



Interview Questions

Experience with music recommender systems & influence of streaming platforms

1. Do you use streaming platforms such as YouTube, Spotify, Tidal, Apple Music, etc., to listen to music in your private life?
 - a. If so, what are your experiences on such platforms? Do they work well for you? What kind of functionalities do you mainly use?
2. Were these platforms, and especially the recommender systems that are integrated therein, already widely used when you started your musical career?
 - a. If so, to what extent do you think they impacted your career at that time? Do you think the start of your career in the music industry would have been different without these systems, and if so, how?
 - b. If not, what do you think would have been different if they were already widely used at the time?

Insight into & influence on recommendations

3. For you as an artist, to what extent is it clear on which basis it is decided which of your songs or albums are recommended, at what time, and to which user?
 - a. Are you satisfied with that level of insight?
 - b. If not, what aspects would you like to gain more insight into?
4. In the following questions, we would like to discuss what you would do if you had total control over the recommender systems - i.e., which songs you would like to recommend and to whom.
 - a. What would you do if you could influence your music's recommendations in this way?
 - b. How would you distribute your music? Which types of songs should be recommended more often, and which types of songs less often? Why?
 - c. Would you differentiate between different groups of users? For example, would you recommend certain songs to one group and not to another group, and vice versa? If so, what kind of groups would you distinguish, and why?

Ways that recommender systems work currently vs. desired way of working

Now, we would like to know what you think about how current recommender systems work, and how you think this could be improved.

5. New music is constantly being uploaded on streaming platforms. Artists often release several albums over a more extended period of time.
 - a. How do you think recommendations should be balanced in this respect, so how many older vs. newer songs should the system recommend? Why?
 - b. Do you think the system should recommend music from artist A more often than music from artist B? Or should the recommendation be independent of how extensive someone's repertoire is?



6. New artists, i.e., artists who have not previously published music on streaming platforms, also constantly upload new music.
 - a. Do you think these new artists should be actively promoted in automatic recommendations? If so, in what way?
 - b. Suppose a particular user is recommended a total of 100 songs. How many of those do you think should come from such new artists?
7. There are groups of artists (not specifically new artists) whose songs the system recommends less often or not at all, for various reasons. For example, the system may not have enough information, such as user ratings or previous listening behavior, to make a good recommendation.
 - a. Should systems try to prevent this?
 - b. What kind of alternatives could you think of?
8. It is possible that platforms, for example, have many users from country X but more artists from country Y. The system can then recommend more music from country X (which has more users) or country Y (which has more artists).
 - a. What kind of recommendation behavior would you expect here?
 - b. Do you think a recommender system should encourage the exchange of music between different countries? Or should recommendations within a country be more self-contained?
 - c. Some countries have set specific quotas for radio stations, specifying the minimum percentage for how much music from that country they need to play. This is the case, for example, in France. Should such a quota also be set for automatic recommendations? In that case, for example, artists from France would also have a greater chance of being recommended to a French listener.
9. Music that is perceived as 'niche' (for example, in style or genre) and artists that are perceived as 'niche' (for example, in terms of country of origin, gender, and popularity) are generally recommended less.
 - a. Do you think recommender systems should encourage music or artists from such niches more, or not? If so, based on which characteristics, and in what way?
 - b. How could we determine the 'correct' distribution or what it should look like?
 - c. Could quotas play a role in this, for example, to achieve gender equality?
 - d. Do you think streaming platforms should play a role in improving diversity and inclusion in their offerings and recommendations? If so, how significant should that role be?
10. Individual users are often most familiar with a specific type of music.
 - a. Should recommender systems pay attention to variation in the music they offer to users, within users' general taste?
 - b. And beyond a user's general taste? Also, for example, music from genres that the user does not typically listen to?
 - c. What would be a good percentage for that?
 - d. Should this apply equally to all users? Or should a distinction be made somehow between different types of users?



11. Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the cultural sector.
 - a. Has the role of streaming services in your life as an artist changed since the first lockdown in 2020? If so, in what way?
 - b. Has your attitude towards streaming services and the recommender systems they incorporate changed since this period? If so, in what way?

12. Recommender systems have an impact on which songs are played, and therefore on what artists ultimately get paid as well.
 - a. Do you think the current model, in which payment is determined based on the total number of streams, is good?
 - b. Or do you think it could be improved, for example, by distinguishing between whether a user listened to a song on their own initiative or based on an automatic recommendation?

13. Do you have any additions on a topic we have already discussed, or is there an important topic we have not discussed yet?