

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING

CATEGORIZING HOW AND WHY PEOPLE LISTEN TO MUSIC: THE THREE-
SECTOR LISTENER WHEEL

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FALL 2009

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for a baccalaureate degree
in Marketing
with honors in Marketing

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Abstract

No culture throughout human history has been without music (Levitin, 2006). Music's ubiquitous presence implies its importance. This thesis aims to answer the question of why music is important by providing insight into why and how people listen to music, and the notable things it does for them. The Listener Wheel was created based largely on information gathered in thirty-four one-on-one interviews. It categorizes how people listen to music into three sectors: proactive listening, passive listening, and selective shuffling.

Proactive listeners are the most cerebral and decisive with what they want to listen to. They have high quality relationships with their music and like to spread knowledge. Passive listeners expend little energy on music because they prefer to relinquish control of music selection. They have low quality relationships with their music and are commonly influenced by their peers and pop-culture. Selective shufflers are somewhere in between. They enjoy having some amount of control over music selection, but still leave actual song choice up to chance. They utilize playlists, often meticulously created, for various occasions. Although they sometimes have high quality relationships with their music, they also sometimes have low quality relationships due to the high amount of randomization in their music listening.

Implications of the Listener Wheel and suggestions for future research are discussed.

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Introduction

Background and Evolution

The story of this thesis dates back four years to 2005. When given the opportunity to do actual research and investigate a topic of my choice, I was excited, but in the “I hope I don’t mess it up” way, not the “this is going to be a fulfilling experience, let’s get started” way. It made intuitive sense that a great thesis would focus on a topic of great interest to its author. I knew immediately that my research was to somehow involve music. Its significance in my life was huge and I planned to keep it that way. I had been performing and creating music since childhood, which made it more than a hobby; it was an obsession. Naturally I wanted to focus my research on something music-related, but I had to specify a single aspect of my obsession and make sure to do it justice. Throughout the following few years, I had trouble in settling on which feature of music would truly be the right thesis topic.

My original topic was “Marketing in the Music Industry,” an exhaustingly broad subject I deemed worthy of tackling. I had logged countless hours of MTV watching and *Rolling Stone* reading, which led me to believe I knew what there was to know about marketing music to the public. After being turned away from Columbia Records internships two years in a row, completely ceasing to watch music television, and becoming very sadly jaded toward *Rolling Stone*, my confidence in corporate music marketing wavered. In terms of buying and consuming music, I was representative of my generation, and living proof that this type of hype marketing was becoming ineffective. I realized that my generation trusted word of mouth and

Internet writings much more than mainstream media. And so my thesis topic shifted to “Music Marketing on the Internet.”

The phenomena of Napster and MySpace allowed smalltime garage bands to challenge the likes of world-renowned recording artists by publishing music on the Internet and presenting it for free. This limitless publicity through the Internet spoke much louder to me than MTV commercials ever had, and seemed to be becoming more popular each day. What was most interesting to me was the reach of these innovative music enablers. They gave the entire world access to John Doe’s high school punk band. Because music marketing was becoming so global, I figured I should probably make my thesis somewhat internationally focused. Around this time I spent a semester studying at London’s University of Westminster.

While in London, I befriended local musicians, attended concerts and events, collected handouts and other tangible pieces of music publicity, began reading British periodicals, magazines, and Internet blogs, and tried to absorb as much London music-scene culture as I could. I was hoping to focus on and discover unique marketing techniques, but instead found that common marketing practices were not especially different in England than they were in the United States. A different discovery was in the people, not the techniques. London music listeners were enthusiastic, and incredibly individualistic. People almost always had something to say, yet no two had the same music interests. There were certainly bands that came up in more than one conversation, but people generally explored many types of music. Each individual represented a market for a “unique niche product,” (Anderson, 2006) meaning a desire for his or her own individual taste in music. In

retrospect, most of the people I talked music with were proactive listeners. Living and learning in London shaped my thesis because of the many random music-related conversations I had with people. I became much less interested in marketing techniques, the Internet, and MySpace and at the same time completely engrossed simply in what people had to say about music.

For specific use in this thesis, I interviewed thirty-four individuals. Of these, only one claimed that listening to music was not important to them. This confirmed to me that listening to music truly is important and that “Listening Patterns” was a valid topic of research. By conducting informal interviews I gained insight into why and how people listen to music, and the notable things it does for them.

Research Goals

The predominant goal of this thesis was to gain insight into daily music listening. By asking participants about their music listening habits, I hoped to uncover some set of patterns to help explain why people listen as such. To achieve this goal, I planned to interview at least thirty participants with as much variance in demographic characteristics as possible. Only interviewing one type of person would almost surely yield data skewed in one direction. By speaking with both male and female individuals of as many ages and occupations as feasible, I wanted my gathered dataset to provide significant insight from its depth and richness (McCracken, 1988).

Another goal of my research was to be able to loosely categorize people into types of listeners. I also wanted to create some continuum or scale to utilize in this

method of labeling. Upon analysis of participant responses, this goal evolved from categorizing people to being able to loosely categorize the actual ways people listen.

Research Questions

Broad questions were created based on the aforementioned research goals. While the overarching question of why people listen to music in their daily lives was the primary motivation for the thesis, I was also interested in which situations people routinely listen, the role (or roles) it plays in their lives, and their perception of its importance.

Research Methods

As previously stated, my research began four years ago with background research in the form of books, periodicals, magazines and scholarly articles. As I honed in on a more specific topic, it became clear that also gathering and organizing primary data through interviews was going to be an essential part of creating a complete and insightful thesis.

Background Research

Secondary and background research rely on existing data and work already published by outside sources. I have been fascinated with many things “music” for years, so naturally I have investigated background sources for some time. There are primarily two books that helped shape my thinking about this thesis: *The Long Tail*

by Chris Anderson and *Your Brain on Music* by Daniel J. Levitin (Anderson, 2007; Levitin, 2006).

Anderson's work is one of the forces that made me reconsider writing about the Internet. His award-winning book helps explain American consumerism and how the Internet has created a seemingly endless amount of niche markets. He uses music consumption as a prime example of how "without the constraints of shelf space and other bottlenecks of distribution, narrowly targeted goods and services can be as economically attractive as mainstream fare." In short, buying the album of an obscure band from your childhood is becoming just as easy as buying the latest album from any popular artist. His masterful description of the current state of affairs, as intriguing as it is, led me to realize my desire to study the individuals he was talking about, the people with niche desires Google and iTunes provide, not the economy of the Internet's plethora of mainstream media. The Listener Wheel's three sectors are not specifically based on Anderson's work, but the overarching concept of different people listening to music for different reasons is. He suggests that because the Internet allows for so many people to have individual interests, niches are just as important, if not more important than big hits. Representing this variety of music selection, I devised the Listening Wheel and its three methods of how people listen.

Levitin's book was an inspiration because he answered so many questions I had about what makes music, music. I tried to emulate his approach of looking at music holistically before making any decisions about what to write. Levitin truly broke down music into its core components, which lets his book read like nine unique articles rather than nine consecutive chapters. Some chapters' subject matter was

more helpful than others, like “Chapter 5: You Know My Name, Look Up the Number,” which details how and why humans are so good at categorizing music. This chapter was particularly inspirational because it made me appreciate an interesting contrast: people record and categorize music similarly in their memory banks, but physically categorize and listen in many diverse ways (Levitin, 2006). Also of note were “Chapter 4: Anticipation,” which discussed techniques composers use to capture the attention of listeners, and “Chapter 8: My Favorite Things,” which provided an insightful analysis that got me thinking about why people like the music they do. Levitin’s introduction and background also proved helpful in laying some important groundwork for my thesis, like his description of music’s “ubiquity and antiquity.”

In considering what other outside research and publications have influenced this thesis, I cannot ignore all the magazines, newspapers, and Internet articles I have come across over the years. Articles of note came from publications such as: *Rolling Stone*, *Q Magazine*, *The New York Times*, and *The Daily Collegian*. I will not reference many specific articles in this thesis, but the aggregate reading from these publications has been paramount to my understanding of music as a product for consumption. Some examples of note were *Rolling Stone’s Top 50 Albums of 2008* compared to the British *Q Magazine’s* article discussing the same topic and *The Daily Collegian* article titled *Listening on the Go, At Home*, which highlighted the trend on The Pennsylvania State University’s campus of students listening to music when in transit (Rasi, 2009). Results from my personal observations and interviews validated this trend as all thirty-four interviewees admitted to listening to music while traveling.

Professor Peter Fader teaches at The University of Pennsylvania, but gave a presentation called *Publish or Perish*, which I witnessed at Penn State in 2006. He spoke of the “Bass Diffusion” model, where innovators and followers coexist and stimulating innovators also subsequently stimulates followers. The innumerable implications for utilizing this model in terms of marketing music were also discussed. His knowledge of the Internet and music marketing techniques inspired me to continue researching in that direction. Also of note were his highlighting of the music industry’s enemies (school, religion, sports, anything that keeps you from listening to music), which I thought was hilarious and insightful, and the fact that music purchasing is purely trial based because you only buy once. Though my thesis topic has shifted since then, his presentation was memorable enough to influence the music listening questions and discussions I had with interviewees. More specifically, *Publish or Perish* influenced me to discuss with interviewees their use of shuffled music and whether they listen to music in isolation or in communal settings. Please see Appendix A for a list of questions I asked in nearly every interview.

I have read many scholarly articles while working on this thesis, but three, all from *The Journal of Consumer Research*, clearly provided the most help. Douglas B. Holt’s *How Consumers Consume: A Typology of Consumption Practices* served as an excellent template for my thesis (Holt, 1995). The formatting of his article was equally as valuable to me as the content. The study describes consuming in terms of four different metaphors: Consuming as Experience, Consuming as Integration, Consuming as Classification, and Consuming as Play. These descriptions helped validate my findings because they somewhat extend to my work. “Classification”

and “experience” both relate very closely to proactive listening, “integration” is incredibly representative of selective shuffling, and “play” resembles passive listening. To illustrate these metaphors, Holt created a two by two figure clearly outlining what each category means and represents. I did not borrow this exact method, but essentially set my thesis up in the same manner, with listening to music as three unique sectors. I also illustrated mine graphically. The majority of my thesis contents are laid out very similarly to Holt’s format.

The second article I drew much information from was Susan Fournier’s *Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research* (Fournier, 1998). Fournier suggests that people build relationships with the things they buy and use. These relationships are of varying degrees of quality, which often relate to how loyal users are to their brands. I believe that these profound suggestions hold true to music as well. Consumers have relationships of varying quality with the music they listen to, which often dictate their loyalty to genres and specific artists. She also theorizes that, “Consumers do not choose brands, they choose lives.” This precise statement led me to the idea of categorizing types of music listening. Consumers do not choose music, they choose lives. The music people listen to is often very predictable when considering the types of lives they lead. Another concept Fournier offers is that, “What matters... is... what consumers do with brands to add meaning in their lives.” If “brands” were to be changed to “music,” this impactful statement would describe a main topic of this thesis.

The final scholarly article that was of particular help was Russell W. Belk’s *Possessions and the Extended Self* (Belk, 1988). This groundbreaking work provides

strong support for the notion that the things we own and use are a reflection of who we are as individuals. The meaning of the article's title suggests that belongings are a part of their owners, and thus actually a part of their selves. Music is different than "things," though, because it is not a fixed object. We cannot see music, even though it surrounds us. For example, in the present study, Tori (F, 20)¹ feels music is important specifically because of this intangibility, saying it is "its own separate world" apart from any physical possessions. Music is dynamic and interacts with listeners in a multitude of ways, like when it "creates emotional 180's" for Philip (M, 20) and "cures so many things" for Dan (M, 21). A clear parallel connecting the Belk and Fournier articles with music can be made. Music can have such a prominent role in peoples' lives that it becomes an extension of their self.

Primary Research

The purpose of primary research is to compile new data that does not yet exist. It is created through first-hand experience. The primary research I completed was in the form of thirty-four one-on-one interviews. As previously mentioned, only interviewing one type of person would skew the data. Because music affects individuals differently, I tried to interview an equal amount of males and females of varying backgrounds in order to get as rich of a data set as possible. Though I did not ask each participant an identical set of questions, most interviews began with the same question ("Do you consider listening to music an important part of your daily

¹ When used as examples, interviewee names are followed by parentheses that include gender (Male, Female) and age.

life?”) and followed a similar path throughout. Rather than ask a standard question set, I treated each interview like a friendly conversation and asked new questions based on the interviewees’ responses. I wanted participants to feel comfortable, relaxed, and open to express themselves freely. Interviews went different directions, and sometimes got off-topic, but it is precisely this reason that I was able to learn so much about the participants. Some of the most fascinating information was followed with laughter or sayings like “Oh my god, you’re writing that down?” Because the interviewees mostly felt comfortable talking with me about music, I was able to uncover truths that sometimes surprised the interviewees themselves.

For the most part, my primary research came about after completing the secondary research. *The Journal of Consumer Research* articles, Professor Fader’s presentation, and various articles from the other sources helped me create open-ended questions that drew meaningful answers from interviewees. Again, a sample of questions that I asked in nearly every interview can be found in Appendix A. Demographic characteristics of the respondents including name, age, gender, and occupation can be found in Appendix B.

Music Listening: Everybody Does It

What Listening Does For Us

Mr. David Cree (M, 60), a retired high school band director offered that, “It’s hard to find someone who doesn’t like some kind of music. I can’t think of any other subject like that.” This thought raises the question of why music is so universally popular. The answer is frustratingly nondescript; music naturally does something for people, and it always has. When considering all human activities, music is bizarre because of its ubiquity and antiquity. No acknowledged cultures throughout human history have been without music. For many people worldwide, making music was as natural as eating or walking. Especially in less developed cultures, everybody contributed to making music because it was part of everyday life. Some of the earliest discovered artifacts are musical instruments, like drums created from stretched animal skins and wind instruments made from bone. Only in the past few centuries have people separated themselves into performers and listeners (Levitin, 2006). Music was and continues to be a unifying force. As Professor Lonnie Graham (M, 59) proclaims, “You have to have it!”

Music plays many roles for different people. Most of these roles, from motivator for exercisers to pacifier for children, have specific effects, whether the listeners realize it or not. Music is both a powerful and dynamic force. Because it clearly does not affect everyone the same way, most people have unique stories, meanings, and uses for music within the context of their own lives. An extensive list of meanings and metaphors for music that interviewees used can be found in

Appendix C. What one song does for Philip, a college student, may be strikingly similar or completely different than what the same exact song does for Richard (M, 52) a dentist. In fact, these two interviewees mentioned listening to the same band, but for drastically different reasons.

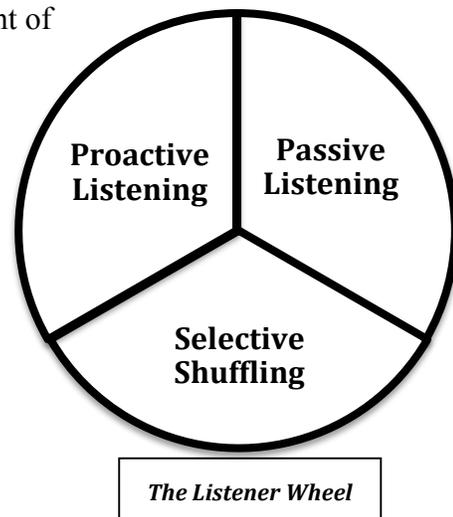
Even music's mere presence or disappearance can drastically affect listeners. For example, while Kilroy (M, 22) was in officer training for the United States Navy, the use of any music-playing devices was forbidden. The physical and mental distress involved with endless pushups, early wake up calls, and countless miles of running paled in comparison to the lack of music. As varied as people are, so too are the things music can do for them.

How do we Listen?

The most obvious answer to this question, in a physiological sense, is that we listen with our ears. Another much more involved answer discussed in this thesis really is the fruit of my research. If ten people planning to listen to music press "play" on their iTunes, iPods, radios, record players, car stereos, or other devices, they listen to ten audible tracks. Even if they all play the same exact song, there would still probably be an incredible variety with how and why those ten people listened to the music. One person could have been a DJ who chose to play the song at some gathering, another person could have randomly heard the song on the radio without paying any attention to it, another could have specifically chosen it because she was walking to class and wanted to sing the lyrics in her head, a fourth simply could have had the song lined up to play next in a fifty song playlist, or maybe

someone had listened to the song for the first time because their friend decided to play it. The ways people come to be listening to music are extremely diverse, just like their purposes for listening, the elements they listen for, and their familiarity with the song's composers. As George (M, 23) rhetorically asked, "Who doesn't like music? Everybody listens to music." The fascinating thing is how differently everybody listens.

To illustrate the categorization of listening methods, I created a graph with three sectors called "The Listener Wheel." Each of the three sectors represents a unique way people listen to music. They were created primarily based on the quality of relationship with music, loyalty, desired amount of control in music selection, and purposes for listening. Although the wheel may not be absolutely comprehensive, for the purpose of this thesis when individuals listen, they fall into the categories of Proactive Listening, Passive Listening, and Selective Shuffling.



Proactive Listening

Proactive listening in some ways is the most sophisticated method of listening because it is the most cerebral. Proactive listeners analyze their music and often listen specifically for single elements, such as lyrical content or individual musical voices. These listeners generally have high quality relationships with the music they listen to, which means they are usually familiar with the artist, genre, or song. What

further differentiates this type of listening is that it goes above and beyond the music itself. Listeners in this category often have the desire to learn more about the music, if they are not already familiar. Proactive listening allows listeners to become closer to their music, to feel it, and to become one with it.

Passive Listening

Passively listening to music requires the least amount of energy because listeners prefer to relinquish almost all control of what they are listening to in order to become ambient listeners. Specific songs may not be important because music is just an environment to passive listeners. Listening fills in the gaps. Passive listeners usually have low quality relationships with their music because they either do not particularly care or would rather not pay attention to what it is and who created it. Loyalty to artists or genres is also somewhat low because it is not of importance when passively listening, even though these listeners are sometimes loyal to specific songs. Rather than choosing music to play, alternatives like television watching, movie watching or having others pick the music are chosen instead. A distinguishable feature of passive listeners is that their peers and pop-culture easily influence them.

Selective Shuffling

Selective shuffling is the broadest method of listening because it incorporates elements of the other two methods. Selective shufflers want some control in what they will listen to, but do not want the responsibility of choosing each song. People selectively shuffling usually have specific reasons for listening, but prefer to leave

actual song selection up to randomization. They meticulously categorize their music so that they can easily shuffle through it later. The use of playlists (pre-determined or created sets of songs) is extremely common because shuffling through an already defined list of music satisfies their music listening need. Radio listening can qualify as selective shuffling because through experience listeners know what type of music different stations play, even though they do not control what specific songs they will hear. Popular innovations in music distribution and playing like the Internet application *Pandora*, which allows users to input music preferences then suggests and plays similar types of music, contribute to selective shuffling in the same manner as radio listening. Selective shufflers often have high quality relationships with the music they listen to and are repeatedly loyal listeners. However, they just as often have low quality relationships and do not repeatedly listen to the same artists or genres due to the great amount of chance in their music listening.

Proactive Listening

“I love music, but it has its specific time and place. When it is on, I’m listening.”

-Tori (College Student, Age 20)

Purposeful Selection

Proactive listeners are defined by their decisiveness; they know what they want to listen to. There is always a reason for listening, and always a certain artist, song, or playlist right for the occasion. They rarely shuffle, and in some cases even despise the thought of it. Gregory (M, 30) has tried shuffling and hates it. He explains that there is a short period of anxiety you get when a song is nearing its end. The disruption of not knowing or controlling what is next negatively affects whatever the listener is doing while listening.

Proactive listeners are somewhat predictable because of their consistency. Jesse (M, 19) maintains a regular exercise schedule and always uses his iPod so he can listen to music through headphones at the gym. His gym music is meticulously laid out separately from the rest because he wants to only listen to those songs when working out and not at any other time. When Jesse hears his specific gym music he “gets pumped up for the now.” When he does not have access to his music at the gym, it is a major hitch in the workout. This case of purposeful selection is similar to that of the famous “Pavlovian Dogs” experiment. Russian psychologist Ivan Pavlov noticed his dogs would begin salivating before they were fed, merely at the sight of their feeder. He predicted that because the feeder was present when the dogs ate, they associated the sight of the feeder with eating. The experiment he conducted involved

ringing a bell each time the dogs were fed. Eventually, the dogs began to salivate just by ringing the bell. When Jesse puts his headphones on and plays his gym music in its particular order, he is conditioned to immediately exert more effort and workout harder.

In this respect, and for many listeners like Jesse, music is akin to an appendage. It is a part of them in that without their music, they cannot operate properly. Molly (F, 22) mentioned that if she notices her iPod's battery life dropping, she begins losing her own energy. Philip's iPod once completely ran out of battery life while he was exercising, which made him leave because his "gym output completely went away." For Philip, the loss of music was like the loss of an arm or leg.

Music is to be Analyzed

As previously stated, proactive listening is the most cerebral of the methods because proactive listeners constantly evaluate and dissect the music they listen to. Some people, like Heather (F, 25), "need to relate" with lyrics. When she listens, she ponders about the message the artist is trying to convey. Sarah D. (F, 20) loves music for its lyrical content as well, so much so that sometimes she does not want to share songs or listen with other people because the songs have such intense personal meanings. Others listen to evaluate musical proficiency, like Chad (M, 39), whose favorite music is that of the progressive rock band *Rush*, whose members are known for being musical virtuosos. The point is that proactive listeners choose their music for a reason and whether intentionally or not, reflect on the music while listening.

Often this analysis comes instinctively. For example, most musicians tend to be proactive listeners because of their backgrounds in the creation of music. Naturally, they consider the various elements and meanings of the music they listen to. Chris (M, 22), a trumpet and guitar player for over a decade, volunteers that the only way he knows how to listen to music is “very actively.” He imagines being in the shoes of the artists themselves, and tries to figure out what their thought processes were while recording.

There can be “lots of thinking involved,” says Chris, when listening to music for proactive listeners. This is why listening proactively rarely coincides with doing important work or sleeping. Philip and Harris (M, 19), who are both drummers, have trouble focusing on anything else when music is present because they have to “process the beat.” Many musicians and music enthusiasts have a tough time listening to music in bed for similar reasons. The music analyzing process sometimes speeds or slows, but rarely stops.

An Extension of Self

Proactive listeners build high quality relationships with the music they listen to. The highest quality relationship, as Belk speculates, is “an extension of self,” where individuals “regard possessions as parts of” themselves (Belk, 1988). For proactive listeners, who are extremely loyal and knowledgeable, music often becomes an extension of who they are. The more these listeners handpick music to listen to and analyze it, the more they take ownership to it and the more they identify themselves with it. The music one listen to gives a real sense of who they are.

A photography professor, Lonnie Graham, regaled me with a story that does an excellent job illustrating music as an extension of self. In Cape Town, South Africa, a group of blacks enjoying each other's company were listening to the new Curtis Mayfield (a legendary African-American musician known for his politically-charged music and also credited as one of the pioneers of funk music) album. Being together and listening to the music gave them tremendous pleasure. The unifying power of the music they loved had them singing, dancing, and partying. Police eventually came and ordered them to stop. Faced with live rounds of ammunition, the group of blacks did not stop. They could not stop. They continued singing and dancing because the music truly was a part of them. It was their culture and represented who they were. It was an extension of their being.

Listening and Preaching

Word of mouth is an extremely powerful machine that is kept up and running by proactive listeners. These listeners like to spread knowledge. Although they can be skeptical of others' suggestions, they enjoy recommending new music because they like when others do the same for them. Rachel (F, 23) points out that "music is a great way to get to know people," and in our interview even suggested two or three bands I should look into. Such are the actions of a proactive listener having a conversation with another self-proclaimed proactive listener, this author. I have certainly gotten to know Rachel much better through talking about music.

Proactive listeners enjoy searching for information and often utilize the most current technology to make their search more efficient. They are the Internet surfers

who download leaked albums (new music not yet released to the public), make music reviews, post blog comments, and play with that fancy new music device on their train-ride to work. They like to read, research, check up on bands, and finally report back to their peers and the rest of the world. Their comprehensive interest in music is why they are the best not just at exploring, choosing and analyzing, but also at discussing, suggesting, and influencing.

A Day in the Life

This section will describe in first-person, a typical twenty-four hour period of time in the life of a mostly proactive listening college student.

The day begins early at 7:45 A.M. with the piercing biohazard alarm clock sound setting from my iPhone. I've tried setting it to more soothing sounds and music, but they just don't do the trick. I end up listening to the music, still in a sleep state, and never get up on time. Anyway, I'm up and need breakfast before class so I sit with a bowl of cereal and watch some ESPN. I'm not a huge sports fan, but it's nice to keep up to date with current sports news. As I walk to my last class of the week, I put in my headphones connected to my iPhone and play the first song already appearing on the screen because it was the last one I played yesterday. It's the third track of the new Dave Matthews Band album, which I just got and have been listening to a lot to learn the new songs. I don't like it as much as the old stuff, but because I'm such a big fan, I have to keep up with the new stuff.

While in class, I spend a lot of the time thinking about a really strange drumbeat Carter Beauford plays on the new Dave Matthews single I listened to on my

walk to class. The song is stuck in my head for the rest of the day, so when I get home I sit down and listen to it again with speakers blaring. I can't decide if I like the song or not and for whatever reason end up on Wikipedia reading about Dave Matthews. After a nap and a late lunch, I head over to a friend's apartment. I walk a few blocks then realize I haven't been listening to music, which means my phone is not in my pocket. I run home, grab the phone, and say out loud to no one, "NOW I can go." Back on my way and listening to The Roots, a rhythmically driven hip-hop group that gets me more into a partying mood, I wonder what would have been worse, not having my phone, or not having the ability to listen to music on this long walk?

There are a few people at my friend's apartment, basically his roommates and some of their girlfriends. While they watch a basketball game on TV I end up chatting with a few guys about the new Dave Matthews album. They love it and wonder why I'm not so into it, so we put it on some nearby speakers and continue discussing the merits of the drumbeat I was intrigued by and other music related chatter. They don't end up convincing me it's a good album, but do recommend I listen to a group called the John Butler Trio. I open their MySpace page on my friend's computer and am just floored. I decide to buy an album, which immediately downloads right to my phone. More people start showing up to the apartment and I notice the basketball game is off the TV. We all agree that musical silence at a party makes no sense, so I plug in my iPhone and DJ the party, which I enjoy doing. Turns out most people really like the music I'm into, especially the newly purchased John Butler Trio.

The party turns out well and I end up walking back with some friends. When I get home, I put on that same track three from the new Dave Matthews Band album, brush my teeth, and go to bed. Lying in bed I realize, yea, it is a pretty good album.

Passive Listening

“If I don’t want to think about anything, I put on my headphones.”

-Lauryn (College Student, Age 20)

Relinquishing Control

A defining characteristic of passive listening involves not wanting or needing ultimate control over what is listened to because after all, it is only background music. Passive listeners surrender control of what they listen to through methods like blindly shuffling their music, listening to whatever is on the radio, and letting others pick music for them, such as roommates or co-workers. These listeners do not have strong opinions about music and usually are not overly knowledgeable, but they still know what they like and do not like. Even though they do not choose the music, they usually have distinct purposes for listening. For example, Sarah (F, 19) listens to “whatever music comes on” while showering and getting ready. She sings along when she knows the words, but prefers not to pick the songs because “that’s too easy.” Nicole (F, 21) lives with six other girls, which means “there’s always music on,” but she does not always recognize what she is listening to. This is okay with her, though, because she “needs someone else to pick songs to play.” She “never knows what to listen to next.”

Music is Company

Many passive listeners relinquish control not because they do not care, but because specific song choice is unimportant to them. Miriam (F, 90) simply loves

classical music and, for the most part, wants it to be played around her if at all possible. When she wakes up, she turns on a radio station that plays classical music. While she cooks, works, and drives, she listens to some sort of classical music. She has favorite composers, but details are not as important as the whole to Miriam. She enjoys listening to music as an ambient listener. To her, when music is playing, it is as if she has company over. The same is true for many passive listeners; music for them is part of the environment. PJ (F, 22) feels that music “puts you in your own little world,” and Holly (F, 22) similarly considers her iPod “a vacation.”

Because passive listeners are the most readily influenced, they often allow music to take over. Music has the power to curb emotions and affect mood state. It can calm an agitated passive listener, motivate a passive listener in a rut, or help a distracted passive listener block the outside world and focus on reading. To the passive listener, as Bill (M, 23) suggests, “music is a medium to escape from the day to day.”

Flavor of the Week

Passive listeners’ musical choices are shaped by the world around them. More specifically, peers, pop-culture, television, radio, iTunes, and the Internet all dictate what a passive listener ends up listening to. Because loyalty is often non-existent, except for particular meaningful or nostalgic songs or artists, the quality of the relationships that passive listeners make with their music is low. This is not to say that they enjoy music any less than proactive listeners or selective shufflers, these listeners just do not build strong and lasting bonds with the music they listen to.

Passive listeners are often interested in “top forty” hits, which by definition change on a regular basis. Lauryn (F, 20) creates playlists that are populated with recent downloads, or that are labeled with the school semester she was in when they were created. As time passes, these playlists become dated and obsolete in terms of what Lauryn listens to because she then has a new crop of playlists.

A Day in the Life

This section will describe in first-person, a typical twenty-four hour period of time in the life of a mostly passive listening college student.

The day begins early at 7:45 A.M. because my roommate has class earlier than I do. He always wakes me up with his music in the morning. It's okay because I'm starting to like his taste in music. I jump in the shower and get dressed while he tries to talk to me about something. Partially because I just woke up, partially because there's music playing, and partially because I'm eating a bowl of cereal and staring blankly at my computer screen, I have a hard time deciphering what he's talking to me about. I give him a few nods and act like I'm paying attention when I notice that I actually like the music he's playing. I should ask him about it later. He leaves for class and I notice his iPod sitting on the bureau. I grab it and head off to class. I don't always listen to music when I walk around because I don't own my own mp3 player, but it's cold out and listening to music can make me walk faster so I put on his "Recently Played" list and get an earful of Metallica. I don't really like Metallica, but at least it wakes me up. I'm too lazy to change it or pick something

else, besides I'm almost at my class already. I pack the iPod in my pocket and go inside.

My class is discussion based and by the time our professor asks questions, I'm awake enough to answer intelligently. After class I get a call from one of my roommates looking to play some basketball. It actually became a nice day out and I don't have another class until the late afternoon, so I walk across campus to meet the guys. I forgot that I had an iPod with me, but even if I had remembered I wouldn't have listened because I like enjoying the sounds of a college campus too. When I meet up with the guys they are sitting around listening to rap music through portable speakers. I'm not a huge fan of rap, but I have to admit it was sweet having music while we were playing ball. I can't really remember what artist it was, but I really liked one or two of the songs. After I was finished with all my classes, I headed home and asked my roommates about the rap music. He said the rapper's name was "Juvenile." Sure enough after Google searching "Juvenile" and "rap music" I heard some free sound clips of his music. Rather than downloading anything, I figured I could just take some of my roommate's Juvenile songs from his computer at some point.

Later that night we walked to a friend's apartment to hang out. My roommate asked me if I had seen his iPod and I remembered it was in my pocket. He punched me in the shoulder and said, "This thing is really important to me, you can't just play around with it." I apologized for taking without asking. Who would have thought music would be so important to him? Once we got to the apartment we watched some MTV shows. A new feature of MTV shows is that when they play music on the show,

the song title and artist appear on the screen. I should have taken notes because I really did like the music. Oh well. The night was pretty low-key, with a highlight being when we listened to some of the rap music from earlier in the day again. This time I recognized some of it.

Walking home, my roommates and I sang a new hit song by Miley Cyrus. I know it's girly, but I have to admit the song is catchy! It must've been featured on one of those MTV shows because I can't remember when else I would've recently heard it. We were all tired so once home we turned on some Pink Floyd and passed out to the relaxing sounds of classic rock.

Selective Shuffling

“I like a variety of music, but I go through phases. I think I have musical ADD.”

-Sarah D. (College Student, Age 20)

Controlled Uncertainty

The name “selective shuffling” came about from the realization that while people often listen to music being played in a random fashion, they still usually have some amount of direction with what they are listening to. When music is played on “shuffle mode” or more simply “shuffled,” the music-playing device randomly chooses each subsequent song. This is an extremely popular method of listening. In fact, some interviewees admitted that they only listen on shuffle, and never pick exactly what songs they want to listen to next. I found, however, that this is not truly the case. While listeners claim that they shuffle all the time, in reality, what they are shuffling is a chosen playlist. They control what songs go into the playlist, but then listen in an uncertain manner.

A Playlist for Every Occasion

Selective shufflers usually have well-defined reasons for listening to music, but they still prefer to leave the order in which they listen to songs and sometimes the songs themselves up to chance. For example, Ken (M, 57) always has music playing at his dental office because he needs to create a relaxing atmosphere for patients. Just like turning the lights on and using sterilized dental tools, playing music is part of the daily routine for him. To get around the hassle of having to constantly choose songs

for the office, he instead, through experience and a bit of trial and error, tunes in to handpicked radio stations. He knows that putting on “Station X” will result in an appropriate type of music for everyone to hear. Ken has nothing left to worry about as the radio station then broadcasts their own predetermined playlists.

A common act is for listeners to create a multitude of playlists for a variety of specific occasions. Sarah D. never mixes up songs that belong in her winter playlist (Christmas music, Coldplay, Death Cab for Cutie) with songs belonging to her summer playlist (Country music, Dave Matthews Band). She actually has a playlist for each month of the year, all of which are listened to on shuffle. When Sarah D. is listening to songs she “shuffles constantly, next, next, next, until I find one I want.” A number of participants have exercise and workout playlists that they swear by. Bill cannot workout at the gym effectively without his mp3 player because he “needs a distraction” or he will “lose his mind,” and with such a big variety of music, he always shuffles. Vickie (F, 21) has a “nap playlist” filled with soothing songs to help her drift into sleep. Another interesting selective shuffle has to do with nostalgia. Tracey (F, 22) sometimes prefers to relive her childhood by listening to Blink 182 and Limp Bizkit, rather than listening to the music of today. She creates playlists based on different phases of her adolescence, and plays them on shuffle, but “never shuffles her whole iPod.” She needs just a little bit of control over what she will listen to, but leaves the rest to chance.

Variety and Quality

As previously stated, selective shuffling is the broadest method of listening because it incorporates both having to choose songs one eventually wants to hear, and the relinquishing of control over what will be played next. For this reason, selective shufflers usually have eclectic musical tastes. They do not want to pick exactly what to listen to because they have and like such a variety of music. This results in a wide range in quality of relationship with music.

Alan (M, 23) “shuffles all the time” because he gets irritated with the same playlist order. This results in there being songs he has “listened to hundreds of times” yet he “still doesn’t even know the words.” This is an example of a low quality relationship even though he may listen to the same music repeatedly, a loyal type action. On the other end of the spectrum, Richard often throws parties and loves to choose music for playlists depending on the people attending and the occasion. He is knowledgeable about a lot of the different music he shuffles through, but likes to vary what is being played. Though he may be a rare case, he maintains a high quality relationship with many artists and types of music. He is not necessarily loyal to each artist and type of music, though, because he enjoys variety and giving different artists playing time. Every individual has their own unique set of relationships with their music at different levels of quality and degrees of loyalty, but they are especially varied when selectively shuffling.

A Day in the Life

This section will describe in first-person, a typical twenty-four hour period of time in the life of a mostly selective shuffling college student.

The day begins early at 7:45 A.M. with talk radio screeching out of my alarm clock. I've tried setting it to all kinds of noises, but none of them wake me up like the incessant sound of people arguing on the radio. I think because I would never otherwise listen to talk radio it wakes me up so well. Music sort of works, but then I'd start the day with some random song stuck in my head and I don't want that. Anyway, I'm up and need breakfast before class so I sit at my computer with a bowl of cereal and listen to my "study time playlist." I have an exam today, and I studied listening to this playlist, so I figure the more I listen to it, the better I'll remember the information. Makes sense right? The playlist is all classical music and has Bach and Beethoven, I think, and some other guys too. As I walk to my exam, I put on my iPod and play the same playlist, study time. I like how passionate classical music is. There's so much going on yet it's really calming and peaceful at the same time. I can't quite tell what song I'm listening to and the title is no help, it just says "Classical." I wish I knew more about music, but there's no time for that now, I have to go pass this exam.

The test was easy. I remembered most of the stuff I studied, and I think listening to similar music all the time helped. But I'm excited now and need a pick-me-up so I'll listen to my "party mix playlist." It's a bit early to be listening to dance music, but I'm in a good mood so who cares? Oh, I haven't heard this Black Eyed Peas song in weeks! Awesome!

After lunch with a friend, I head over to the gym. It's so hard to run without music, but at the same time I can run forever if I'm listening to the right stuff. Being in a good mood plus music I love and haven't heard for a while is an equation for treadmill running success. After running for twenty-five minutes I notice the little battery icon near the top of my iPod's screen is glaring red at me. Oh no, it's about to die. Sadly, after the music turns off I lose my desire to keep running. I'm pretty tired anyway, so I decide to check out of the gym earlier than expected. I live close to the gym so I don't mind taking in the scenery without music, even though I usually do listen when walking. I then shower and decide to leave to go to a friend's apartment. After walking a few blocks, I realize something is missing, no music. My iPod is out of battery life. I forgot already. The long walk to my friend's place seems just a little bit depressing with my music.

There are a few people at my friend's apartment, basically her roommates and their boyfriends. We end up watching some TV show I'm not interested in. I suggest we invite more people over and have a dance party. Everybody likes the idea and someone puts on music. After an hour or two, I'm asked if I want to be the DJ for a while. This makes me way too nervous and I decline because I don't know everyone at the party, what if they don't like my music? My friends and I danced the night away anyway and had a great time.

The party turns out well and I end up walking back with some friends. When I get home, I notice I hadn't plugged my iPod into the wall to recharge it, so I make sure to do so. I'm thankful I remembered, because another day without music would be horrible. I can't stand the sound of silence!

Conclusions: The Listener Wheel in Reality

Sector Movement

Even though the three sectors of the Listener Wheel are described as mutually exclusive, individuals can and do often demonstrate signs of all three. People who tend to passively listen do not cease to ever care about music; sometimes they become very interested and decided about specific artists. Those who tend to proactively listen do not always research the artists they like; sometimes they would rather blindly listen to new music they know nothing about. In the case of selective shuffling, listeners are by definition partly proactive and partly passive. The point is that listeners periodically, whether by mood, or time: monthly, daily, or even hourly, move from sector to sector.

Many listeners have clear tendencies that place them into one sector. In reality, though, nobody is strictly one kind of listener. It may seem that this caveat makes trying to understand peoples' listening methods difficult and chaotic, but sector movement is not as unpredictable as one would think. It tends to follow a foreseeable path. Proactive listeners rarely leave their music choice to chance, but they still create playlists and sometimes shuffle through them. The change from proactive listener to selective shuffler is common because it is the natural next choice. For example, if a typically proactive listener is pressed for time, or is driving and does not want to stare down as they look through their iPod, they will revert to plan B, a selected shuffle. The change from proactive to passive is a big one, though, and is uncommon. Although most people, including proactive music fanatics, enjoy

zoning out listening to some random music from time to time, proactive listeners more frequently selectively shuffle than passively listen because they are nearly incapable of truly not caring what music is being played. A rare example of a proactive listener changing to passive listener is Davis (M, 24), who loves music and usually knows what he wants, but also knows that “music can shut off anything else in the world that is affecting me.” He becomes a passive and ambient listener while doing work.

Passive listeners listen to new music so frequently that they have a high chance of finding music they really like. A common tendency for passive listeners is to become obsessed with specific songs, like popular radio hits that are repeatedly played. They then either begin to selectively shuffle through songs they are obsessed with, or do a bit of research and proactively attain more music by those artists. Even Nicole, a passive listener who is self-admittedly “the worst DJ ever,” likes to seek music advice and suggestions from her peers and the Internet. Passively listening requires very little energy or attention, so whenever a passive listener develops an interest, or feels like exerting some energy in their music selection, sector movement occurs.

Selective shufflers have the most variety in their music choices and uses, and thus do the most sector moving. They clearly care about music, which is why sometimes they exhibit a great amount of loyalty and proactively listen to their favorite artists. Depending on the occasion they sometimes would rather not choose exactly what they listen to, and instead passively listen.

Implications

Categorizing music listeners is nothing new. The music industry has been labeling demographics and the music they listen to for decades. However, times are tough and a reevaluation of the industry business model is in the works. Sales for the most recent tangible form of music, the compact disc, peaked in the year 2000 and have been steadily declining ever since (Fader, 2006). It is clear that the wave of the future is digital music on the Internet. Even with this knowledge, music industry executives are scrambling to sustain business and create new pipelines for revenue. Just as it has always been, these businessmen must be familiar with and cater to their customers: proactive listeners, passive listeners, and selective shufflers.

People who proactively listen seek information. All that need be done to capture their attention is to ensure that information is available, because they will find it. Consider the iPhone application “Shazam.” This program analyzes music it hears through a microphone in the phone and spits back to the user the song’s artist, title, album it can be found on and other valuable musical statistics. It is perfect for any curious listener because it provides a seemingly endless amount of musical information. When a proactive listener strolls through a shopping mall, any song being played through speakers in any store can be quickly identified, and even downloaded.

Passive listeners do not want to have to work for their music. The key to capturing their allegiance is by providing easily accessed, frequently updated, good music. iTunes has done a wonderful job of this by providing an online music store and keeping subscribers up to date with email notifications. These notifications are

filled with valuable information like the most downloaded songs of the week, upcoming releases, featured artists, and can even be tailored to only include information pertinent to subscriber's musical interests. Apple has made shopping for music online ridiculously quick and easy with their iTunes Music Store. Besides getting access to free previews and exclusive deals, passive listeners are influenced by the huge amount of recommendations that litter their computer screens once they begin using the store.

One major misalignment with this pairing of listener to online music store is that passive listeners usually do not like to make major commitments, and with iTunes they are essentially forced to buy music if they want to listen. Services like *Pandora* or *Rhapsody* that offer streaming music for free or for a low cost may be better suited for passive listeners. They require more effort than iTunes to set up and register musical preferences, but in the long run service the needs of passive listeners the best.

Because selective shufflers are a mix of being proactive and passive, they benefit from and utilize most new music technology. *Pandora* is a selective shuffler's dream because it first asks questions or forces the user to input what they want to hear, then does the rest for them. It may be a useful tool for Ken's dental office. Fred (M, 22), Heather, George, and Renee (F, 21), all clearly selective shufflers, each individually mentioned their usage of *Pandora*. It is no coincidence that so many similar people exhibit the same method of accessing and listening to music. Another service gaining popularity that should appeal to selective shufflers is satellite radio, which allows subscribers to tune in from anywhere as long as they

have a receiver. The two most widely known brands are *Sirius* and one of its subsidiaries *XM*. Satellite radio is appealing to selective shufflers because it is composed of hundreds of different radio stations, each specific to what they play. There are sports stations, news stations, alternative rock stations, and even more specific stations like the Bruce Springsteen and Grateful Dead stations. If this premium service continues to gain popularity and ease of use, it has tremendous potential for selective shufflers.

The three categories of listening have not always existed as such. They have evolved as a by-product of technology. Proactive listening was popular in the earlier days of recorded music because you had to be proactive if you wanted to listen, also the reason why passive listening was much less common. In other words, those who did not seek out music generally did not listen to music. It is possible that people were actually more proactive fifty years ago than they are today because music was more tangible and less accessible. Some of the interviewees of an older demographic reminisced with me of when they used to collect albums not just for the music, but also for the cover art, the liner notes, and simply because it was their only option. Without downloading, consumers were forced to travel to a music store to purchase a solid piece of plastic that had music on it if they wanted to listen. The only other options were to attend concerts and live events, which continues today, or to listen communally with friends. The latter is less frequent now as people are more individualistic and tend to listen more commonly in isolated situations like in transit with headphones or while driving in cars.

Selective shuffling was born in the computer age. Technology has provided us with computerized randomizations and the ability to relinquish control to outside forces when listening to music. This was not an option until recently. Even early radio play was essentially proactively listened to because there were only a handful of stations and each one was specific in their broadcasting. The only listening activity remotely similar would be live music festivals, which included multiple acts playing simultaneously such that listeners would give control of music selection to the performers. Though it is a stretch, this method is a combination of proactively choosing to attend a festival of music one likes and passively listening to whatever the musicians played, thus “selectively shuffling.”

Limitations

In conducting my interviews, I often at some point while speaking with respondents would try to fit people into one sector. In many cases this simply was not possible as interviewees described having attributes of all three. The sectors are described somewhat rigidly and in black and white terms, when really the way people listen to music is in shades of grey. The Listener Wheel attempts to categorize all the methods of music listening, but does not entirely do the job. I considered two other ways of illustrating this categorization, both of which were less complete. One possibility was by including transitional stages and theorizing some sort of music listening continuum instead of the wheel. Ultimately I decided the continuum was so heavily centered upon three main methods of listening, (actively, passively, and somewhere in between) that I might as well just segment it instead. The other

possibility involved a two by two graph, allowing me to place listeners into one of four sectors. One axis was split between purposeful, active listeners who were loyal and selective, and ambient, passive listeners who shuffled their music and preferred to relinquish control. The other axis was split according to the quality of the relationship with music. One side was low quality, while the other was an extension of self. This four-sector graph mostly made sense, but was discarded in favor of three sectors because people never seemed to fit into the “purposeful/active, but low quality relationship” sector or the “ambient/passive, but extension of self” sector.

All of the thirty-four people interviewed for this thesis were happy to help and excited to talk about music, which seemed suspicious to me. Mostly handpicking people to interview yielded decent results for the purposes of this thesis, but also made any takeaways less generalizable to the public as a whole. Respondents were mostly white college students. I did what I could to interview people in other age groups, occupations, and of other races, but getting a truly representative sample was unfeasible.

Another important limitation of this thesis was the actual quality of the interview data. Interviewees seemed mostly genuine and honest, but the presence of a few biases probably skewed the data. I did my best to display total objectivity, but because many respondents knew me on a personal level, and knew of my love for music, they may have answered questions in a more pro-music manner. This social desirability bias may have affected the outcome of the interviews, which is why my data is somewhat more skewed toward proactive listeners. This may also be because proactive listeners tend to be more outgoing conversationalists and more prone to

discussing music. Interestingly, I found that respondents I would consider passive listeners often felt ashamed of their lack of interest in music and would apologize for being unhelpful, even though their answers were just as valid and useful as everyone else's. Coincidentally, it would have helped if I spoke with more of those types of listeners. If I had to label each of the thirty-four interviewees with a single sector, an overall limitation would be that passive listeners were under-represented. Maybe it is representative of the population as a whole that fewer people listen passively than the other methods, but further research would be necessary to tell for sure.

Suggestions for Future Research

It would be fascinating to run a study similar to mine on a larger scale with age, race, and other demographic groups more evenly represented. It would be time consuming and would require some very dedicated researchers, but more significant findings would arise. One way to make this possible would be for a record company, or some other business that could benefit from categorizing methods of music listening, to employ teams of interns or workers to interview random people. The personableness that I attained would be lost, but better data would be collected.

Research on playlists would also be interesting. I found that most people create playlists, so why do companies not pre-package them? Of the computer programs mentioned in this thesis (iTunes, Pandora, and Rhapsody), all utilize playlists for music listening convenience. A study of the playlists people create would probably find that there are commonly created ones that companies could begin mainstreaming in their programs.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Interview Questions

1. Do you consider listening to music an important part of your daily life? Why?
2. In what situations throughout the day do you find yourself listening to music? For example, do you listen while in transit, like walking to class or in your car? What about the gym?
3. What are some kinds of music you like? What's one of the last things you listened to? Is there a kind of music you hate?
4. Do you listen in isolation, like with headphones on or in your room by yourself? Or do you listen more often in a communal setting, when other people can also hear what you're listening to?
5. Do you ever use the "shuffle" function? Do you create playlists? What about shuffling your playlists?
6. Let's say hypothetically you were at a party with a bunch of friends, how would you feel about DJing the party?

Appendix B: Demographic Information

#	Name	Age	Gender	Occupation
1	Miriam	90	F	Retired
2	Sarah	19	F	Student
3	Gloria	81	F	Retired
4	Samantha	23	F	Physical Therapist
5	Holly	22	F	Student
6	Nicole	21	F	Student
7	Heather	25	F	Stylist
8	Rachel	23	F	Retail Worker
9	Molly	22	F	Student
10	PJ	22	F	Student
11	Tracey	22	F	Student
12	Lauryn	20	F	Student
13	Tori	20	F	Student
14	Renee	22	F	Student
15	Vickie	22	F	Student
16	Sarah D	20	F	Student
17	Jesse	19	M	Student
18	Harris	19	M	Student
19	Philip	20	M	Student
20	Lonnie	59	M	Professor
21	Bill	23	M	Student
22	Gregory	30	M	Writer
23	Chris	22	M	Graphic Designer
24	Richard	52	M	Dentist
25	George	23	M	Student
26	Dan	21	M	Student
27	Alan	23	M	Elementary Teacher
28	Davis	24	M	Student
29	Ken	57	M	Dentist
30	David	60	M	Professor
31	Fred	22	M	Student
32	William	65	M	Professor
33	Chad	39	M	University Employee
34	Kilroy	22	M	U.S. Navy Officer

Appendix C: Music Meanings and Metaphors

- Music is like another person in the house, it's company.
- Music is a medium to escape from the day to day.
- Music is our environment completely surrounding us.
- Music covers us like clothing; we bring it with us.
- Music is a language anyone can understand.
- Music is an ethnic reminder; it instills pride.
- Music is an appendage; exercise is impossible without it.
- Music can shut off anything in the world that's affecting me.
- Music reminds me of where I came from.
- Culture is about music, music is about culture.
- Music is a clear motivator.
- Music is a release.
- Music creates emotional 180's.
- Music is life.
- Music is like drugs.
- Music takes over.
- Music is culture, a unifying force.
- You have to have music.
- Music is more enjoyable than real life.
- Not having music would be horrible.
- Music is a way to identify with people.
- Music is a new separate world.
- Music is my only friend.
- Music is the distraction I need.
- My iPod is a vacation.
- I'm lost without music.
- Music is my favorite.
- Music brings people together.
- Music is the only constant.
- Music is an agent of peace.
- Music is a cure for so many things.
- Music puts me in my own world.
- Music is an escape from the daily grind.
- Music is courage.
- Music is nostalgia.
- Music fills in the gaps.

Appendix D:

Academic Vita of Stephen Curtis Weiss

Address: 2739 Stoney Creek Road, Broomall, PA 19008

E-Mail: stevecweiss@gmail.com *Telephone:* (610) 209-6514

EDUCATION and HONORS:

The Pennsylvania State University, Class of 2009

University Park, PA

The Schreyer Honors College

Cumulative GPA: 3.73

Bachelor of Science in Marketing, Minor in Psychology

The University of Westminster, Spring Session 2008

London, England

- Inducted to **Beta Gamma Sigma**, International Honor Society for “The Best in Business”
- Schreyer Honors College Academic Excellence Scholarship
- Schreyer Ambassador Travel Grant
- WGI Sport of the Arts Award: Recognizing academic achievement and contribution to pageantry arts
- Newtown Square Business & Professionals Association Academic Scholarship
- Paul B. Holder Award: Recognizing outstanding dedication and achievement in music

Thesis Title: Categorizing How and Why People Listen to Music: The Three-Sector Listener Wheel

Thesis Supervisor: Jennifer C. Coupland, Clinical Associate Professor of Marketing

EXPERIENCE:

Bailey Brand Consulting

Plymouth Meeting, PA

Account Management Intern

Summer 2008

- Developed the positioning strategy for three brands: Lucid, SootheTime (created from scratch) and SongBird
- Planned and launched an intensive Chicago based promotional campaign for Lucid: built relationships with key accounts responsible for becoming brand ambassadors, helped implement a guerilla marketing style street team and spread awareness by creating an online presence that utilized social networks, email blasts and banner ads
- Compiled competitive audits through in-store investigations and research of trends, color palettes, positioning and messaging
- Defined account specific challenges and presented solutions to upper management daily at campaign status meetings

SAP Americas

Newtown Square, PA

Field Marketing Intern

Summer 2007

SAP Americas is a \$5 Billion subsidiary of \$12 Billion *SAP AG*, the world’s largest inter-enterprise software company.

- Managed the Bill of Materials Matrix – a detailed library that records and coordinates existing assets across twenty-nine industries
- Performed an extensive analysis of newsletters, then designed a standardized template now utilized in all five regions of North America by an audience of thousands

Honors Finance

University Park, PA

Financial and Marketing Plan Project

Spring 2007

- In collaboration with the Intercollegiate Athletics Department, developed a new marketing plan to increase attendance and popularity of basketball games at Penn State
- Co-authored, with a team of seven, a 100 page document including research, analysis, recommendations and a complete financial plan, then presented to administrators who have begun implementing our recommendations

LEADERSHIP:

The Penn State Marching Blue Band

University Park, PA

*The Penn State Indoor Drumline: **Section Leader***

Fall 2005 through Spring 2009

- Selected as a member of two elite performance organizations involving intense commitment, dedication to results, brand recognition and competition, selected as a section leader based on consistency, ability and leadership
- Rehearse over 25 hours per week during both the Fall and Spring semesters

Private Drum Instructor

Broomall, PA

Instructor, Arranger, Consultant

2003 to Present

- Experienced in teaching, coaching and motivating students 8 to 21 years old
- Enjoyed many winning seasons teaching high school drummers to perform music I wrote

Arrowhead Day Camp

Newtown Square, PA

Pioneering Specialist

Summer 2006

- Supervised the safety and well-being of hundreds of children
 - Offered standing position based on performance
-

SKILLS and OTHER ACTIVITIES:

- Proficient Mac and PC user with extensive knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint
- The Reading Buccaneers Drum and Bugle Corps Summer 2009
- Private Lessons, Jazz Combo, Percussion Ensemble