IMPROVING THE STITCHER EXPERIENCE

Prepared for Asana

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WHO?

Podcast listeners are…

Intellectually Driven
(advanced degree holders, higher than average incomes etc.)

Young
(More than 50% are <34Y/O, tech savvy etc.)

Prefer On-Demand Learning
(Like to consume information on their time*)

*See Appendix A

USERS

Allen is a 27 year old male who studied at Philosophy at Harvard University, and upon graduating got a job at McKinsey as an Analyst. Currently, he lives in New York City. In his spare time Allen likes reading, writing, playing the guitar, going out with his friends, and spending time with his girlfriend. However, he leads a busy lifestyle and wishes he had more leisure time to connect and stay in touch with people. Allen enjoys listening to a variety of Podcasts on his way to work in the mornings. He wishes he could talk about them more.

Kristine is a 24 year old female who studied English at Duke University. Upon graduating she started her own blog and began her freelance writing career. Later on, she found herself working as a journalist for the New York Times. Kristine has enjoyed creative writing and reading from a very young age. She loves to unwind by listening to Modern Love by NPR, she's often wished she could talk about the amazing stories she hears on the podcast with her friends. Kristine enjoys a variety of hobbies from Yoga to Mountain Biking. She lives an active lifestyle and makes time to see her loved ones.

QUOTES (ASSUMPTIONS)

"I wish I could talk about the things I learned from the podcasts I listened to with my friends…"

-Allen

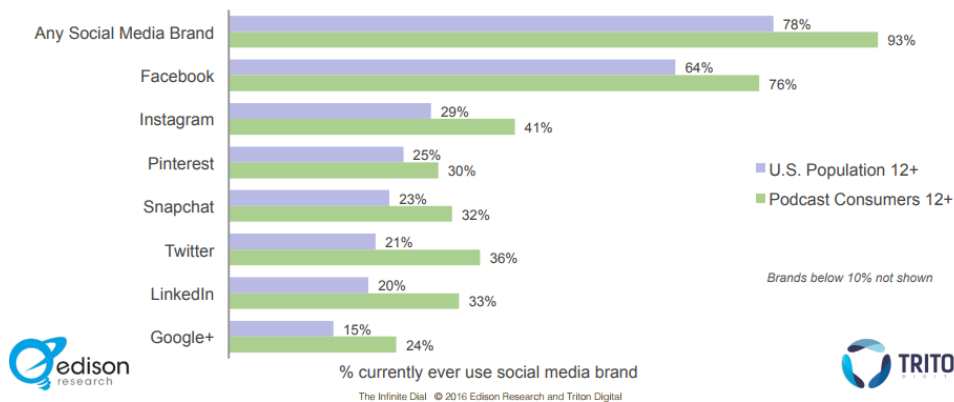"One day I want to submit my own idea for a story on Modern Love, I wonder if my friends would like it, just as much as I do…"
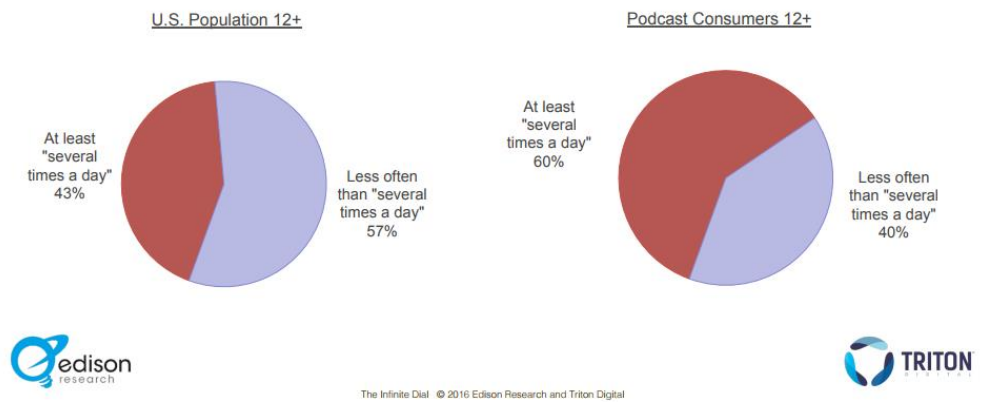
-Kristine

GOAL

The What: To improve the experience that podcast listeners have on Stitcher, by introducing features that encourage listeners to interact with other users, within the application.

http://www.edisonresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/The-Podcast-Consumer-2016.pdf

Insight: Podcast listeners are greater users of social media (+15% more usage, +17% frequency vs. non podcast listeners). Social Media & Technology allows listeners to feed their need to feel more connected to friends and society.

FEATURE BRAINSTORM (WRITE UP)

When deciding on a feature that I would like to build or test I came up with a laundry list of ideas. They stemmed from what's happening in variety of industries from Television to Music. A central theme seems to be centered around discovery. More importantly the question I wanted to try and answer for a user is "What's a good podcast to listen to?".

My hunch is that answer to that question is best answered by people who share in the listeners mutual interests (a.k.a friends and family). Beyond that, discovering others outside of the immediate circle is where technology comes into play.

Primary User Question: *"Can Stitcher connect me with people that share in my mutual listening interests who I can talk to about what I listen to, or get recommendations on what I can listen to next?"*

Using data, machine learning, or artificial intelligence models can be a viable solution, however until more sophisticated user data is collected, I chose not to approach the solution with that lense. Instead, my ideas were focused on facilitating organic conversation in a few contexts:

- 1 listener to many listeners

- Many listeners to many listeners

- 1 podcast producer to many listeners

- 1 podcast producer to 1 listener

FEATURE BRAINSTORM (ALTERNATIVES)

Driving back to the goals, I decided to focus more closely exploring features for the following two scenarios:

- 1 listener to 1 listener

- 1 listener to many listeners

Below are some rudimental alternatives:

Discover with Friends
Create a "What are **my friends** listening to?" section that connects with listener's social media accounts.

Podcast Forum
Reddit Style Discussion board within Stitcher, that's mobile friendly. Facilitate Real-Time podcast discussion.

Comments
Allow comments to be posted on individual or a series of podcasts.

Community Curated Podcast Playlists
Allow listeners (or influencers) to create custom Podcast Playlists.
(similar to Ted Talk Playlists that revolve around a central theme)

In-App Mentions
Allow listeners to mention their social media friends within the context of a podcast.

Thumbs-Up, Thumbs- Down
Allow listeners to rate podcasts and instantly share "thumb-up" podcasts with friends.

FEATURE TO TEST

Discover with Friends
Create a
"What are my friends listening to?"
section that connects with listener's social
media accounts.

I chose the discover with friends feature to test, because it satisfies the primary goal (improve the listener experience through increased interaction with other users). It is within the boundaries of the two context scenarios I described on slide 7 (1:1 and 1:N listener interaction). Stitcher can measure the results with an in-app rating system designed specifically for this section. (e.g asking for a 1-5 star rating after a listener finishes a podcast that was found through the discovery section)

This discover with friends feature is different from the existing one, because it aggregates options based on the listeners friends, **not** the entire Stitcher user base. It will show **most listened to podcasts by friends** (through social media accounts) within the last 14 days. (time duration is flexible) It could incorporate a "real time" listening component as well. (Described in the mockup)

BEHAVIOUR AND MOCKUPS

To the left I created a mockup of where the "Discover with Friends" feature would live and how it would ideally behave.

Option A: "Discover with Friends" would be nested in Browse Shows. It would take up two tiles of space, with the label, "Popular with Friends". At which point the user would be taken to a curated list of top listened to podcasts by their friends in the last 14 days. Below each tile would be a collection of the faces that listened to the corresponding podcast.

Option B: "Discover with Friends" would be an option on the Front Page, with it's own selector. Users could scroll through the podcasts (top listened, 14 days) with the corresponding icon heads of their friends that listened to it.

Option C: Nested under "Popular and Trending" within the "Browse" Option would be the "Top with Friends" feature. This is different because the second screen after the tile is selected would be separated into two distinct panels. One would be a "Now listening" which would be a real time demo of what podcasts the listeners are listening to OR have listened to in the last 24 hours. The top listened to section would list the podcasts listened to the most in the last 14 days by the user's friends, with a collection of faces (icons) at the bottom.
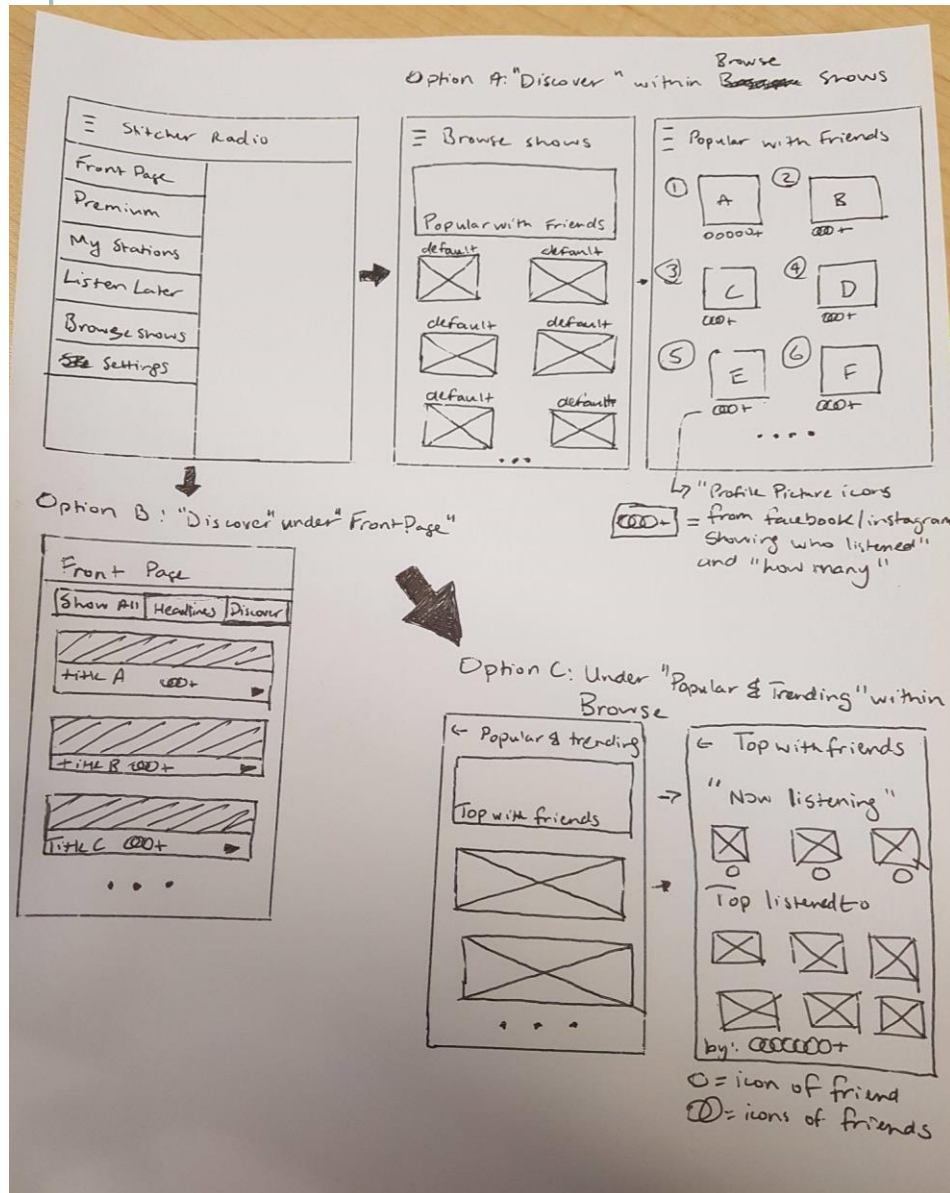
TRADE-OFFS

The biggest trade off is not being able to build any other features (slide 7).

The assumption that "listeners interacting with other users improves their experience" may be flawed. By experimenting with the "Discover with Friends" feature, Stitcher will gain valuable insight into how users behave when a "social" component is introduced.

By building for the "Discover with Friends" feature, it will set the groundwork for any social features that Stitcher could experiment with in the future. E.g testing and connecting Facebook/Instagram/Snapchat/Reddit API's to the platform.

METRICS AND RISKS

Measuring Success

With a feature like "Discover with friends", it's imperative to understand listener sentiment <u>with</u> and <u>without</u> the "Discover with friends" feature.

I propose a simple A/B test at the completion of every podcast (within a control group) of a 5-star rating system. The idea is to understand if a person likes a podcast better if they went through "Discover" than without (regular browse functions).

If ratings are higher using "Discover with Friends" then it works. If not, I would rather rework "Discover with Friends" and try again.

I did think about metrics like "Time in app" or "# of hours listened to" but I wanted to measure if there was an improvement in perceived satisfaction with what "Discover with Friends" served up.

Risks

1. Not enough "social media friends" are using Stitcher.

2. Users skip over the "Discover with friends" if content doesn't seem relatively "better" than other sections.

3. Time to Market for "Discover with Friends" could be higher vs. other features.

APPENDIX A

Method Used Most Often to Listen to Podcasts

THE INFINITE DIAL 2016

Podcast Consumers 12+

Click and listen immediately 59%

Download manually to listen later 23%

Subscribe to and download automatically to listen later 15%

Don't Know 3%

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