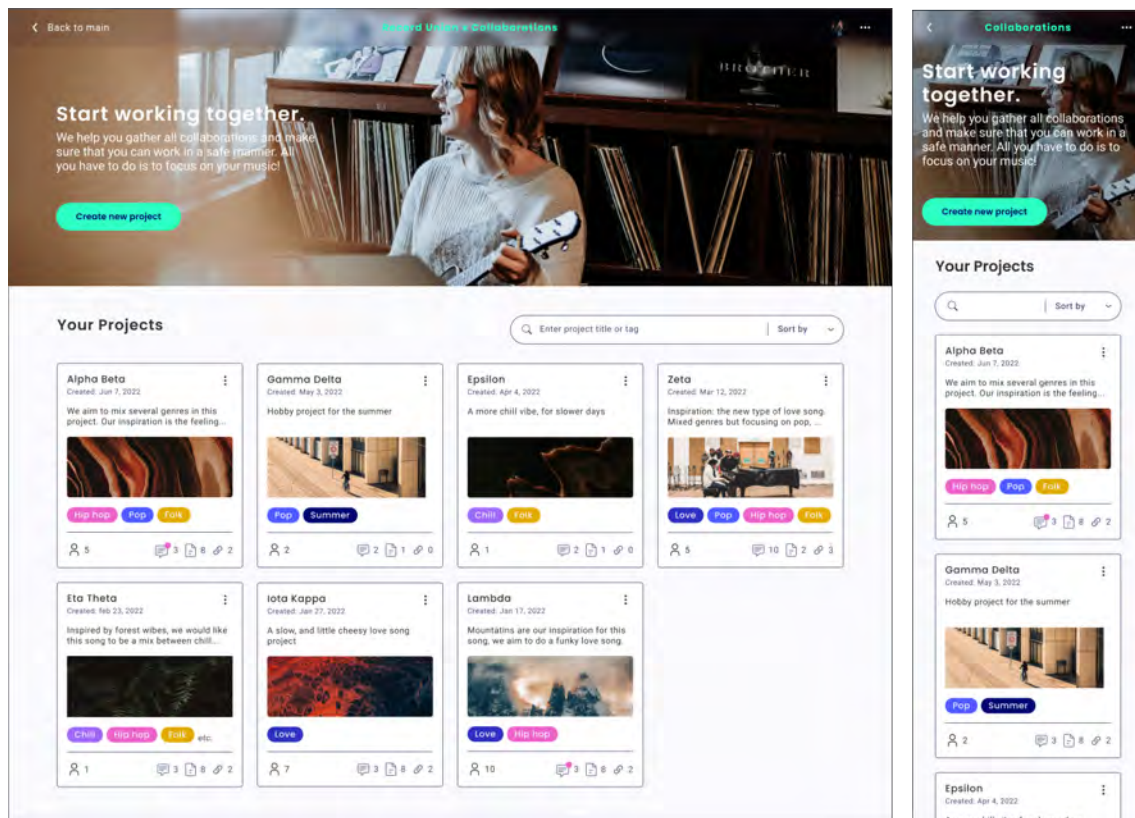
**Figure 7.2:** User flow and features for the final concept.

The *Your Projects* view serves as the platform's landing page, introducing users to the different features. It facilitates the action of creating new projects as well as provides an overview of the users' ongoing projects. Each project is represented through a project card. Such component holds a high-level summary of the project, including title, project tags, number of collaborators and more. By interacting with a card, users can go deeper into the interface, reaching the *Project Details* view for that specific project.

Moreover, the *Project Details* view accommodates the actual space for collaboration and is shared amongst a group of people collaborating on a project, called project members. The space is also thought to be of use by a single person, wanting to organize their solo projects or potentially be able to collaborate with people outside of Record Union. Main functionalities are file-sharing, version-tracking, the ability to react to uploads and the set structure of approval for releasing a song in unison. In brief, collaborators jointly build a traceable song that in a safe and controlled manner displays contributions and ownership. The following subsections will go deeper into the details of each element in the final solution.

### 7.1.1 Your Projects View

Designed with three main sections, the introductory view holds the role of establishing trust between the interface and the user. As presented, top-down in Figure 7.3, the sections are the top navigation, information segment and project module. Each section aims to establish trust from different perspectives.



**Figure 7.3:** The Your Projects view provides an overview of all ongoing projects. Desktop version is displayed to the left, mobile version to the right.

The aim of the top navigation is to clearly indicate the structure of and position within the feature. Such a component's location is static, however, elements within the component are designed dynamically and shift depending on the specific view. For the current view, three elements are displayed. First, an exit path can be found to the far left, taking the user back to the main web page of Record Union. Second,

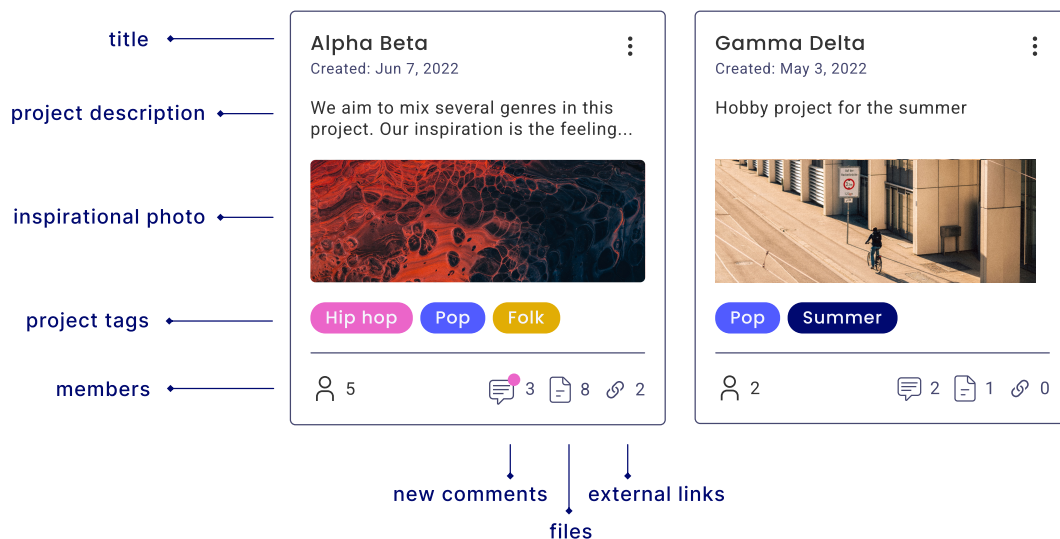
## 7. Final Design

a textual indication of application location, in this case the collaborative feature, is provided in the center of the bar. Third and to the far right, managing options for user profiles and accounts can be easily accessed, increasing the user control.

Past iterations of the concept leveraged user statistics as a medium for increasing the feeling of belonging. Subsequently, user testing discovered some confusion on the matter. The statistics shifted the users' focus away from collaboration and at this point, the designers doubts that such a feature will add to the core concept. Nevertheless, it is still believed that data can be used to evoke emotions connected to belonging.

Consequently, the purpose of such a segment changed focus to more clearly communicating the offer and the aim of the feature at hand. As a result, the design further increases the possibility to create trust between product and user. The approach used is both textual as well as visual, a design choice that provides a reach across both visceral, behavioral and reflective processing.

The last segment of this view is the project module. The module uses a grid pattern, allowing project cards to be static while the number of columns and rows is responsive based on the platform of use. As displayed in Figure 7.3, four and one column patterns are used for desktop and mobile respectively. Furthermore, to cater to the need for customization, functionality for filtering or sorting cards is provided.



**Figure 7.4:** Project cards serving as a summary of ongoing projects.

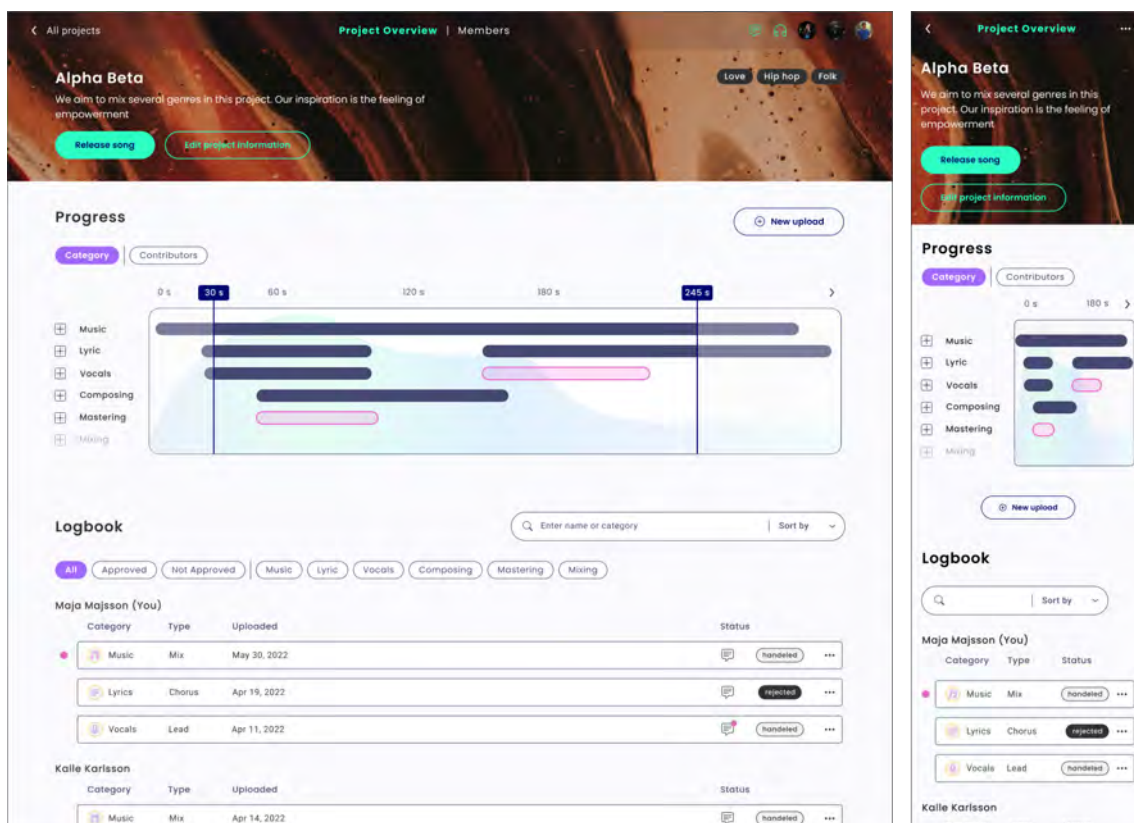
An up-close representation of the project cards can be seen in Figure 7.4. To provide both an overview and user control, the cards use the following design elements; a project or song title, a short description of the project, an inspirational or cover photo, project tags and high-level statistics displaying the progress of the project. The first four elements serve as a high-level project summary and the last element

provides information for tracking progress and activity within the specific project.

More in detail titles, descriptions, images and tags are elements set by the owners of the project, initially done when creating it. Notably, modifications of these elements can be done throughout the project. When users select tags, the interface provides a pre-set selection. Should the users not find suitable topics, they have the option to create new, customized ones. The progress and activity of a project are displayed using icons. From left to right, the first icon represents the number of collaborators within the project. The second represents unread comments and feedback. The third represents new uploads and the last one displays new external files that have been linked to the project.

### 7.1.2 Project Details View

The result presented in this subsection seeks to facilitate collaborations through the design of traceable projects. Used to attain success was a clear display of contributions and ownership amongst artists. For the full design of the *Project Details* view, see Figure 7.5.



**Figure 7.5:** The Project Details view, facilitating the collaboration space. Desktop version is displayed to the left, mobile version to the right.

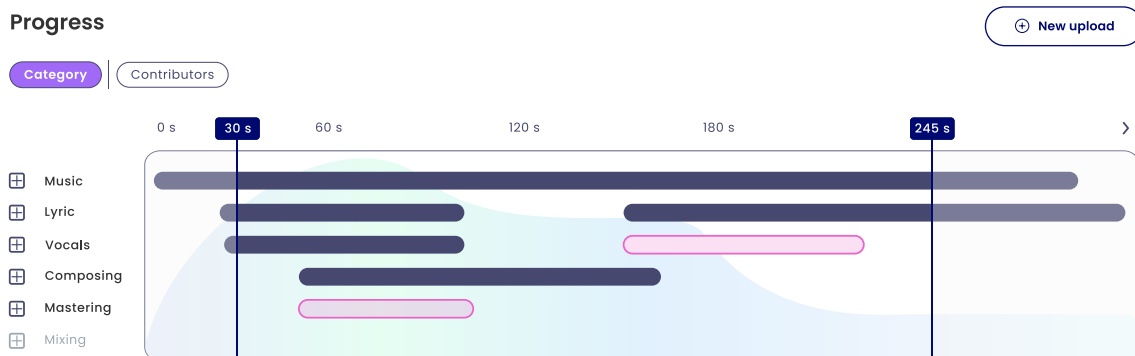
The interface is structured using four main sections. The sections, as displayed in Figure 7.5, are called top navigation, project introduction, progress and logbook.

As previously mentioned, the navigation bar consists of dynamic elements tailored to the active view. In this case, the left section of the bar consists of an exit path, leading the user back to the *Your Projects* view. The center section provides navigation and location inside the project, illustrated by the active overview and the deactivated member's pages. The right section highlights user profiles.

Next, the project summary highlights information displayed on the project cards, such as the title, description, cover image and tags. A primary button indicates the concluding action of releasing a song and a secondary button indicates the possibility of changing the details. In addition to the edit and release functionality, this section provides a gentle reminder of the emotional foundation of the project.

The progress section relies on visual and spatial information, whereas the logbook has adapted to a textual approach. Utilizing different stimuli and processing abilities increases the cognitive capacity for processing information. As the visual representation of contributions and ownership, the progress section aims to display and track the development and progress of the project. For such achievement, a schematic chart illustrates the progress.

The chart uses several vertically stacked rows and a horizontal axis to build a coordination system, as displayed in Figure 7.6. Each row represents a category connected to different types of contributions and copyrights, for instance lyrics, vocals and music. The horizontal axis illustrates the timeline of the song in progress. Bars are then placed accordingly within the coordinated systems. Each bar represents an individual contribution and has two states, not viewed (pink outlined) and viewed (grey filled). Such a structural difference between states increases accessibility. The not viewed bar-state is meant to capture the users attention, indicating that a new contribution has been uploaded and added to the song since the last time the user visited the platform. To easily connect new uploads showed in the chart to the logbook, a pink circle to the left of the uploaded list item, see Figure 7.5.

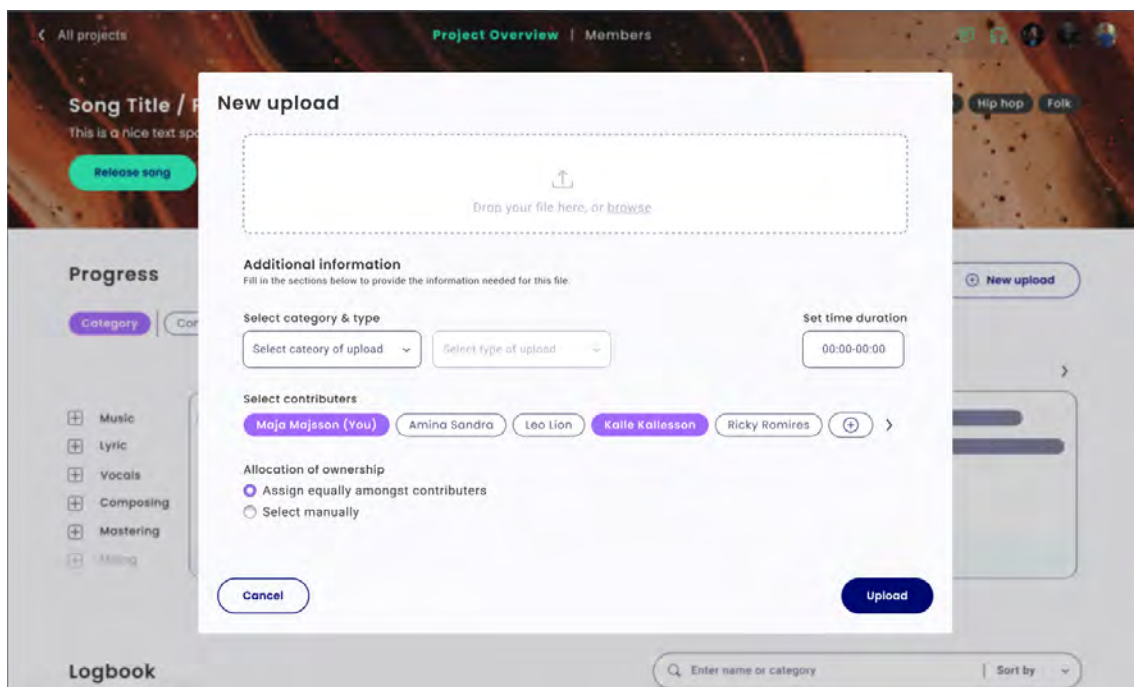


**Figure 7.6:** The bar chart displaying uploaded contributions and ownership.

Moreover, users can interact with the chart using two separate actions, dragging the timestamps or clicking the filters placed above the chart. The first interaction allows users to view a specific part of the song, whereas the second caters to both customize

and filter the type of displayed data. The data can be tailored either based on category, as displayed in the figure, or based on contributors to the project. Notably, filters applied to the chart do not affect the logbook.

In brief, the logbook segment holds all data connected to the various building blocks of a song, including its version history. The information follows a list structure, with each item representing a contribution uploaded by one of the collaborators. Uploading a new contribution is done through the *New upload* button located further up on the page. After clicking the button, a modal will appear in which users can select a file type and add details such as contributors and category, see Figure 7.7. Furthermore, the findings has concluded that more automated and seamless uploads, as well as gathering of data, would benefit the user experiences.



**Figure 7.7:** The New upload modal.

Moreover, the logbook overview will only display a selection of data, this to improve the overall clarity of the interface. The displayed data provides users with information such as who made the upload, category, type and date of upload. In resemblance with the bars visualized in the project overview, each item has two states, viewed or not viewed. Not viewed list items have been uploaded since the last time the user visited the platform and are as previously mentioned, marked with a pink circle placed to the left of the list item. Should users like to access more information such as length of upload, version history, ownership and chat they can do so by clicking on the desired item. A modal will then appear showcasing more data, see Figure 7.8.

## 7. Final Design

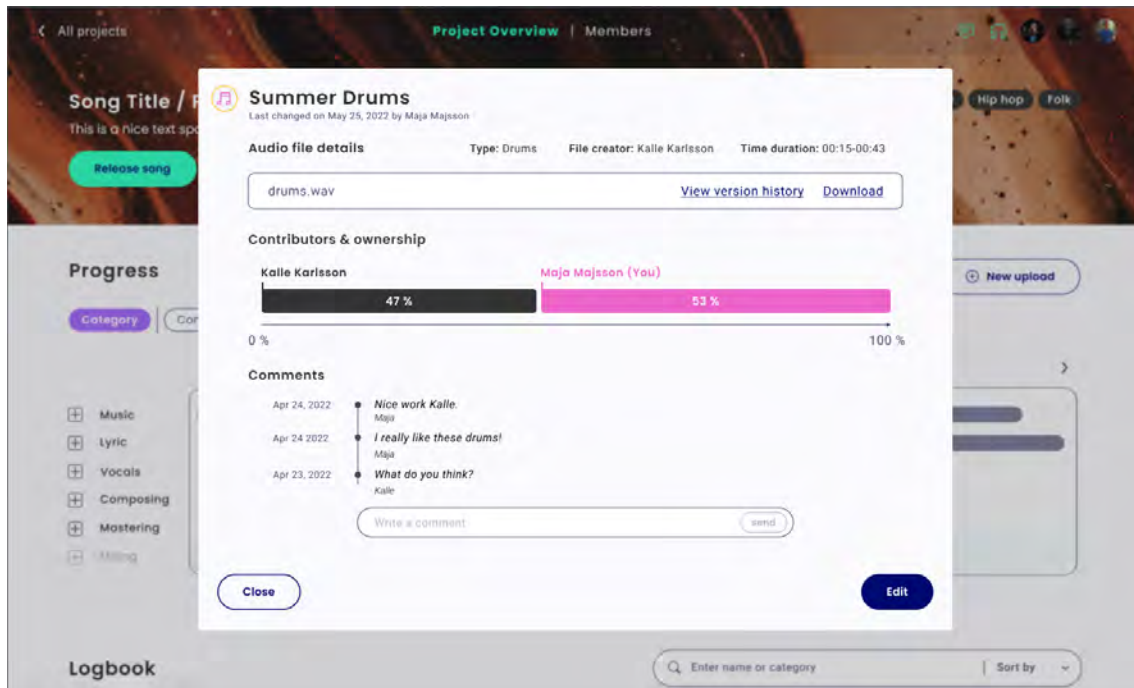


Figure 7.8: The View more details modal

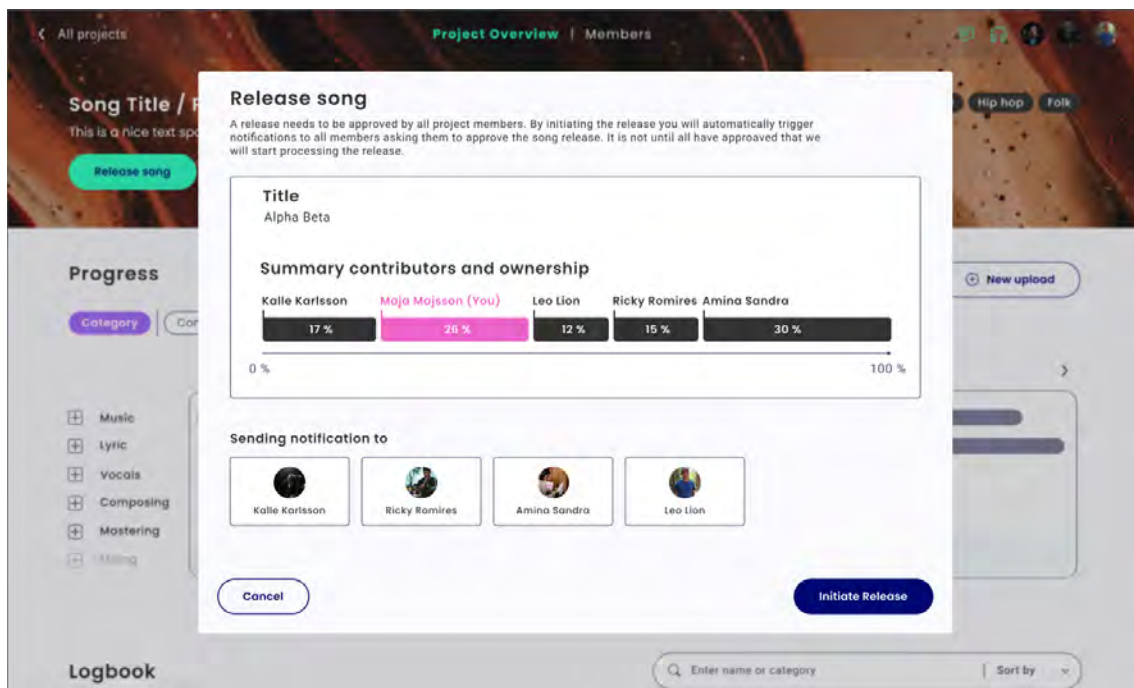


Figure 7.9: The Release song modal.

Although newly uploaded contributions are highlighted, the system does not demand users' approval for each item. Uploads are on the contrary approved by default and an opt-out action for rejecting an upload is instead required. Former iterations on the concept did explore the opposite approach. However, through evaluations with stakeholders and users, the conclusion that more automated approvals would provide a better foundation for building trust and decrease the risk of micromanaging has been drawn. Should there be a need, users can still reject or comment on any uploaded file.

Through additional precautionary steps in the release flow, the system can ensure a higher level of user control and integrity. To avoid users missing uploads or forgetting to make an active reject, a feature requiring all project members to validate copyrights, ownership and contributions before making a release of the song possible is present. Such formalities are presented in the release modal, see Figure 7.9, and are reached through the *Release song* button, styled as a primary button and located in the project introduction section at the top of the page. Once a user has initiated the release, remaining members will receive a notification asking them to approve.

Altogether, with the bar chart providing an accessible overview of the song progress, the logbook providing access to more detailed information regarding ownership, allocation of copyright and versions as well as the blockchain inspired release flow, dividing a song into blocks of contributions, a space in which trust and social capital can grow has been created. The Facilitating Collaboration concept is intended to lower the threshold for Aspiring Artist collaborating by providing a safe space to share files and knowledge, with the aim of creating positive experiences for independent artists.



# 8

## Discussion

Overall, the discussion in this chapter is set out to investigate if, and if so, to what extent the problem statement has been answered through the work conducted. The statement is phrased as follows, *What design factors should be considered when designing for transformational innovation in the context of independent music distribution.* In addition, to help answer the statement, three research questions, *RQ1: What are the current challenging factors for Aspiring Artists?*, *RQ2: What design solutions, or interactions, can be considered to improve social capital among Aspiring Artists?* and *RQ3: What potential does such a solution have for transformational innovation?* have been addressed.

Moreover, topics such as how well the thesis has succeeded with proceedings, delivering a design solution, contributing to academia as well as meeting stakeholders' Record Union (RU) and Aspiring Artists' demands are discussed. Lastly, ethical and moral aspects connected to working with design and user involvement are presented.

### 8.1 Challenging Factors for Aspiring Artists

The user research phase was performed with the aim of answering the first research question *RQ1: What are the current challenging factors for Aspiring Artists?*. The findings presented through the User Profiles, Emotional Journey Map and Key findings in Chapter 6 give a thorough understanding of Aspiring Artists. In particular, the User Profiles work as means for categorizing and defining the target group. It provided the researchers a way of structuring their perception of users, whereas when used as a mediating object in workshops it contributed to ambiguity in terms of prioritization. Although the User Profiles were not used as much as anticipated, they aided researchers with a holistic view of what success is and opened up new possible growth tracks for the platform.

Furthermore, the Emotional Journey Map was supposed to capture the essential emotions and pain points present in the context of creating and releasing music. The success of the journey is concluded through its ability to communicate emotions and trigger discussions among stakeholders, design students and interviewees. However, the emotional journey is quite complex and understanding all levels and perspectives take time.

The final pillar for presenting user insight, Key findings, contributes to this thesis by presenting a broad spectrum of user insights. In comparison with challenges formerly identified by Record Union, see Subsection , the findings presented in Chapter 6 have confirmed the struggles in the areas of Marketing & Promotion, Network & Collaboration, Trust and Knowledge. On the other hand, the topics of Financing & Funding and Mental Health appear more briefly, hence neither validation nor disagreement on such topics can be made.

To further elaborate, within the area of Marketing & Promotion this thesis sheds light on Aspiring Artists' confusion around promotion as well as the lack of focus on building fan relations early in their career. As a contribution to the topic of Network & Collaboration, the user profile Professional Music Creator constitutes collaborations as a measure of success. Similarly, Daniels (2019) asserts that an increased feeling of empowerment contributes to success no longer corresponds to being signed by a label. Instead and as brought forward by Öztürk (2018), collaborations are the accelerators for Aspiring Artists within the music industry.

In addition, trust has been identified as the facilitator of collaborations. Whereas previous insights on the topic focus on trust between artists and the industry this thesis has offered a second perspective, focusing on trust in the relations between Aspiring Artists. Lastly, adding to the topic of Knowledge a system illustration, see Figure 2.1, was created. Such a figure further visualizes the complexity of the system surrounding Aspiring Artists and can be used as a guide in further research connected to Aspiring Artists.

To conclude, when assembling the findings presented in Chapter 6, it is clear that they together bring a substantial understanding of the challenges experienced by Aspiring Artists today. Moreover, the answer to RQ1 reads as follows: the current challenging factors for Aspiring Artists are building trust and facilitating safe collaborations among Aspiring Artists, as well as conducting successful promotions and building fan relations to start monetizing their music.

## 8.2 Improving Social Capital Acquisition

The final concept Facilitating Collaborations, see Chapter 7, derives from insights, needs and requirements identified throughout this thesis. The design aims to showcase an answer to the second research question *RQ2: What design solutions, or interactions, can be considered to improve social capital among Aspiring Artists?*. This section presents a thorough discussion on the topic.

Utilizing Record Union and the elements presented in the final design as an aid when it comes to organizing and displaying digital ownership, it is believed that artists can become more open with each other. By sharing material and knowledge willingly, more meaningful relations and interactions are believed to form. This is due to the belief that trust can be established more effectively. In other words, this would mean that the design solution could help artists climb the Pyramid of Trust

(Serwin, 2016), presented in Chapter 3. The aim of the design solution is to get artists to reach the top level of the pyramid and accordingly with Serwin (2016) creating a will to commit to an ongoing relationship.

Setting this in motion, climbing the pyramid of trust, creating deep connections and building a growing network, a lot of resources needed for Social Capital acquisition have been established. As argued by Maric (2014) trust and social capital are closely connected. Trusting relationships generate social capital and social capital generates trusting relationships (Maric, 2014). The type of social capital that will grow between artists using this platform is believed to be of a shifting nature, i.e. of both bonding and bridging kinds.

As of now, how and which type of social capital will build amongst the artists could be up for discussion, depending on how the network around them is viewed and defined. One way to do it is to look at the project group as the network. Within this group, adopting to the definition suggested by Maric (2014), the idea is that artists can interact and thereby build trust and social capital. During the user research phase, it was discovered that artists seek both like-minded people, with whom they can identify and artists from different genres than their own.

Consequently, it can be assumed that interactions will appear both between artists of similar backgrounds or beliefs and artists with a very different approach to music and life than themselves. Additionally, since RU's users are located all over the world and this concept is thought to be used by as many of them as possible, it could result in artists seeking out other artists from e.g. their country, continent, culture, or religion. It could also result in artists seeking out artists from completely different origins. Therefore it is hard to predict what kind of constellation of artists the network will consist of if the network is defined as the project group. Hence, as complemented by (Claridge, 2018), both bonding and bridging social capital acquisition could be expected to derive from the final design concept between project members.

At the current state, the final design concept aims to only be used by RU's users. Looking at it from a wider perspective, the network could also simply be identified as users of RU. In this case, the common background connecting all artists would be that they are all artists and they are all using RU. Hence, the social capital would arguably be of a bonding kind, deriving from gathering people with a common goal on one platform, interacting and working on something they feel very passionate about.

To conclude, collaborating artist to artist creates a natural exchange of skills, experiences and knowledge. In turn, this could result in many artists leveling up their artistry more frequently than they would have done alone, without interacting with other artists. Thereby, the design solution contributes to both bonding and bridging social capital acquisition, as well as more artists climbing the steps towards becoming professional artists, see the User Profiles diagram in Chapter 6. The answer to RQ2 can be stated as follows: Creating a feature that allows artists to build trust

and collaborate with each other can improve social capital among Aspiring Artists.

### 8.3 Level of Innovation

Innovation is the potential for creating sustainable competitive advantages on the market (Samad, 2012) and can be categorized into three different levels (Nagji & Tuff, 2012). As introduced by Nagji and Tuff (2012) in Section 3.1, the lowest level is called core innovation, followed by adjacent and transformational innovation. To address the third research question *RQ3: What potential does such a solution have for transformational innovation?*, one needs to understand the current level of innovation.

The final concept can at current stage be categorized into an adjacent level, this motivated by the concept utilizing existing capabilities in combination with new user insight to create and offer an additional feature within the context of music, however outside of plain distribution. This becomes clearer in comparison with other concepts explored. For instance, Concept F and the User Profiles in Chapter 6, requires a more incremental change to an already existing feature, equal to Nagji and Tuff (2012) definition of core innovation.

As further illustrated by Figure 3.1, there is a span within the three levels and the boundaries between can be a bit diffuse. Whereas the final concept currently can be seen on an adjacent level, one can argue that the design in production has a potential for reaching a transformational level. Collaboration spaces, such as Onedrive or Dropbox, widely exist on the market today. Attempts have been made to create such spaces for targeting music creators as well, such as Splice Studio. However, with new offerings such as increasing digital ownership using a blockchain inspired approach the product can open a new place on the market of distribution. Notably, there are some technical hurdles the future product will need to overcome, especially in terms of file sharing for an extensive amount of big files without affecting the performance of the application. In conjunction with the discussion about latent needs being reached through exploring and testing solutions of tacit needs, the researchers want to hypothesize that in the context of user centered design, transformational innovation is reached through passing by and testing out concepts on an adjacent level.

To conclude, there is nothing saying that a more developed and launched version of the final concept would be of the transformational kind. However, to understand this, additional user evaluations need to be performed. Thereby, the answer to RQ3 reads as follows: The work performed has built a solid foundation for reaching a transformational design, but to understand the exact potential further testing needs to be performed.

## 8.4 Research & Design Work

The areas of independent artists and digital music distribution are relatively unexplored by the researchers of this thesis. Consequently, substantial efforts were dedicated towards understanding the music industry and creating empathy for Aspiring Artists in both the preparation and user research phases, see Sections 5.1 and 5.2. Arguably, such core understanding was needed to form a solid foundation from which deeper needs were explored. Thus, less time was allocated towards the concept development phase and as a consequence, potential implications for the final results can be discussed. Should more time have been spent on the latter parts of the Double Diamond process, one can argue that more latent needs could have been discovered as the concept went through several iterations and user evaluations. This section will provide a deeper discussion of the topic, as well as provide a general discussion of the research & design work performed throughout the project.

### 8.4.1 Sample & User Research Methods

A sample of 15 Aspiring Artists was used throughout the user research, see Table 5.4. The decision to include a world spread of Record Union users working within a variety of genres, rather than focusing on users within a limited market and a specific genre surely influenced the outcome of this thesis. However, by investigating a diverse sample of Aspiring Artists, the researchers could cover a wider range of preferences and routines amongst the user group. On the other hand, if the sample had been limited by markets and genres the challenges discovered would potentially have been more homogeneous, resulting in a different outcome of this thesis.

Due to the diverse sample, cultural differences appeared among the participants. Analyzing the correlations between experiences and cultures has been outside the work of this thesis. This would have required a larger sample in order to provide any insights with statistical significance. However, one can discuss the effects of the language barrier. Even though they are sufficient, neither the researchers nor all participants have English as their native language. Consequently, some insight could have been lost in translation and, in turn, affected the end results.

According to Sleeswijk Visser et al. (2005), the use of sensitizing triggers different ways to reflect on and express experiences. It is believed that the interviewees who created a sensitizing artifact prior to the interview session had an easier time reflecting and verbally expressing their experiences within the music industry. However, the researchers experienced struggles when it came to making sure that the artifact was actually created before the interview session. One reason for this could be that the tool provided for creating the artifact, Miro, did not accommodate participants using a mobile platform without downloading an app. In this day and age, the researchers see benefits of using tools that accommodate both mobile and desktop platforms.

However, even though the length of the diary study was beneficial for the use of sensitizing, it is believed that an even longer time period would have brought a deeper understanding of patterns and behaviors. The diary study did contribute widely to this study, but in combination with an increased time period, a bigger sample has the potential to further increase the credibility of the insights. This is arguably because of the possibility to use both qualitative data, such as quotes, along with quantitative data, such as data used to assemble the heat map, to level the final insights.

### 8.4.2 Discovered Needs

As brought up in the initial parts of this thesis, the objective was to present needs on a deeper level, i.e. latent and tacit needs as established by Sanders (2002). Qualitative research was performed in a digital setting and no observations were made. Whether or not such a setting affected the level reached, can be further discussed. However, by utilizing digital collaboration platforms generative methods could be used revealing both explicit needs, such as *Users seek constructive feedback from their connections*, and tacit needs, such as *Users seek to build long-lasting relations that can evolve over time*.

Latent needs show researchers how users' futures can change for the better. Such needs are not recognizable until the future, however they can be implied by accessing and understanding dreams (Sanders, 2002). Even though users were asked to create forward thinking artifacts and elaborate on their hopes and dreams for the future, needs presented in this thesis can not yet be categorized as latent. Having said that, it can neither be concluded that none of the tacit needs can transform or develop into latent.

This hypothesis is based on the results of user activities performed in the concept development phase, such as evaluation research and user testing. The authors of this thesis discovered that when showcasing a sketch or wireframe of a future concept, users who in the past were proven to be hesitant toward collaborations could still envision future scenarios in which the tool could benefit them. Moreover, the researchers would like to suggest two future improvements to similar studies. First, perform further investigations using methods such as enactment. Second, investigate and explore the use of prototypes as a tool for user research.

### 8.4.3 Ideation & Evaluation

As previously stated, the shortage of time dedicated to the concept development phase affected the needs discovered in this thesis. The evaluations and testings performed mainly used mid- and high-fidelity prototypes as mediating objects to trigger reflection. It can be argued that the evaluations and testing conducted clearly showed tendencies to be more of a conceptual evaluation kind than a detailed usability testing. Contributing to this thesis, they rather collected qualitative data used for refining insights, than qualitative data evaluating the usability of the final

design. Going back to the statement at the beginning of this paragraph, the reason for such an outcome is probably connected to the lack of time and prioritization for developing a more high-fidelity prototype.

On the other hand, the aim for the project was to conceptually propose a design suggestion. Hence, it is believed that the approach used aided the evaluation of the concept. Arriving at the current state of the final design, the researchers want to recognize usability testing as the next step. Undoubtedly, it would provide a new set of insights connected to the guessability and learnability of the feature. However, within the frames of this work, the gain versus cost in terms of time and effort did not motivate the performance of such activities.

#### 8.4.4 Accommodated Needs

Overall, the final concepts target many of the challenges Aspiring Artists face today as well as the needs connected to them. Conversely, weather needs such as *Users seek connections with like-minded people* and *User seek constructive feedback from their connections* have been fulfilled can be discussed. As a limitation of the final concept, no feature has been designed to initiate the contact between artists.

However, both Concept A, Human to Human and its successor Concept 1, Initiating Relations, put substantial efforts into exploring such matter. The concept was validated through three evaluation sessions, results showing that Aspiring Artists are positive towards making connections through music, as well as on a distribution platform such as Record Union. Hence, such a feature could be incorporated into a future solution.

Furthermore, the same concepts explored various approaches to constructive feedback and addressed the second mentioned need using the approach of giving feedback through emotions. Such an approach is well in line with the insight of emotions driving the creative process and was well received by users. At this stage, the final concept addresses feedback, however using a comment-based approach, which was not as well received by users. To conclude, the need for constructive feedback is addressed in the final concept, however the approach has potential for improvements and could further utilize patterns from Concept A or 1. The need for finding and initiating connections has not been addressed in the final concept, but a suggestion to integrate such a solution for Concept 1 is made. The concept requirement *A concept should provide connections with both known and unknown artists* respond directly to the need *Users seek connections with like-minded people* and should be addressed accordingly to above. Moreover remaining core, concept and design requirements are attended to in the final design.

#### 8.4.5 Long-Term Consequences & Further Research

Looking at the long-term consequences connected to this thesis and the final design concept, a few areas of risk have been identified. Firstly, the design solution provided

is at a conceptual stage, in need of several more iterations and evaluations before a MVP or finished product can be developed and launched. The level of impact that the researchers will have on future implementations and changes to the concept and product is at this time unknown, thereby also the end result of the current design concept.

Secondly, design solutions that aim to change a user behavior often result in unknown consequences, gradually surfacing, e.g. using gamification elements in design, such as the approving/rejecting feature, can create an addiction to a product which in turn can have a negative impact on the overall well-being of the user. In order to avoid this, user testing on how this feature should work and behave in exact detail is recommended. This is also necessary in order to make sure that the feature does not become an element of annoyance instead of its intended function of providing security, trust and a feeling of control.

Thirdly, from the very beginning it has been clear that artists seek a space to which they can feel belonging, not another social media platform generating more self-consciousness, insecurity and doubt. Although the final design concept does include interacting with other artists, it is believed that the negative aspects that come with social media could be avoided as much as possible if actively working towards that goal. For example, for future work it is of high importance that an implementation of an initiating relations feature goes in line with this goal and need, much as the Concept 1, Initiating Relations tried to. It is still believed that connecting artists via their emotions and music creates a deeper, stronger and more profound bond, with a better precondition for social capital acquisition. Instead of simply following other artists in order to create some sort of network, becoming one of many in a list, connecting artists in this way could end up in individual and unique meetings.

Lastly, in order for artists to even consider using this design concept platform as a way to organize individual or collaborative projects, the conversion from their current way of working must be smooth and seamless. Or, the product itself must be worth the hassle of having to change to a new routine and service.

## 8.5 Stakeholders

In this section discussion regarding what type of values the final design solution pose to both stakeholders, Aspiring Artists and Record Union. Even though main focus has been placed on the artists, trying to tackle the problems they experience, it was also important that the final design concept was in line with RU's image, vision, goals and believes.

### 8.5.1 Value for Aspiring Artists

One aspect that has been both interesting and challenging to work with is that every artist and every project is different. Since emotions are the driving force of music creation for most artists, there is no way of knowing beforehand where the next seed

of motivation is going to be rooted from. Motivation and inspiration is something dynamic, evolving and ever changing.

This makes the need for artists to be able to work on their music at all times and in various forms quite important. This also makes each project different. Some artists like to be completely free without any structure and just go where the music, emotions and the project takes them. Some artists manage to have a set structure even though each project offers so much when it comes to motivation. Regardless, throughout the thesis it was of highest importance that the final design solution would not hinder or hold back the flow of motivation and the will to create. At this stage, the design concept has gone from demanding approval from each project member for every upload made to the project, to only demanding approval when a song is ready for release. Instead, the user now has to make an active decision to opt-out of approving an upload. Such a design decision was made to further contribute to a less disruptive user flow and serve as an insurance for integrity and control.

One use case that has been actively considered throughout the refinement of the concept has been how to make the solution attractive and profitable even for artists who have no interest in engaging in collaborations with others. This was an important case to solve in order for the concept to be of value for both the company stakeholders, but also for as many artists as possible. As of now, the solution of making the platform usable for solo artists by providing them with a space to organize, structure and compare projects meets this need. The approach needs to be further tested in order to fully validate that this is indeed something that could benefit solo artists working alone and not just an assumption made.

However, during the usability tests held at the end of the thesis, artist hesitant towards collaborations expressed that a space for storing and organizing ideas, versions and songs would be of great value. This since digital storage space is always an issue when dealing with such vast file sizes as most artists do. Motivated by this, there is a really good change that a design concept like this, even though intentionally made for facilitating collaborations amongst artists, could also be of value when working with music alone. This by itself also makes the design concept more valuable for RU, since it can be sold and marketed to a wider group of artists.

### **8.5.2 Monetization Opportunities for RU**

Furthermore, it important that the final design concept attained a certain value proposition, reaching a certain level of innovation in order to stand out on the market. However and maybe most importantly, the solution also had to be designed in such a way that it seamlessly could incorporate with the already existing RU website application. Since artists chose to distribute their music through RU because of its simple and clear design, the company's straight forward offer and transparent as well as silent way of distributing and helping artists. The design concept therefore had to go hand in hand with this approach, taking a quite complex subject as building

trust amongst users online and making it very simple, straight forward and effortless to be a part of.

The offer that such a collaboration platform presents to the artists has to be very clear. What exactly does this function add to the current web application and why should the artist pay for it? A few potential marketing areas has been identified for the final concept. As brought up in previous chapters, artist mentioned during user testing that it is always a challenge to share, send and store music files due to their usually big size. One option for monetizing of this new platform from RU's perspective could then be to offer users to pay a different price depending on how much storage they want. Another approach could be to have different payment plans connected to the number of active projects granted for one user at the same time.

Lastly, having such a design concept facilitating collaboration and network opportunities for artists, is to the researchers knowledge new on the business of independent music distribution. To be able to provide independent artists with benefits traditionally connected with having to sign with a label, could definitely provide RU with the level of innovation needed to once again stand out on the market, generating new paying customers to the site.

## 8.6 Ethics in Design

In this section, ethical challenges, dilemmas and grounds are being brought up as a way of reflecting upon the performed work of this thesis, as well as identifying possible precautions to take in the future before developing the design concept further. Moral aspects and the ethical impact which a product or service imposes on society and the people in it should always be up for discussion at each phase of the project when working with human-product interactions. This to avoid making moral or ethical wrong steps, causing unintended negative effects with your designs instead of doing good.

From an ethical perspective, it has been important to maintain honesty and transparency when referring to theory and work performed by others, during the course of this academic study. Proper citations or referencing should always be made. It is also very important to keep a critical mind when it comes to which resources to select, as well as to strive for a transparent way of sharing both insights, data and process. It does however, also become important to remain the integrity of the participants who partook in the various user research activities throughout the thesis, keeping data and quotes anonymous and intractable.

### 8.6.1 User Involvement

As a first step, it is important to consider the short term versus long term ethical effects that the work generates. Since the thesis was carried out in very close connections to users, ethics considering interviews and other types of activities in which users participated, had to be thoroughly planned and discussed to make them feel as

comfortable and as safe as possible. Since music creation is a creative process, with no clear rights or wrongs when it comes to an artist's personal preferences, image or sound, it is important to keep in mind not to ask too critical or personal questions.

When involving the users, the aim was to make it clear that it was not them personally who was being evaluated or studied, but in a more objective way their experiences of the industry, challenges and hopes and dreams. These subjects are of course very personal and therefore, a lot of the conversations that were held with users became very personal and informative i.e. talking about their mental health, financial issues or fears they had. Notably, mental health is a big issue among aspiring artists and as interviewers we touched upon experiences and feelings important to respect and consider the possibility that questions and research activities could be triggering and bring up difficult memories.

Since the study touched upon such sensitive and personal subjects, it was extra important to make clear and sure that ethical considerations regarding what the users were subjected to were taken and how the gathered data was going to be handled after the interviews. The goal was that participants should never feel inconvenienced or compromised, always provided with the option to leave the study at any given time and the option to deny recording of data. Collected data was then, after the interviews, presented with anonymity and care as well as according to GDPR regulations. Furthermore, the interviews as mentioned, aimed to be objective and evolve around the users experiences, behaviors and feelings. This means that they did not touch upon or put value into the level of success of the artist or value answers regarding emotional experiences differently depending on knowledge, skill-level or success. The only delimitation made based on success-level was that the artist had to fit into the target group of Aspiring Artist to be a part of the study. However, even though precautions like this were made, it is always a possibility that some of the artists felt denounced or targeted when participating in the study. It is therefore always important to remember that you are dealing with human beings when conducting user research. In this particular case, even so their most personal work and creations. Without their will to share their experiences and feelings, this thesis would not have been able to perform.



# 9

## Conclusion

By establishing collaborations as a measure of success and trust, the foundation of the final concept was formed, see Chapter 7. Previous research identified fan-first approaches and data insight as trends for 2022 (Viberate, 2022), highlighting the opportunity to increase creativity and establish new ways of forming connections within the music industry (Tschmuck, 2012). In contrast with Viberate (2022), focusing on the artist-artist relation rather than the artist-fan relation, as well as adding to Tschmuck (2012), the research performed within this project suggests an approach on how to form connections and build social capital using collaborations amongst artists.

The purpose of the research has been to identify needs and explore the possible utilization of Social Capital and Innovation theory in the context of Aspiring Artists. Research conducted has focused on recognizing and understanding challenges within this context and converting such challenges into a possible growth tracks for Record Union. The growth tracks aims to push the boundaries of digital music distribution, exploring new areas, directions and increasing the number of users. Furthermore, the proceedings of the project adapted to a Double Diamond approach, which primarily utilized qualitative research methods, such as interviews, diary studies, informal evaluation research and user testing, using a sample of 16 participants. Notably, it is suggested by the researchers that further research, as well as designers adapting the suggested approach, should prioritize the use of evaluation research earlier in the process as a means to reach more latent insights.

Moreover, the research has identified forming trust, facilitating collaborations and conducting successful promotions as the most challenging factors for Aspiring Artists, see Chapter 6. These insights transformed into six concepts, see Chapter 5, which later arrived at one single concept through the use of evaluative research. To guide this process, a list of requirement was created, containing requirements divided into core, general and design based on the insights gained, see Table 9.1. Arguably, when applied and evaluated in a conceptual design, these can be used to initiate the answer to the problem statement. In other words, factors used when creating the final concept and to consider when designing for transformational innovation in the context of Aspiring Artists.

The final concept, Facilitating Collaborations, allows artists to foster trust amongst each other in a safe environment, as a result improving social capital acquisition in that context. This can be achieved by forming the interface, as well as the collabo-

## 9. Conclusion

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rations, around the process of jointly building a traceable song that in a secure and controlled manner displays contributions and ownership. With former research discussing the importance of ownership over the creative process (Daniels, 2019), the design presented further aims to balance digital ownership, collaborations and social capital acquisition. When combining such perspectives with the area of interaction design, the researchers have created a solid foundation for reaching transformational innovation both within the context of design and Aspiring Artists.

Having said that, it could through the list of requirements presented in Table 9.1 be concluded that general requirements, focusing on aspects that a design should evolve from, can be used to create a feature that has potential for transformational innovation. In contrast, core requirements focus on factors important to Record Union and design requirements focus on factors important for the user experiences. Therefore the answer to the problem statement reads as follows:

The following design factors should be considered when designing for transformational innovation within the context of independent music distribution and Aspiring Artists.

**Table 9.1:** List of Identified General Requirements.

REQUIREMENT	AREA
A concept should ensure safe collaborations.	GENERAL
A concept should provide a possibility to track progress.	GENERAL
A concept need to facilitate long-term connections.	GENERAL
A concept should strive for social capital acquisition.	GENERAL
A concept should strive to effectively facilitate trust between users.	GENERAL
A concept should not interfere with users music career.	GENERAL
A concept should strive for not being a new social media platform.	GENERAL
A concept should strive to facilitate growth and development for users.	GENERAL
A concept should provide connections with both known and unknown artists.	GENERAL

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# A

## Appendix

## A.1 Interview Script

### Interview Script

**The aim** of this interview is for us and for Record Union to gain an understanding of aspiring artists' experiences and mental models of the music industry as well as understand future dreams.

**The outcome** of this interview round should be a summary of existing mental models of the music industry, a summary of people's experience of the industry, and a list and explanation of deeper needs connected to the challenges identified by Record Union.

#### 5 min | Introduction

- Introducing ourselves and the aim of this interview.
- GDPR, is it ok to record?

#### 5 min | Warm-up

- Tell us about yourself
  - How does your week look like
  - What are your interests
- Why music?
  - How did you end up making music
  - What type of music?

#### 20 min | Mental Model

- How did it go to make the board?
  - If not made yet, allow 5-10 minutes for the person to do it together with us
- Screen share and walk us through the artifact you have created in your space
  - Can you explain your process of making music?
    - Do you usually make money off your music?
      - What are your revenue streams?
    - Where do you spend the most money?
    - What are the main challenges?
  - Let's focus on what happens after releasing a song, how active are you after a release?
    - How do you make the release successful
      - Promotion, live gigs, follow up with stats?
    - Have you always had the same process?  
Why / Why not?
    - Describe your emotional journey?
  - Can you explain a bit more about the music community you are in?
    - What does your collaboration situation look like?
      - Why / Why not?
    - Has it always looked like this?

- If changed, why?
- Who is a part of your network?
  - Elaborate on the relationship between these?
- Can you describe your relationship with your fans?
  - What do fan relations mean to you?
  - What are the challenges?
    - Why?


**14 min | Experience of the Music Industry**

- What has your experience of the music industry been like during your active artist years?
  - What has kept you going?
    - Why?
  - Main challenges?
    - Why?
- What common mistakes or typical wrong turns have you made during your music career as an independent artist?
- What is the next new big thing within the next 2 years?
- In an ideal world, what would you have liked for your artistry to have looked like?
  - Hopes and dreams
  - Process
  - Industry

**1 min | Wrap Up**

- Thank you so much for participating and wanting to share
- If needed, is it okay for us to contact you again?

## A.2 Screening Survey



**needs your help**

### Calling our artists!



At Record Union, we like to constantly evolve and find new ways to empower independent artists. We believe this is best done together with you, our artists.

Hanna and Lovisa joined us as a collab with their Master Thesis, to become part of our growth and innovation leap. They'd like your help in understanding how to make a difference for independent artists.

So we're starting a new research group. This group consists of artists who are interested in sharing their thoughts and feedback with us through surveys, interviews and workshops.

Sound like something you would like to be a part of?

- Answer and sign up below!\*

 [lovisa.skold@recordunion.com](mailto:lovisa.skold@recordunion.com) (not shared) [Switch account](#) 

\* Required

\*Signing up means that we will contact you about participating in various user research activities if we find that your profile matches. However, it doesn't mean that you have to participate.

Questions? Please contact [lovisa.skold@recordunion.com](mailto:lovisa.skold@recordunion.com) or [hanna.cervak@recordunion.com](mailto:hanna.cervak@recordunion.com)

How old are you? \*

Under 18

18-25

26-35

36-45

46-55

56-65

65+

How do you identify? \*

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What's your location? \*

Please enter Country and City

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

What type of music creator are you?

I am a ... \*

Pick one or several alternatives you identify with

- Producer
- Performer
- Songwriter
- Composer
- Singer
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

As an artist I am \*

Always working alone    1   2   3   4   5   6    Always collaborating

Choose the statement that fits your situation the most \*

- I make music for fun with no further desire to have a music career beyond that
- I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal
- I make my living off my full-time career as an artist or music maker

How long have you been an artist? \*

Less than a 1 year

1-5 years

6-10 years

More than 10 years

Contact Info - so we can reach you again!

What's your name? \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

...and your email? \*

Your answer \_\_\_\_\_

How would you like to maintain contact with us? \*

Select all research activities you would like to participate in

Interviews

Workshops/Focus groups

Online surveys

Journaling/Diary

Concept evaluation/user testing

You are safe with us! \*

By participating in this survey you agree to let us store your personal data for 6 months, but the data will only be used to contact you and kept within the organization. Is this okay? If you change your mind, you can contact us at any time and request that we remove your data.

Yes, I agree.

[Back](#) [Submit](#) [Clear form](#)

## A.3 Responses Screening Survey

How old are you?	How do you identify?	What's your location?	I am a ...	As an artist I am	Choose the statement that fits your situ:	How long have you been an artist?
18-25	Male	Bangladesh	Singer, Songwriter	6	I make music for fun with no further desire to have a music career beyond that	Less than a 1 year
18-25	Female	Erdek	Singer	1	I make my living off my full-time career as an artist or music maker	Less than a 1 year
18-25	Male	Slovakia	Singer, Songwriter	2	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
18-25	Female	Helsinki, Finland	Composer, Singer, Songwriter, Performer	3	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
36-45	Male	România	Songwriter, Composer, Producer, Singer	4	I make my living off my full-time career as an artist or music maker	More than 10 years
26-35	Male	Moscow	Producer, Songwriter, Singer, Performer, Composer	4	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	Less than a 1 year
18-25	Male	Poland, Ząbkowice Śląskie	Producer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
36-45	Male	Lithuania, Vilnius	Composer, Songwriter, Producer, Singer, Performer	3	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	More than 10 years
18-25	Male	Lugano	Producer, Singer	3	I make music for fun with no further desire to have a music career beyond that	1-5 years
18-25	Male	USA Chesapeake	Singer, Composer, Producer, Songwriter	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
Under 18	Male	Ukraine	Singer, Producer, Composer, Songwriter	3	I make my living off my full-time career as an artist or music maker	Less than a 1 year
26-35	Male	Uganda Kampala	Singer, Songwriter	3	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
26-35	Male	Poland, Jelenia Góra	Producer	3	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	6-10 years
18-25	Male	Tunisia	Producer, Songwriter, Performer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	Less than a 1 year
46-55	Male	United Kingdom, Oxford	Performer, Songwriter	4	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
36-45	Female	United States, West Warren, MA	Composer, Performer, Producer, Singer, Songwriter	4	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	More than 10 years
26-35	Female	Belgium Lier	Singer, Songwriter	5	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
18-25	Male	Charlotte, Nc Usa	Singer, Producer, Songwriter, Performer	2	I make my living off my full-time career as an artist or music maker	6-10 years
46-55	Male	Calgary Canada	Songwriter, Singer	3	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	6-10 years
26-35	Male	Brazil, São Bernardo do Campo	Producer	5	I make my living off my full-time career as an artist or music maker	More than 10 years
36-45	Male	Lakeland Georgia	Composer, Songwriter, Producer, Performer	3	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
18-25	Male	Uganda, Kampala	Singer, Songwriter	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
46-55	Male	Belgium, Les Bons Villers	Songwriter, Performer, Composer, Singer, Producer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	More than 10 years
46-55	Male	Brazil / Curitiba	Performer, Composer	3	I make music for fun with no further desire to have a music career beyond that	More than 10 years
18-25	Male	Tonalá, Jalisco, México.	Producer, Songwriter, Singer, Composer	6	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	Less than a 1 year
36-45	Male	USA Muskegon, Michigan	Producer, Singer, Songwriter, Performer, Composer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	More than 10 years
18-25	Male	Cotronei	Songwriter	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	6-10 years
Under 18	Male	Nigeria - Lagos	Songwriter	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
Under 18	Male	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Composer, Singer	3	I make music for fun with no further desire to have a music career beyond that	1-5 years
65+	Male	Sweden Stockholm	Performer, Producer, Songwriter, Composer	4	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	More than 10 years
18-25	Male	Holts Summit, Missouri	Composer, Singer, Producer, Performer, Songwriter	3	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
18-25	Male	Russia, Saint-Petersburg	Composer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	6-10 years
36-45	Female	Uganda	Singer, Songwriter, Composer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	Less than a 1 year
26-35	Male	Switzerland, Winterthur	Composer, Producer	4	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	More than 10 years
18-25	Male	Kiev	Songwriter, Singer, Producer, Performer, Composer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	6-10 years
18-25	Male	Abuja Nigeria	Singer	3	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	6-10 years
46-55	Male	Rio de Janeiro - Brazil	Producer, Composer, Songwriter	6	I make my living off my full-time career as an artist or music maker	More than 10 years
Under 18	Male	derby's	Singer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
18-25	Male	Uganda	Singer, Songwriter, Composer, Performer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
Under 18	Female	Croatia, Zagreb	Singer, Performer	6	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	6-10 years
46-55	Male	Göteborg Sweden	Songwriter, Producer, Singer, Composer	5	I make music for fun with no further desire to have a music career beyond that	1-5 years
46-55	Male	jesolo italia	Composer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	Less than a 1 year
18-25	Male	South Africa, Johannesburg	Songwriter, Composer, Producer, Performer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
26-35	Male	Accra Ghana	Singer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	Less than a 1 year
18-25	Male	vietnamese/ha noi	Songwriter, Performer, Composer, Producer	5	I make music for fun with no further desire to have a music career beyond that	1-5 years

## A. Appendix

How old are you?	How do you identify?	What's your location?	I am a ...	As an artist I am	Choose the statement that fits your situ:	How long have you been an artist?
26-35	Male	South Africa Ficksburg	Performer, Producer, Composer, Songwriter, Singer	4	I make my living off my full-time career as an artist or music maker	1-5 years
36-45	Male	Germany, Steinheim an der Murr	Performer, Composer, Producer, Songwriter	2	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	More than 10 years
36-45	Male	Lahore, PAKISTAN	Producer	6	I make my living off my full-time career as an artist or music maker	Less than a 1 year
26-35	Male	London, Eng	Producer, Songwriter, Singer	4	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	6-10 years
18-25	Female	Slovenia, Dobrova	Performer, Composer, Singer, Songwriter, Producer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
18-25	Male	Uk Manchester	Composer, Performer, Songwriter, Singer, Producer	4	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	More than 10 years
18-25	Female	Boynton Beach	Singer	2	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	Less than a 1 year
36-45	Male	Exeter, UK	Producer	2	I make music for fun with no further desire to have a music career beyond that	Less than a 1 year
18-25	Male	Uganda-kampala	Composer, Songwriter, Singer, Performer	4	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	Less than a 1 year
26-35	Female	France	Composer, Producer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
26-35	Male	Belgium Antwerp	Songwriter, Composer, Singer	6	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	6-10 years
18-25	Female	Australia	Producer, Singer, Songwriter	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	Less than a 1 year
18-25	Male	Israel	Producer, Songwriter, Composer	2	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	Less than a 1 year
26-35	Male	Cdo	Songwriter, Composer, Singer	5	I make music for fun with no further desire to have a music career beyond that	1-5 years
36-45	Male	USA Phoenix	Composer	1	I make music for fun with no further desire to have a music career beyond that	Less than a 1 year
26-35	Male	Jamaica	Performer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
36-45	Male	Colombia, Manizales.	Producer	3	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
Under 18	Female	New jersey United States	Composer, Singer, Songwriter	2	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
18-25	Female	Las Vegas United States	Performer, Songwriter	6	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	6-10 years
18-25	Non-binary	USA, Wichiya	Songwriter, Composer, Producer, Singer, Performer	1	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	1-5 years
Under 18	Male	Turkey/Istanbul	Producer, Singer	1	I make my living off my full-time career as an artist or music maker	1-5 years
18-25	Male	Namibia	Composer, Singer	3	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	Less than a 1 year
36-45	Male	Israel	Producer, Composer	2	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	More than 10 years
26-35	Male	Midrand south Africa	Singer, Producer, Performer, Songwriter, Composer	4	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	More than 10 years
18-25	Male	Harare, Zimbabwe	Songwriter, Composer, Performer, Singer	3	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	Less than a 1 year
18-25	Male	South Africa	Songwriter, Singer, Producer, Composer	6	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	6-10 years
26-35	Male	Wolverhampton	Producer, Singer, Songwriter	3	I want to be able to earn my living off my music and am working towards that goal	6-10 years

## A.4 Diary Days

### Day 1, Date

Hi! Welcome to the first day of this journal activity. Today we are interested in learning a bit about you as an artist and your inspiration.

#### Everyday

How are you feeling today?

What role did music play in your day today?



### 1 Show us your inspiration!

Upload a picture that represents your artist.

Place image here

### 2 Track of the day

Enter a link to a song that inspires you!

Paste a link to a Spotify or YouTube track and place it here.

P.S. Interested in ours?



That's it for today! Great work! 🍌

### Day 2, Date

Hi! So today we are gonna dig a bit deeper into what happens after you are "done" with a song. Start thinking about a challenging situation you experienced recently, and we'll explain more below! 🍌

#### Everyday

How are you feeling today?

What role did music play in your day today?



### 1 A challenging situation

Focus on a recent time, after the process of completing a song, when you encountered a challenge (big or small). If you can't think of anything, it is ok to take any challenge you have experienced recently connected to your music.

Describe the situation

### 2 Your role

What was your role in this situation? Please describe.

Describe your role

### 3 Your emotional reaction

Please describe your emotional reactions during this challenge. Feel free to use emoji, text or anything else that suits you.

Describe your emotional journey

### 4 Take Aways

Looking back at this experience - what are your take aways?

Describe or list your take aways

That's it for today! Great work! 🍌

## Day 3, Date

Hi again and welcome to the fourth day of this journal activity. Today we want to just make a traditional diary entry. Describe your day as you would be writing a diary, from start to end pin-pointing important events - or unimportant for that matter! 📅

### Everyday

How are you feeling today?

What role did music play in your day today?

### 1 Write your diary!

Dear diary...

That's it for today! Great work! 🎉

## Day 4, Date

For the fifth day of this journal we are interested in learning a bit about what had an impact on you today and that you would like to remember. 📅

### Everyday

How are you feeling today?

What role did music play in your day today?

### 1 Three moments from today you would like to remember

Upload pictures that describes, represents or helps you reflect over something that happened today. The memories you will take with you can be both positive and negative.

### 2 Short description of selected memories

Why these memories - What made you choose them and how will they stay with you?

Write text here...

That's it for today! Great work! 🎉





## A.5 Diary Study Introduction Script

**Aim:** For this study, you will focus on your everyday life experiences of being an independent artist. Use the journal and the task of the day as a tool to reflect and name feelings and behaviors that you as an artist have experienced recently. Think about your personal daily experience of the music business, including important tools, collaborators, encounters, environments, and other things needed in order for you to be an artist that day. There are no right or wrong answers!

**The outcome** of this study: a deeper understanding of how it is to be an artist on a daily basis, behaviors, feelings, struggles and triumphs. The results will contribute to the summary of people's experience of the industry and a list and explanation of deeper needs connected to the challenges identified by Record Union.

- Explain what we will do with the result / what our thesis is / collab with record union
- Go through the different types of days and look at the first days as examples.
- Explain the idea with emoji emotion wheel and show them the suitcase
- Make sure they feel comfortable with miro as a format.
  - If not send PDF via email and let them answer the email.
- Discuss a good communication platform for reminders, check-ins etc.
  - Email, Whatsapp, SMS etc.
- Explain that we will send reminders for journal days, but they can always access their "schedule in miro"
- Schedule the final interview (1 h interview) approximately 14 days after start.


## A.6 Diary Study Reminders Schedule


Day	User Activities	Reminders / Posts
Day 0	Short meet and greet with us!	<p>Book final interview (approximate 14 days after start)</p> <p>Deciding how to keep in contact.</p> <p>Miro or PDFs?</p>
Day 1	Blue day 1	<p><b>Engelska</b></p> <p>Hi first day today! We want to start slow with getting to know you, and if you are curious we will share our most inspirational songs.</p> <p><b>Svenska</b></p> <p>Hej xxx.</p> <p>Idag kör vi igång! Målet med första dagen är att lära känna dig och ditt musikskapande lite bättre. Här hittar du länken till <a href="#">din miro-dagbok</a>, den kommer vara tillgänglig för dig under hela perioden. Vi kommer allt eftersom att öppna upp nya uppgifter/dagar och har du några frågor är det bara att höra av sig!</p> <p>Med vänliga hälsningar, Lovisa &amp; Hanna</p>
Day 2	Green day 1	<p><b>Engelska</b></p> <p>Happy <b>Day x!</b> Did everything work out with Miro yesterday? I've opened up the journal page of the day. Today we ask you to reflect on a challenging situation you have experienced recently.</p> <p>Have a nice day, Xx</p> <p><b>Svenska</b></p> <p>Hej,</p>


		<p>Vad bra att du fick igång allt med miro igår!</p> <p>Idag har vi öppnat upp nästa uppgift. Där ber dig att reflektera över och bryta ner en utmanande situation.</p> <p>Ha en fin dag!</p>
Day 3	Rest day	<p><b>Engelska</b> How did everything go with the reflection yesterday?</p> <p>Tomorrow it is time for a diary, we suggest that you make some notes throughout the day.</p>
Day 4	Pink day 1	<p><b>Engelska</b> Good Afternoon from Sweden. We look forward to seeing your diary from today. Do you have any questions for us so far?</p> <p><b>Svenska</b></p> <p>Godmorgon! Idag kör vi en klassisk dagbok, där vi vill att du skriver upp lite reflektioner och saker som händer under dagen. Här behöver inte allt vara kopplat till musikskapande. Ett tips kan vara att skriva ner lite anteckningar under dagen så är det lättare att komma ihåg sen!</p>
Day 5	Blue day 2	<p><b>Engelska</b> Today we want to take a trip down memory lane!</p> <p>Tomorrow it is time for a diary day again, we suggest that you make some notes throughout the day. Remember you emoji case!</p> <p><b>Svenska</b></p> <p>Hej, idag vill vi att du delar tre bilder från dagen, gärna från stunder/saker du vill minnas.</p> <p>Sen får vi önska dig en trevlig helg och vi hörs på måndag då det är dags för en klassisk dagbok igen.</p>
Day 6	Pink day 2	<p><b>Engelska</b> Great work so far! Tomorrow we will have a little break so see you the day after!</p>

		<p><b>Svenska</b> Hoppas du haft en fin helt och bra jobbat än så länge. Idag är det dags för ännu en dagboksdag.</p>
Day 7	Rest day	
Day 8		<p><b>Engelska</b> We are more than halfway through! Today we like to see some short reflections and/or snapshots from today.</p> <p><b>Svenska</b> Nu har vi inte många dagar kvar! Idag är vi nyfikna på att se några inblickar från dagen och kortare reflektioner.</p>
Day 9		<p><b>Engelska</b> Only two entry days left 😊 Today it is again time to reflect on a situation, but today we want to know about a situation where you felt empowered!</p> <p><b>Svenska</b> Nu är vi inne på slutspurten. Idag är det dags att reflektera över en situation där du kände dig "empowered" och imorgon (sista dagen) avslutar vi med en klassisk dagboksdag.</p> <p>Ses på fredag!</p>
Day 10	Rest day	<p>Tomorrow is the final day! And the last diary day. After that, you will have some days if you missed one day during the weeks or just to reflect. We thank you so much for participating and are looking forward,</p>
Day 11	Diary day	<p><b>Svenska</b></p>
Day 12		
Day 13		

## A.7 Validation Survey





**Research group - we need some help** 

Hanna and Lovisa here 

As you might recall we are currently working together with Record Union as a part of our Master Thesis - trying to find new ways to empower independent artists. As the next step in our research, we are seeking to gain insights on a bigger scale and would therefore need your help to understand more about your way of working as an artist, both solo and together with others.

We would be very thankful if you could take 3 minutes to answer this survey!

 lovisa.skold@recordunion.com (not shared) [Switch account](#)  Draft restored

\* Required

How do you identify? \*

Female

Male

Non-binary

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

As an artist I develop the most when... \*

1 2 3 4 5

working solo      working together with others

As an artist I am most comfortable when... \*

1 2 3 4 5

working solo      working together with others

As a user of Record Union I would prefer... \*

1 2 3 4 5

focusing on my own thing      more of a community

When I create music, emotions... \*

1 2 3 4 5

have no influence on my work      impacts everything I do

In a music community, the most important thing for me is... \*

Your answer

For me a successful music community should facilitate... \*

Choose number 3 in the middle to indicate you like both options

1 2 3 4 5

a quantity of connections to build a network      a quality of connections to build real relations

Working together with other artists I am mainly seeking... \*

Choose number 3 in the middle to indicate you seek both options

1 2 3 4 5

input and constructive feedback on my music      collaborations and creating music together

If I felt like my integrity was compromised I would... \*

Choose number 3 in the middle to indicate you would do both

1 2 3 4 5

refrain more and more from collaborating      keep an open mind and continue collaborating

I could see myself using a collaborative platform facilitated by Record Union \*

yes, absolutely

no, it wouldn't be for me

Almost done! If you want to add anything to your answers or share something else, feel free to use the space below.

Your answer

## A.8 Responses Validation Survey

How do you identify?	As an artist I develop the most when...	As an artist I am most comfortable when...	As a user of Record Union I would prefer...	When I create music, emotions...	In a music community, the most important thing for me is...	For me a successful music community should facilitate...	Working together with other artists I am mainly seeking...	If I felt like my integrity was compromised I would...	I could see myself using a collaborative platform facilitated by a digital music distributor
Female	3	3	4	3	Team work and trust	4	2	3 yes, absolutely	
Female	4	3	1	4	Feedback	5	1	3 yes, absolutely	
Female	5	3	4	3	Structure & willingness to help each other	4	3	4 yes, absolutely	
Female	3	3	1	4	Kommunikation	2	4	3 yes, absolutely	
Female	3	2	3	4	Creativity, support and shares with eachothers knowledges/strengths	3	4	3 no, it wouldn't be for me	
Female	5	3	1	5	To do what you want and get support from others	3	5	5 yes, absolutely	
Female	5	4	4	5	An open ceiling where various ideas, styles, and levels of skills are accepted	4	5	2 yes, absolutely	
Female	1	1	1	5	empowering each other	5	4	1 yes, absolutely	
Female	3	2	4	5	Acceptance	3	5	2 yes, absolutely	
Male	4	3	3	5	Respect and honesty	5	3	1 no, it wouldn't be for me	
Male	1	1	2	3	esperienza	2	3	2 yes, absolutely	
Male	4	4	3	5	support	3	3	3 yes, absolutely	
Female	1	1	1	5	Content	5	5	5 yes, absolutely	
Male	1	2	3	5	Promoting my music so that the authors make new music, and not copy each other	1	5	1 no, it wouldn't be for me	
Male	3	1	3	5	Musica melofy	5	4	3 yes, absolutely	
Male	3	3	1	5	Getting my music world wide	3	4	4 yes, absolutely	
Male	3	2	3	5	Opportunity to grow my listener base	3	3	3 yes, absolutely	
Male	3	4	4	5	Reaching a Goal of getting Famous, and earning from my music	4	4	2 yes, absolutely	
Male	1	2	2	5	Positivity and constructive criticism	3	3	3 yes, absolutely	
Female	3	1	3	5		3	3	4 yes, absolutely	