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This Week's Stories

Spotify's Latest Algorithmic Playlist Is Full Of Your Favorite New Music

August 5, 2016

Friday is the best day of the week in the music industry. It's when the new stuff drops, the albums and singles that will dominate radio play for the next few days, weeks, months, and in Drake's case, the next several generations.

Spotify's New Music Friday is one of the best ways to see what's out, and one of the service's most popular playlists. But starting this Friday, you'll probably first head to Release Radar, Spotify's new, hyper-personalized playlist of new tracks. Today and every Friday after, it'll serve up two hours of fresh jams you'll (probably, hopefully) love.

Release Radar is a direct offshoot of Discover Weekly, Spotify's first attempt at automatically making playlists for every one of its users. Discover Weekly refreshes every Monday, with 30 new tracks Spotify's algorithms think you'll love. The playlist has become sort of a phenomenon. More than 40 million people are using it to stream billions of tracks. It's the best thing about the Monday morning commute, really.

It's safe to say Spotify didn't expect Discover Weekly to get this big this fast. "It was a complete surprise," says Edward Newett, the company's lead software engineer and the guy who originally hacked together Discover Weekly in 2014. "At the time," he says, "I don't think we were super focused on music discovery in that sense." Spotify had the Discover page, and the artist and song radio, and that seemed good enough. "This just fell out of luck, in a way."

Newett and Spotify's other engineers have spent the last year tweaking the service's infrastructure to be able to handle the workload of simultaneously making 100 million different playlists. Now they're looking for other places to use the tech, starting with brand-new music. Release Radar's a little different from Discover Weekly. Since the tracks are new, Spotify obviously has no listening data.

Instead, the company relies on its deep and specific knowledge of the music itself, along with your listening history, to figure out what you might want to know about. In my case, it works really well: I got two hours mostly full of new releases from artists I already knew, along with a couple of well-placed wild cards.

Release Radar won't be the last automatic, ever-evolving playlist from Spotify. In the company's view, this kind of playlist is the future of music. For decades, we all listened by the album: drop it on the turntable, put the needle down, sit back, and let the LP wash over you. Then listeners flocked to music video countdowns and MP3 downloads, and eventually found themselves in command of the Internet Jukebox and its infinite catalog of videos and songs. Somewhere in there, we lost the ability to just press play, close our eyes, and enjoy. Playlists are giving that back. After trying lots of other formats, Newett says, "We've now found that the playlist format is actually a super successful way to ship product. It's a similar, very lean-back experience."

I've been testing the new playlist for two weeks, and Release Radar has been terrific so far. It's showed me new albums from little-known favorites I never would have noticed otherwise. I've even discovered a couple of new debuts before all my friends did. (Which is, of course, the goal of music:

to know the cool stuff first.) It's not quite as horizon-expanding as Discover Weekly, and it's probably not going to create the near-religious devotion that playlist has engendered. But it's a great way to start the day on Friday. And it's further proof that Spotify just gets me.

wired.com

Apple's App Store Just Had Its Best Month Ever

August 4, 2016

In case anyone still thought apps were dying, Tim Cook just laid that theory to rest.

The company's App Store set a new record for the month of July, Cook revealed. The month saw Apple's highest ever monthly billings and the biggest amount paid out to developers in a single month, he said in a tweet.

Cook didn't elaborate on the source of the success but we suspect *Pokémon Go* likely had something (or a lot) to do with it, as Niantic's game has been smashing records left and right.

"The month saw Apple's highest ever monthly billings and the biggest amount paid out to developers in a single month"



Apple previously announced that the game had set a new record for the highest number of downloads in its first week.

Revenue-wise, Cook added that App Store developers had earned more than \$50 billion.



Again, *Pokémon Go* was likely a significant factor in that success. The app generates more than \$10 million a day between iOS and Android, according to an analytics firm App Annie, who estimates the game has already been installed more than 100 million times (the game launched at the beginning of July.)

Those are pretty staggering numbers no matter how you look at it. While there's some speculation that *Pokémon Go* won't be able to maintain its initial momentum, it seems clear that Apple, at least, has already benefitted in a huge way.

mashable.com

Products & Services

LG Will Announce First Android 7.0 Nougat Phone On Sept. 6

August 4, 2016

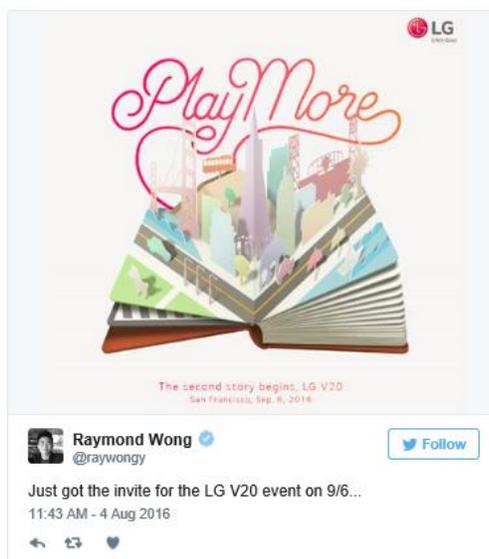
"The craziest part of the announcement date might be the fact it could come one day before Apple reveals its new iPhones."

Having choices is great. Samsung's releasing its impressive Galaxy Note 7 later this month, the new iPhones are coming next month and now LG's announced it'll also unveil a new phone in early September.

The LG V20, which the company half-arsedly announced — but didn't show — early last week, will debut in San Francisco on Sept. 6.

The invite (below) doesn't reveal anything juicy. We've got a "Play More" title and "The second story begins."

The first part could be alluding to LG's "Friends" modules, which headlined the company's G5. Although it seems unlikely the V20 will also be a modular phone, weirder things have happened. It could also merely be teasing the phones beefed up entertainment features.



The second part is a little more cryptic. On the surface, the V20 is, of course, the second version of the V10, but it could also be hinting at a second screen or second selfie camera, two things that made the V10 different from other phones.

LG's G5 has two rear cameras. I wouldn't bet against that appearing on the V20. I liked the two-camera system a lot when I reviewed the phone.

The craziest part of the announcement date might be the fact it could come one day before Apple reveals its new iPhones.

Phone leaker Evan Blass tweeted that he has confirmed pre-orders of the new iPhones will begin on Sept. 9 with deliveries on Sept. 12.



If accurate, Apple could announce them on Sept. 7, as *Daring Fireball's* John Gruber posits.



Not to downplay the V20 and what it could bring — it will be the first Android phone to ship with Android 7.0 Nougat, after all — but announcing a new product right when new iPhones are rolled out is practically suicide.

Good luck LG!

mashable.com

The Galaxy Note 7 Unlocks Just By Gazing Into Your Eyes

August 2, 2016

"You can unlock the phone simply by looking at it, and secure folders with retina or fingerprint protection."

When Samsung released the Galaxy Note in 2011, the average smartphone screen measured less than 4 inches. That made the Note's 5.3-inch screen seem like an impractical experiment, not a sign of things to come. Isn't technology supposed to get smaller over time?

Not if it has a screen. Big phones are mainstream now, and the Galaxy Note 7 shows how refined they've become. Its 5.7-inch AMOLED display (1440x2560, 518ppi) seems reasonably sized, and the phone feels surprisingly compact. The slimming effect is due to a curved screen, borrowed from the S7 Edge, which eliminates the side bezels. That makes the Note 7 2.2mm narrower than its predecessor despite having the same size display.

As a result, the Note 7 resembles an oversized Edge. The two phones share other similarities. They use quad-core processors and offer 4GB RAM. Both are water resistant (with an IP68 rating, meaning they're "dust tight" and you can submerge them) and feature the same excellent camera, MicroSD slot, fast-charging 3,500mAh battery, and "Edge UX" shortcuts.

This is the first Note phone to use USB-C charging, and the first Galaxy device with HDR10 video playback. But the marquee feature might be the iris-scanning camera. You can unlock the phone simply by looking at it, and secure folders with retina or fingerprint protection.

And then there's the S Pen stylus. Before knocking it as a Palm-Pilot-era relic, you should know that you can translate or magnify text with it, and turn any video that isn't DRM protected into a gif with just a few taps. If you use the stylus often, you won't have to jump between S Pen-friendly apps quite so much. A Samsung Notes app combines the functionality of several predecessors.

Note veterans will be relieved to hear this stylus won't get stuck in its cubby if you insert it backward. Samsung wanted the stylus to provide a more-natural writing experience, so they designed it to feel like a 0.7mm ballpoint pen. Cooler still, you can use it underwater. Because why not.

Like recent generations of Galaxy phones, the Note 7 should offer a solid VR experience. However, the USB-C connector means you'll need a new Gear VR headset. Coincidentally, Samsung announced the \$100 Gear VR for Galaxy Note 7 today, and it works with older phones via an included MicroUSB attachment.

No word on what carriers will charge for the phone, but preorders start tomorrow. The phone ships August 19, and it'll be available in silver, black, and blue.

wired.com

Emerging Technology

Statue Destroyed 1,500 Years Ago Revived Through 3D Printing

August 5, 2016

3D printing has been used to build replicas of historical artefacts based on photographs and scans. Now, in honour of the 2016 Olympic Games, a team from 3D printing company Stratasys, 3DPTree in Atlanta and the Millennium Gate Museum in Atlanta have gone one step further -- recreating a statue that was destroyed over 1,500 years ago.

The Statue of Zeus at Olympia stood around 13 metres (43 feet) tall, towering over visitors to the Temple of Zeus in Olympia, Greece. It was constructed around 435 BC by the sculptor Phidias, and it would have made an imposing sight. Its core was wood, covered with ivory and gold, and it sat on a cedar wood throne decorated with ebony, ivory, gold and gems.

Now considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the statue stood (or sat) for over 850 years. In 420 AD, it was seized and taken to Constantinople, where it was added to the collection of imperial chamberlain Lausus. This was to be its final resting place. In 475, the Palace of Lausus and much of Constantinople was destroyed by fire, including the statue of Zeus.

No replica survived, only depictions on coins, and descriptions by historians and travellers. It was from these, and later statues that copied the style of the famous Zeus that artists attempted to recreate the statue.

"The biggest challenge was the statue no longer existed. 3DPTree and museum curators teamed to conduct extensive research on how it would have looked, and later recreated it digitally," museum director Jeremy Kobus said in an email.

The resulting statue is printed in thermoplastics, rather than gold and ivory, and stands a fair bit smaller than the original at 1.8 metres (6 feet). It was constructed in pieces using the Stratasys Fortus 900mc 3D printer.

"The process used was FDM -- or fused deposition modeling. Materials were deposited in a very precise manner and at a specific speed -- then cooled at target temperatures," said Stratasys's Jesse

Roitenberg. "These controlled elements lead to very high quality 3D printed parts. With finishing techniques, the final product looks very close to the original."

Size aside, the final product probably doesn't look as grand as the original, but it should help provide a sense of the scale and grandeur of the temple to museum visitors attending the "The Games: Ancient Olympia to Atlanta to Rio" exhibition from 20 August.

The techniques employed by the team can be used to help recreate other invaluable lost artefacts. "Throughout history, there are always instances where the most precious works of art get destroyed or broken. In the past, this disappearance meant items were lost forever," Kobus said. "That's why we're so heavily invested in the artistic value of 3D printing."

[cnet.com](#)

New Gear VR Headset Gets USB-C And A Wider Field Of View

August 2, 2016

The new Samsung Galaxy Note 7 is the first Note to use USB-C, which is good for many reasons, not the least of which is it makes it easier to plug in when it's dark. But it means you'll need a new Gear VR headset if you want to enjoy the wonders of virtual reality.

So it's a good thing Samsung announced the Gear VR for Note 7 along with the new phone. Yes, it works with the Note 5 and Galaxy S6 and S7 series, but it was made for the Note 7. If you're serious about a phone-driven VR experience, it's worth forking over \$100 for the new rig.

It offers a wider field of view—101 degrees instead of 96—to enhance the sense of immersion. And it's finished in a shade of blue so dark it's almost black, which ought to address complaints that the earlier all-white models created reflections. Samsung also overhauled the input controls at the temple. The touchpad is recessed, and quite a bit bigger. A dedicated button takes you to the Oculus Store without dealing with menus. The padding seems cushier and comfier, and the new rig is noticeably lighter than the previous version.

The pass-through power and peripheral port on the bottom is now a USB-C connector, as is the native phone connection. A dongle in the box lets you use older, Micro USB-connected Galaxy phones. In all likelihood, it signals that the next generation of Galaxy phones will use USB-C. Until then, you'll have to use an adaptor and pay \$100 to upgrade your Gear VR experience. But that's a small price to pay for the wonders of virtual reality.

[wired.com](#)

Mergers and Acquisitions

European Food Delivery Startup Deliveroo Raises \$275 Million

August 5, 2016

London-based Deliveroo today announced it's raised a hefty \$275 million in order to expand its European operations beyond the 84 cities (and one dozen countries) where it currently operates.

Deliveroo currently serves the likes of France, Germany, Hong Kong, and the U.K. (of course) — but the startup has remained absent from the GrubHub-saturated U.S. market.

With fresh capital in hand, the food and booze delivery company says it will also use the new funds to invest in RooBox, which — Deliveroo says — “gives restaurants access to delivery-only kitchens in key locations, accelerating geographic expansion.”

London investor Bridgepoint Capital, Russia’s DST Global, and U.S. firms General Catalyst and Greenoaks Capital participated in the round. The company had previously raised at least \$195 million, including a \$100 million round in November 2015, a \$70 million round that July, and another \$25 million in January.

venturebeat.com

Ex-Facebook CTO Sells Word Processor Quip For \$582 Million To Salesforce

August 3, 2016

A young word processing app just found a new home — for a pretty hefty price tag. Salesforce, the cloud software giant, has acquired Quip for \$582 million, according to the company’s filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission Monday.

Founded in 2012, Quip began as a mobile-oriented word processor and collaboration tool that competed with the likes of Microsoft Office and Google Docs. Quip works on PCs, yet the company said in blog post that it “shines on phones and tablets.” Collaboration was also easier to visualize through a highlighted feed of updates.

The mobile focus is not surprising given the founder’s history. Quip CEO Bret Taylor was the co-creator of Google Maps, founder of social network FriendFeed (which was acquired by Facebook in 2009) and later the chief technology officer of Facebook during its aggressive push to mobile. Taylor also joined Twitter’s board last month.

Quip announced the news in a blog post, saying Salesforce’s strategy aligned with its own. Salesforce and Quip share the same philosophy about software: it should be in the cloud, built for the mobile era, and be inherently social. Salesforce pioneered the shift to enterprise cloud computing — and Quip has been working since 2012 to reimagine a productivity platform for teams that allows them to be more connected, more collaborative and get more work done.

Quip has not recently released user numbers. It offers a free version and premium versions for small companies at \$12 per user per month and larger enterprises at \$25 per user per month. Salesforce’s move to purchase Quip comes after a reported failed attempt to purchase LinkedIn, which sold to Microsoft for \$26 billion last month.

Having its own word processing tool gives Salesforce another boost in its competition with Microsoft’s Office 365. Salesforce Ventures was an investor in Quip’s \$45 million funding round. The operation will still be run by Taylor and his team.

mashable.com

Industry Reports

Apple Releases iOS 9.3.4 With 'Important Security Update'

August 4, 2016

“iOS 10 brings a massively overhauled Messages app, redesigned Music and Maps apps and the ability to delete stock apps.”

Attention iPhone and iPad owners: now is a great time to make sure your software is up to date. Apple has released iOS 9.3.4, which includes "an important security update" that the company says all iOS users should get.

The update addresses a "memory corruption issue" and patches the Pangu jailbreak, according to Apple's website.

If your device hasn't prompted you to install the update already, you can find it in the main settings app under **General** —> **Software Update**.

As *MacRumors* notes, this update is likely to be the last before iOS 10, which is expected sometime next month. If previous years' updates hold true, the next version of iOS will launch with the next iPhone in September. iOS 10 brings a massively overhauled Messages app, redesigned Music and Maps apps and the ability to delete stock apps (well, sort of). It also sports revamped notifications and lockscreen, a redesigned Control Center and opens up Siri to third-party developers.

mashable.com

LinkedIn Now Has 450 Million Members, But The Number Of Monthly Visitors Is Still Flat

August 4, 2016

LinkedIn (\$LNKD) announced its second quarter earnings today as it nears the end of its time as an independent company. It was revealed that the company generated \$933 million in revenue, with an earnings per share (EPS) of \$1.13. And while LinkedIn counts more than 450 million members, what's telling is how many of those are actively visiting the professional social network each month: 25 percent.

For those keeping track at home, Wall Street analysts had been expecting LinkedIn to report \$898.3 million in revenue and an EPS of \$0.78. So it's a beat.

The company's stock closed down 0.13 percent for the day at \$192.01, but it's currently up 0.15 percent in after-hours trading.

"In Q2, we demonstrated good momentum with our members and customers and delivered strong financial results," said LinkedIn CEO Jeff Weiner. "Continued product innovation drove increased levels of engagement, and strengthened our enterprise offerings."

While that's true, and the company has seen its cumulative member numbers grow 18 percent from last year, the percentage of what the company categorizes as "unique visiting members" — LinkedIn's term for monthly active users (MAU) — has been relatively flat. In Q2, the company reported that out of 450 million members, an average of 106 million members visit the service each month. This was the same figure as last quarter, when LinkedIn reported it had 433 million cumulative members. The unique visiting member metric became popular about a year ago, and if you look at the overall trend for LinkedIn, that percentage has been flat since Q2 2015. In fact, LinkedIn's MAU has remained consistently around 25 percent over the past five quarters.

This latest quarterly earnings release comes in the shadow of LinkedIn's \$26.2 billion acquisition by Microsoft, which amounts to about \$196 per share as part of an all-cash deal. Today's report is likely one of the last glimpses we'll receive of the company's financial performance before it becomes the property of the Redmond, Wash.-based technology giant.

Talent Solutions continues to lead the way in terms of generating revenue for LinkedIn, growing 35 percent annually to \$597 million, largely through its hiring programs. Its marketing solutions brought in \$181 million for the quarter, a 29 percent increase from the year prior, and premium subscriptions contributed \$155 million, up 21 percent year over year.

Because of its pending acquisition, LinkedIn offered no update to its fiscal 2016 outlook.

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