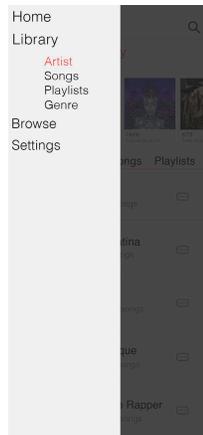Cogs 187A
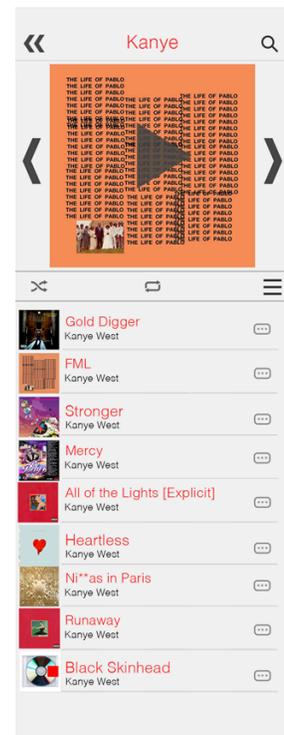Sam Cabano
Mallory Kraus
Mustafa Nasr

Hardest Decisions

Core Navigation

Thinking about which universal navigation options to include, we didn't want to overwhelm the user with too many menu options, but at the same time allow them quick and easy access to some menus that they may use frequently (i.e. Home, Library, Browse, Settings), as well as including some submenus. The hamburger menu information architecture is laid out as follows.

- Home
- Library
- Browse
    - Artists
    - Albums
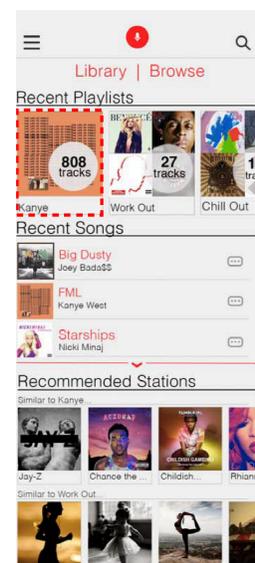   - Songs
    - Genres
- Settings
- Logout

In order to only offer primary page options in the hamburger menu, we had put our creativity to the test as to how we designed the layout for all other pages. We had to make sure that the hamburger menu was present on nearly every screen except for a few that would replace the menu with a pair of back arrows. We decided that a few key pages within the app would benefit from having navigation arrows in place of the hamburger menu (e.g. within the media player). We also considered incorporating both the hamburger menu and the back navigational arrows in tandem, but ultimately decided against the idea as it could create difficulty for the user to choose to select either the menu or the arrows.

Home-Page Design

One of the difficult decisions we had to make in regards to the homepage design was whether or not to include multiple hotspots for the playlist icons (i.e. to play and to edit). Though giving the user multiple options on a single icon would help reduce the number of pages a user would have to navigate it doesn't reduce it by much and it may make it more difficult to precisely select the user's desired target (see image on the right).
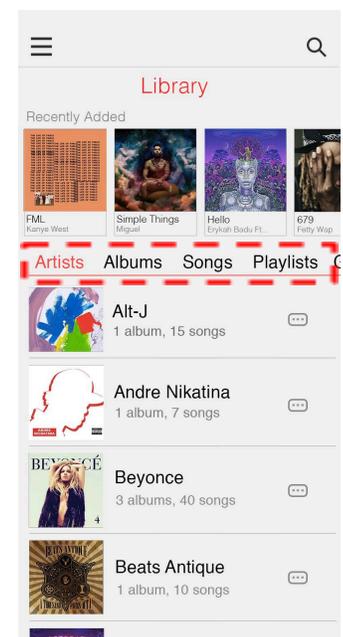
Another major decision that needed to be made was the number of menus to have on the home-page and the navigational options within those menus (i.e. recent playlists, recent songs, recommended stations). We decided to go with the most recent music played by the user and based on those recent plays, recommended options on the home-page. This decision was made based on our interview data and comparative scenarios, as those were the options offered across most major applications. In order to retain these three menus on the page, we utilized a combination of horizontal and vertical scrolling menus. This allowed us to offer many options within each category but also helps the home-page from appearing cluttered with too many images, as well as creating a more clear division between each list of items.

Browsing Options

One of the more difficult decisions we made regarded which browsing options to allow within the app. The apps we evaluated vary in browsing options available to the user, however, most of them shared a search function. Though the search function is not an adequate replacement for all other possible browsing options, so we compared the browsing options across all the apps we evaluated and decided to retain the most common ones for our design. These labels include; Artists, Albums, Songs, Playlists and Genres.

We also considered having recommended options located within the sub-genre categories, but due to a design change made afterwards, we decided against this idea. We decided to make the recommended options available on the home screen. We limited the amount of recommended options to eliminate redundancy, but also because in the initial stages of use the app may not have enough user data to provide desirable recommendations to the user.

When driving, Visibility of System Status is especially important. "Start", "Stop", and "Next" have arge hotspots for ease of use while driving.

Album covers offer visual cues as to what artist, album, and song the user is viewing, decreasing the amount of time the user is looking at their screen.