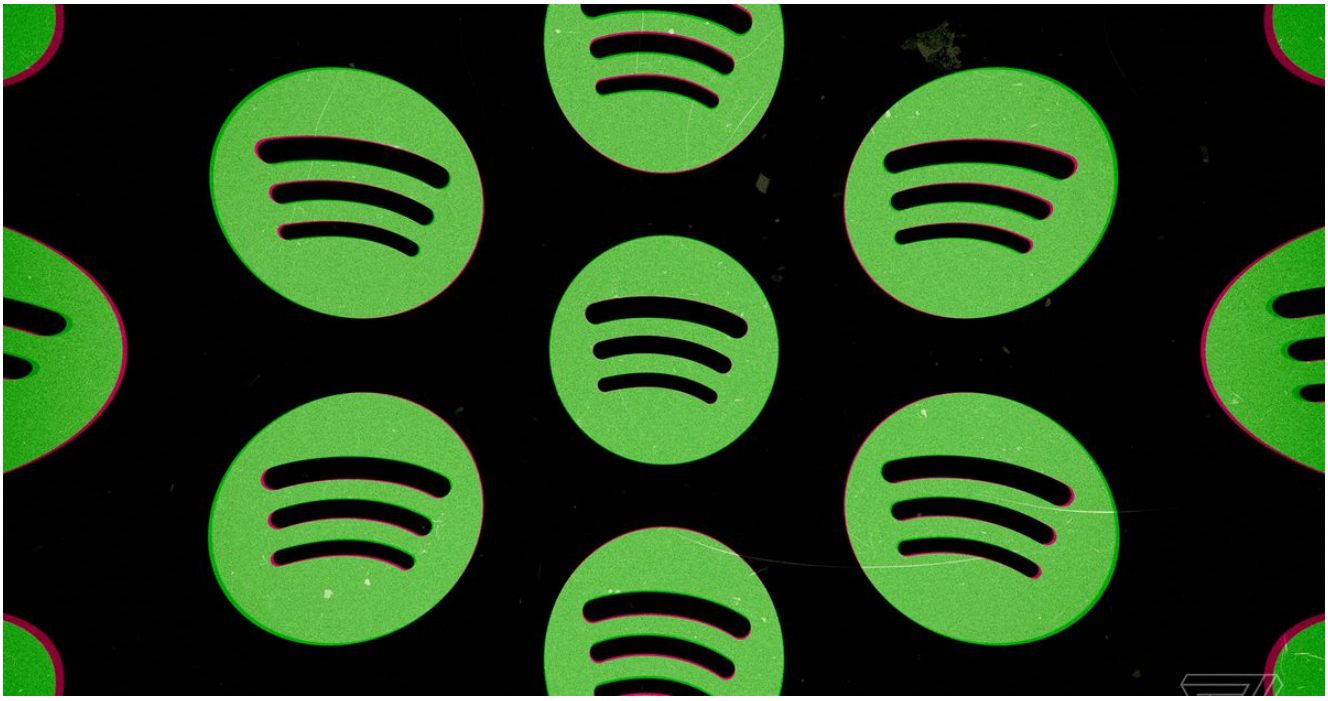
Spotify hints at subscription podcast service



Spotify appears to be interested in launching a subscription podcast service that would offer access to original shows or exclusive episodes for a monthly fee. The potential service was described in a survey sent out through Spotify's app, which was reported on by Andrew Wallenstein, president of *Variety*'s Intelligence Platform.

The survey describes at least four possible subscription podcast plans, ranging from $3 to $8 per month. The cheapest plan would include "access to exclusive interviews and episodes," but would still include ads. The most expensive plan would include access to "high quality original content," early access to some episodes, and no platform-inserted ads. None of these plans would include access to Spotify's premium music subscription.

A spokesperson for Spotify indicated that the survey should not be taken as concrete product plans. "At Spotify, we routinely conduct a number of surveys in an effort to improve our user experience. Some of those end up paving the path for

our broader user experience and others serve only as important learnings," the spokesperson said. "We have no further news to share on future plans at this time."

> *Looks like the premium podcast plan would be ad-free and some mix of exclusive extra content at price points somewhere between $3-$8. pic.twitter.com/ArK8xYg0CM*
>
> *— Andrew Wallenstein (@awallenstein) November 6, 2020*

That means there's no guarantee that Spotify will follow through with launching any of the described services. Companies often survey customers about potential new products and may shape their plans based on the results. But the fact that Spotify is surveying users means that it's likely considering launching some sort of subscription podcast plan, even if it doesn't necessarily end up taking any of the exact forms described here.

Spotify has been making big investments into podcasting over the past two years. The company acquired several major podcast producers, including Gimlet, Parcast, and The Ringer; signed exclusive podcast deals with Michelle Obama, Kim Kardashian West, and Joe Rogan; and has increasingly promoted podcasts inside its app. Podcasts offer a lucrative opportunity for Spotify because it doesn't have to pay licensing fees and royalties to stream them, but it can still make money on subscriptions and app-inserted ads played around them.

Eventually, Spotify is going to want to make money off of the huge sums it has sunk into podcasting — and it seems we may have an early look at what that'll be like. Whether Spotify can pull it off is another question, though. The podcast service Luminary signed a splashy roster of talent to make podcasts for its subscription service, but it frustrated the podcast industry in the process and seems to have struggled to get listeners to sign up.

https://www.theverge.com/2020/11/6/21552822/spotify-podcast-subscription-service-survey