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Spotify

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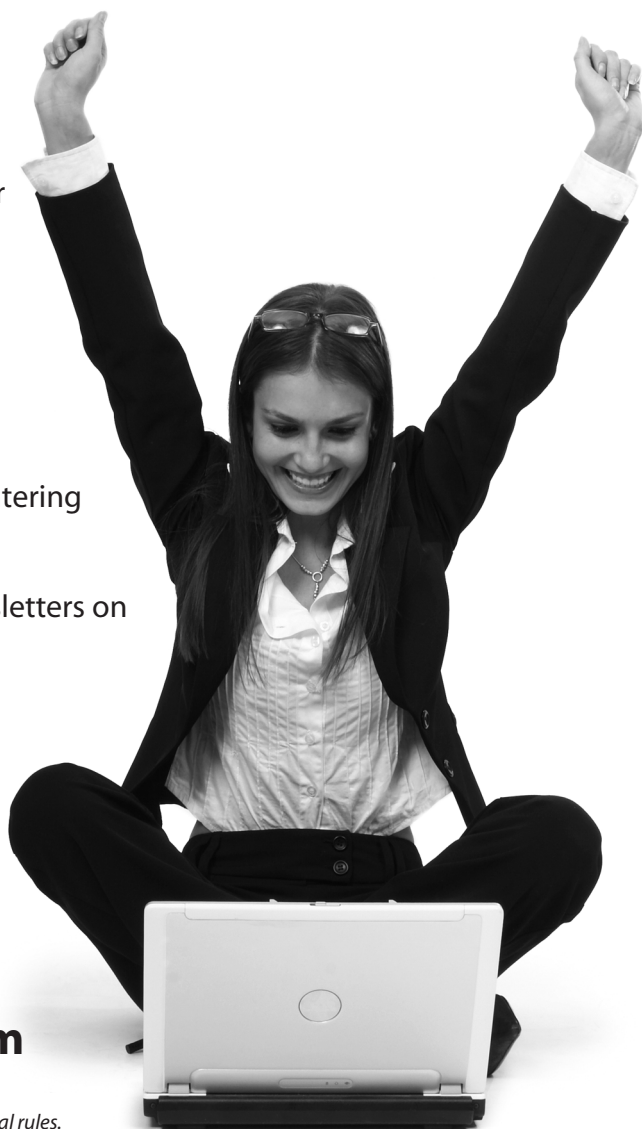
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About the Author

Kim Gilmour is a freelance journalist and author with more than 13 years of experience. As senior researcher/writer at *Which? Computing*, the U.K.'s biggest computing magazine, she conducted high-profile news investigations, product reviews, and tutorials; and she is still a regular contributor. She was also features editor at *Internet Magazine*, where she extensively covered early developments in the digital music revolution. Prior to this, she was assistant editor at an Australian business technology title.

Kim's articles have appeared in the U.K.'s *Web User*, *PC Pro*, and *Computer Shopper*, among others. She is the author of *Digital Photography for the Older and Wiser* (Wiley) and co-author of *eBay.co.uk for Business All-in-One For Dummies* and *Starting and Running an Online Business For Dummies (U.K. edition)*.

Dedication

For Audrey, who loves music.

Author's Acknowledgments

Writing this book from Australia — a country that doesn't even *have* Spotify yet — was far from the lonely task I thought it might be. I've had countless advice from the Spotify community all around the world; and despite the late nights and time differences, it worked! This book would not exist without you all. Thank you so much; I hope our paths cross one day.

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Contents at a Glance

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Part I: Becoming Buddies with Spotify</i>	7
Chapter 1: Introducing Spotify	9
Chapter 2: Getting Set Up with Spotify	27
Chapter 3: Understanding the Spotify Window	47
<i>Part II: Managing Your Spotify Experience</i>	69
Chapter 4: Experiencing the Music.....	71
Chapter 5: Finding New Tunes	85
Chapter 6: Creating Playlists: The Mixtape Lives On	101
Chapter 7: Mastering the Library at Your Fingertips.....	117
Chapter 8: Downloading Tracks from Spotify	139
<i>Part III: Getting By with a Little Help from Your Friends</i>	149
Chapter 9: Getting Started with Spotify Social	151
Chapter 10: Sharing and Collaborating on Music	171
Chapter 11: Embracing the Spotify Community	191
<i>Part IV: Enjoying the Enhanced Features of Spotify</i>	217
Chapter 12: Understanding Spotify Paid-For Services	219
Chapter 13: Downloading Spotify for Mobile Devices.....	241
Chapter 14: Using Spotify on Your Mobile Device.....	255
Chapter 15: Listening to Spotify Music on Other Devices.....	285
Chapter 16: Using Offline Mode with Spotify Premium	299
<i>Part V: The Part of Tens</i>	313
Chapter 17: Ten Answers to Common Spotify Problems	315
Chapter 18: Ten Innovative Spotify Tools	327
Chapter 19: Ten Great Ways to Use Spotify	335
<i>Index</i>	347

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
About This Book	2
Conventions Used in This Book	2
Foolish Assumptions	3
Added Extras	4
How This Book Is Organized	4
Part I: Becoming Buddies with Spotify	5
Part II: Managing Your Spotify Experience	5
Part III: Getting By with a Little Help from Your Friends	5
Part IV: Enjoying the Enhanced Features of Spotify	5
Part V: The Part of Tens	6
Icons Used in This Book	6
Where to Go from Here	6
<i>Part I: Becoming Buddies with Spotify</i>	7
Chapter 1: Introducing Spotify	9
Peeking at Some Snazzy Spotify Features	10
Getting instant music	10
Creating playlists	10
Listening on other devices	11
Playing local files	11
Sharing new music discoveries	12
Branching out with third-party resources	12
Deciding to Go for Spotify	12
Technology	13
Sound quality and efficiency	14
Music sharing by using links	14
Merging your music	14
Catalogue selection	14
Transatlantic reach	15
Examining the Business of Spotify	16
Convincing you to pay	16
The answer to piracy?	16
Shifting music ownership	17
Valuable listening data	18
Tasting the Many Flavors of Spotify	19
Spotify Free: A gourmet sample	19
Spotify Unlimited: A hearty main course	20
Spotify Premium: A four-course meal	20



- Figuring out Terms of Use 21
 - Country differences 21
 - Basic things to agree to..... 22
 - Local files 23
 - Advertising and use of computational resources..... 23
 - Use of your data..... 24
- Knowing Me, Knowing Spotify 24
 - Making sure artists get paid 25
 - Keeping the service afloat 25
 - Helping you discover new music 25
 - Conducting market analysis 26
 - Targeted advertising 26
 - Using Spotify Social 26

Chapter 2: Getting Set Up with Spotify. 27

- Understanding How Spotify Works 27
 - Keeping your music in a cache 28
 - Considering Spotify’s data usage..... 29
- Running Spotify on Your Computer 29
 - Compatible systems 29
 - Necessary specifications 30
 - Security software 31
- Sounding Out Digital Audio on Spotify 32
 - A bit about bitrates..... 33
 - Hooking up speakers 33
- Getting Started with Spotify 34
 - Signing Up for Spotify 35
 - Downloading Spotify..... 37
 - Logging into Spotify..... 41
- Finding Music to Play on Spotify 43
- Updating the Spotify Software 45

Chapter 3: Understanding the Spotify Window 47

- Navigating the Spotify Window..... 47
- Understanding Spotify’s Main Features..... 48
 - Search bar 49
 - What’s New 51
 - Radio..... 51
 - Play Queue..... 51
 - Inbox..... 52
 - Devices 52
 - Library..... 53
 - Local Files 53
 - Downloads 53
 - Starred..... 55
 - Playlists 55
 - People list 55
- Viewing Your Account Details 56

Playing Tracks.....	57
Playing, skipping, and pausing.....	57
Pumping up the volume.....	59
Randomizing the experience.....	59
Repeating the music.....	59
Using Share buttons.....	60
Fine-Tuning Your Setup in Preferences.....	61
Last.fm.....	61
Facebook.....	62
Profile.....	62
Language.....	63
Local Files.....	63
Playback.....	64
Purchases.....	65
Cache.....	66
Proxy.....	67

Part II: Managing Your Spotify Experience 69

Chapter 4: Experiencing the Music..... 71

Knowing Who’s Available on Spotify (and Who Isn’t).....	71
Notable missing artists and albums.....	72
Country restrictions.....	74
Understanding the Play Queue and History.....	75
Letting Spotify do the work.....	76
Manually adding tracks to the Queue.....	77
The History tab.....	77
Searching through Spotify’s Offerings.....	78
The genres of Spotify.....	78
Special searches.....	79
Combining searches.....	81
Walking on the wild side.....	83
Auto-correct heaven.....	83
Filtering the easy way.....	83

Chapter 5: Finding New Tunes..... 85

Reading Artist Profiles.....	85
Checking Out Artist Biographies.....	86
Discovering Artist Radio.....	87
Exploring What’s New.....	89
Listening to Spotify Radio.....	90
Getting Started with Last.fm.....	93
Signing up for Last.fm.....	94
Discovering Last.fm recommendations.....	96
More ways to find new music.....	97
Adjusting Last.fm privacy.....	99
Deleting tracks from the Library.....	99

Chapter 6: Creating Playlists: The Mixtape Lives On	101
Knowing How Playlists Work	102
Creating Playlists	103
Mixing your own playlist	104
Making an album into a playlist	106
Organizing Playlists	107
Creating playlist folders	108
Viewing playlist folders	108
Reordering playlist folders	109
Reordering and moving playlists	110
Rearranging playlist tracks	110
Renaming playlists	111
Deleting playlist tracks	113
Deleting playlists and playlist folders	113
Sorting Playlists	113
Examining a Playlist's Anatomy	115
Chapter 7: Mastering the Library at Your Fingertips	117
Importing Your Local Files in an Instant	117
Dealing with pesky Windows Media Player files	119
Tagging your tracks	120
Gracing your Library with Gracenote	122
Recognizing Some Spotify Icons	125
Making Life Easier with Shortcuts	126
Organizing Your Tracks	128
Using Library view	128
Managing the music in your Library	128
Managing Spotify and iTunes playlists	129
Sorting out your tracks	130
Filtering the music	131
Viewing album cover art (or loving Ctrl+G)	133
Starry, starry tracks	134
Creating shortcuts to access the music	135
Chapter 8: Downloading Tracks from Spotify	139
Introducing Spotify Downloads	139
Buying Download Bundles	140
Using Your Bundle before It Expires	141
Payment Methods	141
Buying Tracks from Spotify	142
Buying Missing Tracks	145
Privileges with Purchased Tracks	147

***Part III: Getting By with a Little Help
from Your Friends* 149**

Chapter 9: Getting Started with Spotify Social 151

Understanding Spotify Social.....	152
Exploring Facebook Music	153
Viewing the Music dashboard.....	155
Playing music in Spotify.....	155
Signing up for Spotify from Facebook.....	157
Controlling Privacy on Facebook	158
Facebook's Open Graph.....	159
Editing Facebook's Spotify privacy settings.....	160
Hiding individual stories from your Timeline.....	162
Stopping Spotify from posting to your Timeline.....	163
Viewing a Profile Page.....	164
Adding extra profiles.....	165
Sharing your Spotify username.....	166
Dealing with connection issues.....	166
Editing Your Profile Privacy.....	168

Chapter 10: Sharing and Collaborating on Music 171

Using Spotify Links to Share Music	172
The Share button	173
Linking to just about anything	176
Knowing which links to use.....	178
Subscribing to Playlists	180
Looking at playlists.....	181
Seeing who's subscribed to a playlist.....	181
Collaborating on Playlists.....	182
Discovering Your Inbox	184
Sending tracks, playlists, and more.....	185
Reading Inbox messages.....	186
Marking and starring Inbox tracks	186
Blocking unwanted messages	187
Checking Out the Top Lists.....	187

Chapter 11: Embracing the Spotify Community..... 191

Playing with Special Spotify Toys.....	192
BRITify.....	192
Last.ify.....	193
Pitchify	194
Gigero	195
Tubufy	196

Topsify.....	196
Overhere	197
Equalify.....	198
truShuffle.....	199
Spotisquare.....	199
Viral Music List	199
Playlistify.....	200
clinc	201
Discovering the Music with ShareMyPlaylists.com	201
SMP site features.....	202
Registering on SMP	203
Submitting a playlist to SMP.....	203
App downloads, Twitter, and more.....	204
Using Spotibot to Uncover Music.....	206
Following Spotify Music Blogs	207
soundofus.com.....	208
Spotify Classical	208
Spotinews.....	208
SpotiDJ	209
Getting More Help with Spotify.....	211
How Get Satisfaction works.....	211
Submitting a Get Satisfaction query	211
Adding an image to your query.....	213
Giving help to others	214
Contacting Spotify Support	214
Consulting Spotify's official website.....	214

Part IV: Enjoying the Enhanced Features of Spotify..... 217

Chapter 12: Understanding Spotify Paid-For Services219

Moving on to Bigger and Better Spotify Access	220
Spotify Free: A tantalizing experience.....	221
Spotify Unlimited: What it says on the tin	223
Spotify Premium: Music wherever you are	223
Comparing Products at a Glance.....	226
Exploring Payment Options	227
Payment methods and charges.....	227
Upgrading your account	229
Creating a Premium or Unlimited account from scratch.....	231
Giving the Gift of Spotify.....	231
Using Spotify Invitations and Promotional Offers	235
Spotify invitations.....	235
Free trials	236
Contacting Customer Service.....	238
Viewing Your Account Details	239

Chapter 13: Downloading Spotify for Mobile Devices 241

- Experiencing the Ultimate Freedom with Premium 242
- Using the Spotify Mobile Service with a Non-Premium Account..... 243
- Uncovering Spotify Mobile’s Features 244
 - Search..... 244
 - What’s New 244
 - Playlists 245
 - Now Playing 245
 - Settings 246
- Investigating Compatible Handsets..... 247
 - Downloading the app to your phone..... 249
 - Manually entering a handset 250
- Downloading Spotify Mobile Using a Computer 251
 - iTunes Store..... 251
 - Android Market 252
- Using Spotify Mobile for the First Time 253
 - Viewing playlists 253
 - Login restrictions..... 254
 - Using accessories 254

Chapter 14: Using Spotify on Your Mobile Device 255

- Using Spotify on Your Mobile 255
 - Connecting to Spotify Mobile 256
 - Searching for Spotify tracks 257
 - Using playlists 258
 - Playing back your tracks..... 259
 - Shuffling playlists..... 261
 - Finding out What’s New 261
 - Controlling volume 262
 - What’s currently playing..... 263
 - Finding more track information 264
- Sharing Tracks and Playlists 266
 - Sharing tracks on the iPhone 266
 - Sharing tracks on Android..... 268
- Performing Key Actions, Quickly..... 269
 - Swiping your iPhone..... 269
 - Pressing matters with Android 270
- Organizing Your Music Library..... 271
 - Organizing playlists 271
 - Creating and editing playlists..... 273
 - Filtering within playlists..... 274
- Syncing Local Tracks over Wi-Fi..... 275
- Wi-Fi-ing a Stairway to Heaven..... 276
 - Step 1: Connect your phone to Wi-Fi..... 277
 - Step 2: Make playlists available offline..... 278
 - Step 3: Your tracks start syncing..... 278

Troubleshooting Problems	280
Updating the Mobile apps.....	280
Streaming and syncing settings	283
Expanding Your Spotify Capabilities.....	283
Chapter 15: Listening to Spotify Music on Other Devices	285
Marrying Your Music Device with Spotify.....	286
Welcoming the iPod	287
Syncing music to your iPod.....	287
Going back to iTunes.....	290
Streaming with Spotify's Hi-Fi Partners	292
Setting a device password	292
Logitech Squeezebox Touch (and Radio).....	293
Onkyo	294
Sonos	295
Wireless Streaming without Premium	296
Using Your Mobile Device as a Remote.....	297
Chapter 16: Using Offline Mode with Spotify Premium.	299
Playing Tracks in Spotify without a Web Connection.....	300
Using Offline Mode on Your Computer.....	300
Going Offline with Spotify Mobile	303
Syncing offline playlists from your computer with Wi-Fi.....	303
Syncing offline playlists directly from your mobile device	305
Forcing the mobile app offline	308
Dealing with Syncing Problems	309
Wi-Fi's not working	309
Freeing up space for Android phones.....	310
Dealing with iPhone storage limits	311
Syncing suddenly stops	311
Dealing with missing tracks.....	311
Reaching mobile-device limits	312
Part V: The Part of Tens	313
Chapter 17: Ten Answers to Common Spotify Problems.	315
Forgetting Your Device Username or Password.....	316
Fixing Constant Offline-Mode Problems	317
Finding a Particular Album, Artist, or Track.....	319
Wondering Where Your Playlists Will Go.....	319
Decoding Error Messages and Codes	320
Dealing with Payment Problems.....	321
Pausing for Thought: Why Has the Music Stopped?.....	322
Figuring Out Why a Track Won't Play.....	323
Dealing with Sound-Card Issues	323
Fixing Frustrations Once and for All	324

Chapter 18: Ten Innovative Spotify Tools.....	327
ListDJ.....	329
Cleanify Clipboard Filter.....	329
Better Spotify Links.....	330
FoxyTunes.....	330
Spotify Chrome Extension.....	331
Growl for Mac.....	331
freshspotify.....	332
Spotify Search for Firefox.....	333
Spotify Super Search.....	333
Playlistify Anything Bookmarklet.....	333
Chapter 19: Ten Great Ways to Use Spotify.....	335
Getting Your Unsigned Band onto Spotify.....	335
Finding a Job at Spotify.....	336
Making New Friends.....	337
Burning a CD from Downloaded Songs.....	338
Finding Hidden Audio Gems on Spotify.....	339
Listening to Music from around the World.....	341
Starting Up Your Own Spotify Blog.....	341
Developing a Spotify Service or App.....	342
Entering a Spotify Competition: Win Stuff!.....	344
Tidying Up Spotify's Catalogue.....	344
<i>Index</i>.....	347

Introduction

There's no denying it: A revolution in how people consume music is well underway, and Spotify's at the center of all the action. Just a decade ago, it was normal for people to wander into a music store and buy an artist's CD after hearing a few catchy tracks on the radio or reading a few good newspaper reviews.

Then, when music sharing over the Internet became mainstream around 2000, millions realized just how easy it was to store digital music on computers. Who needed a CD?

Also around this time, portable music players became popular. You could copy thousands of your digital tracks onto matchbox-sized gadgets. Astonishing! Yet, for all the technical innovation, artists still weren't being compensated fairly for their efforts because most digital music was being swapped on illegal networks. Then, iTunes came along and blew everyone away, introducing a simple click-and-buy mechanism to let people download music legally without guilt and sync tracks seamlessly to their iPods.

And now? Prepare to get ready for an even bigger change. Music no longer takes up storage space on your computer or even your portable music devices. It's floated off into the *cloud* (the term used to describe content or services hosted remotely over the Internet); streaming to you through services such as Spotify.

Spotify is a Swedish company headquartered in London, U.K. It first launched in 2008 as an invite-only service in selected European countries, offering free streaming of millions of tracks in exchange for listening to a few advertisements in between. People thought of a track, and Spotify played it straight-away in high-quality audio, as if it were on a CD. Amazing! Eventually, Spotify opened up registration to everyone in its launch countries.

Spotify has plenty of healthy competition these days — Apple's iCloud and the long-running Napster and Rhapsody, for starters, and younger companies such as MOG, Deezer, We7, Rdio, Simfy, and Grooveshark. I personally like Spotify's reputation for speed and stability. It has a superb, tried-and-tested way of streaming music to your computer, and its fast, fully featured desktop app lets you sync music to a range of mobile devices.

About This Book

I'm glad my publishers recognize Spotify's part in shaping the way people listen to music.

I designed this book so that you can read it from beginning to end if you're a complete newbie and want to understand what Spotify is and how it works before being gently guided through using the software. But if you've already signed up and installed the software, you can easily skip the bits you already know and dive straight into the parts that interest you, such as the wonderful add-ons and Spotify blogs, or the social networking features, all outlined in Part III. Like all *For Dummies* books, everything is cross-referenced, so if you come to a concept you're unfamiliar with, you can flick to the appropriate section or chapter to read up on topics if you need to.

While reading this book, please bear in mind that you may encounter some slight differences in how something looks or acts, when compared to how I describe it. Like the world of digital music, Spotify doesn't keep still (and that's a good thing). While I've been writing this book, Spotify introduced a raft of features, including its own download store (only available in Europe at the time of writing), iPod syncing, a U.S. launch, and a new subscription structure. At press time, Spotify announced a major tie-in with social networking giant Facebook, a relationship that's still evolving. (I'm also holding out for a dedicated iPad app. Check out www.dummies.com/go/spotify for bonus information about new Spotify features!)

Most of the illustrations featured in this book are based on what a Spotify Premium subscriber sees. A free account looks slightly different and includes banner ads at the bottom and/or the side, along with a timer at the top-right corner that indicates how much listening time you have left that week. However, functionality should still remain largely the same (apart from some Premium-only features such as Spotify Radio and offline syncing). Despite any new (and welcome) changes in Spotify's world, rest assured that its core capabilities won't stray off course. For up-to-date tips and news about new features, you can follow my Twitter account (@spotify4dummies) and get in touch with me if you have any questions.

Conventions Used in This Book

There are certain conventions used in *For Dummies* books when talking about computers, and here are a few of them:

- ✦ **Drag and drop, or click and drag:** A way of moving elements around by using your mouse. When you see a description such as “drag the track onto your playlist” or “drag and drop the track to your playlist,”

you click the name of the track with your mouse, hold down the mouse button, and drag the track to the playlist before lifting the mouse button to release, or *drop*, it.

- ✓ **Keyboard shortcuts:** I explain the Windows way of doing things first (because it's most popular), followed by the Mac version, but I always explain which is which. When you see "Ctrl+C," you hold down the Ctrl button while pressing the C button. Mac keyboard users see references to the Command (⌘) key instead.
- ✓ **Web addresses, Spotify links, and so on:** I include web addresses and Spotify links in special typeface, such as `www.spotify.com` or `spotify:user:jasminetea`. Twitter usernames are also in this font for easy reference, such as `@spotify4dummies`. (To view this Twitter account, go to `www.twitter.com/spotify4dummies`.)
- ✓ **Numbered lists:** When you see a numbered list, you need to follow the steps in order. The bold text explains what the step involves. For a fuller explanation, you can read the non-bold text below the numbered step.
- ✓ **Accessing menus:** When I say something like "Go to File⇨New Playlist Folder," I'm referring to clicking the File menu at the top of the display, and then selecting New Playlist Folder from the menu that appears. If I talk about clicking a series of links on a website, I spell out what you need to do.
- ✓ **Scrolling, touching, sliding, and flicking on a phone:** In the mobile device chapters, I refer to touch-screen smartphones. Scrolling on a phone (as opposed to using a mouse) involves sliding your finger on a screen to navigate a menu up and down (or side to side). Touching or tapping means selecting an option with the touch of your finger. Sliding is like clicking and dragging with your mouse, but using your finger instead.
- ✓ **Pop-up:** In Spotify, you sometimes see a small *pop-up alert* (a yellow bar) at the top of your screen, which I refer to as such. You also see *pop-up windows* (boxes overlaying the Spotify screen) that appear when certain actions are performed, such as downloading a track. Also, I call the small windows that pop up for you to do a simple task (such as locate a file or confirm a selection) *dialog boxes*.

Foolish Assumptions

You don't need to know anything about Spotify or even digital music to start using this book. I don't assume that you've ever owned a digital music player or even used music-management software such as iTunes, although this experience can help when you import local files. But I do assume that you have some basic computer knowledge and some essential computer equipment:

- ✔ **A computer and a broadband Internet connection:** Spotify relies on a broadband connection to work its magic because it streams music from the Internet to your computer, and a dial-up connection would simply be too slow. Spotify is optimized for Windows or Mac setups (and so is this book!), but Spotify can work on other systems, such as Linux. For full details on recommended computer specifications, see Chapter 2.
- ✔ **Familiarity with selecting menus and applications:** I assume you have experience with selecting an application in Windows or on a Mac and launching it, and that you know how to complete tasks (such as saving a file) by selecting menu choices from the top of your display.
- ✔ **Familiarity with the concept of files and folders:** I assume you have experience with saving files on your computer and storing them in folders or a media library.
- ✔ **Some web-browsing experience:** You don't need to be an Internet whiz-kid, but I assume you have an e-mail address and a fair deal of experience with browsing websites and using search engines such as Google, Yahoo!, or Bing. Some experience with signing up to a website, as well as downloading and installing a program, can also help you during the Spotify registration and setup process.
- ✔ **An interest in discovering music:** Spotify is all about the music, so this is definitely a must-have attribute! Being open-minded about broadening your musical horizons can help you get the most out of this great tool.

Added Extras

Spotify is available in free and paid-for flavors. Being a Spotify Premium subscriber gives you a huge number of benefits, including ad-free, unlimited listening from Spotify's music library and the ability to sync any Spotify track to your phone. Much of Part IV assumes you have a Spotify Premium subscription, but I always mention upfront whether you need a Premium subscription to use an offering in order to avoid disappointment or confusion.

This book also contains chapters dedicated to using your iPod or mobile device with Spotify if you have these devices. You can easily skip these bits if they don't apply to you.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is organized into five parts. Each part relates to a different part of your Spotify experience. You don't have to read the whole book in order; you can choose the parts that interest you. But even if you've already spent some time using Spotify, I recommend scanning the early chapters, at the very least, in case you pick up any fresh tips.

Part I: Becoming Buddies with Spotify

In Part I, I introduce Spotify and give you a quick rundown about why it's so great, how it works, and what subscription levels are available. I then outline the equipment you need before guiding you through the setup process. Rounding off this section are detailed descriptions of all the Spotify features.

Part II: Managing Your Spotify Experience

This part is all about getting stuck into Spotify and experiencing the music. You can discover how to organize your musical library, find new music, and create playlists to share with the world.

Part III: Getting By with a Little Help from Your Friends

Spotify has some strong social networking elements that help you share music with your friends through tools such as Facebook and Twitter. Discover how to collaborate on playlists, connect your Spotify account to Facebook, and send tracks to your friends. You also can find one of my favorite chapters, all about the great third-party tools that have been developed by the creative and enthusiastic Spotify community.

Part IV: Enjoying the Enhanced Features of Spotify

Much, but not all, of the chapters in Part IV refer to special features that are available only to paying subscribers, such as streaming music to a Logitech Squeezebox speaker or syncing Spotify tracks for offline listening on a mobile device. However, some features everyone can enjoy (such as syncing your local tracks to an iPod). I start off this section by explaining which elements of Spotify are free and which aren't, and the differences between the subscription levels. At the time of writing, Spotify was still announcing final price points and features for its entry into the U.S. market, and there may be some differences between the European and the U.S. versions of Spotify. Please check the official Spotify website (www.spotify.com) for the latest prices and features.

Part V: The Part of Tens

Filled with troubleshooting tips, great web resources, and excellent ways to get more involved with Spotify's community, consult this catch-all section for all kinds of useful information.

Icons Used in This Book

Spotify For Dummies uses special symbols called icons to alert you to important or interesting sections. Look out for these:



This icon highlights handy information that can help you speed up a task or fix a problem you might encounter, and it's the most common icon I use in the book.



Ignore the information here at your risk: This icon alerts you to potential pitfalls and shouldn't be ignored.



When you see this icon, I highlight something you need to bear in mind before you proceed with a particular task.



Information here may appeal to anyone interested in knowing exactly how something works. If you want just the basic info, skip anything marked with this icon.

Where to Go from Here

Just check out the Table of Contents and dip into the part that interests you. For example, if you have no idea what Spotify is, Chapter 1 is the perfect place to start. For tips on searching, turn to Chapter 4. Premium subscribers can get the most from the chapters in Part IV.

Now, hold onto your seats — you're going to be amazed at what Spotify can do. I'm sure you'll enjoy your experience!

Part I

Becoming Buddies with Spotify

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



“He saw your laptop and wants to know if he can check out the Spotify What’s New listings.”

In this part . . .

What is this thing called Spotify, anyway? Well, you've come to the right place. In this part, I introduce you to Spotify and explain how this innovative service is changing the way we interact with, discover, and listen to music.

In this part, you can also find all the information you need to get up and running with a minimum of fuss. I provide you with crucial information on setting up an account, installing the software, playing tracks, and conducting a simple search.

I describe all the main elements you see when you start up Spotify so that you can start playing with this source of endless fun right away.

Chapter 1

Introducing Spotify

In This Chapter

- ▶ Considering what Spotify can offer you
 - ▶ Understanding how Spotify works as a business
 - ▶ Discovering the types of service you can get
 - ▶ Going through the Spotify terms of use
 - ▶ Figuring out the information Spotify collects about you
-

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to my magic act. Now, for my first trick: to pull my music collection out of thin air for your enjoyment! Without a CD or a portable music player in sight!

I can play my friends' music, too, and check out what other tracks people choose to share. I've eavesdropped on Britney Spears's favorite '80s tracks — I'm sure she didn't mind because she posted them on Twitter.

And my second trick? Pick an act, any act. I'll search for them and play their tracks for you almost instantly, even if I've never heard of them before.

Yes, the way we access music is changing, and Spotify is helping drive this shift. Spotify is a piece of software that lets you search for music and hear it streamed to you from the Internet. You don't need to download the song to your computer before listening to it, and the song plays almost instantly.

But that's not all Spotify does. In this chapter, I explain what Spotify can do and how it signals a move away from more traditional ways of listening to music. I also discuss how Spotify works as a company — how it pays artists, as well as its terms of use, subscription levels, and privacy issues.

Peeking at Some Snazzy Spotify Features

Spotify is helping to make universal, instant accessibility to all music possible, whether you're on your mobile device or desktop computer.

Facebook helped people reconnect with old friends and make new ones, and Spotify's helping people rediscover songs from their youth and discover fresh music through friends and search. But what exactly *is* Spotify? What does it do? How does it operate? I answer all these questions in the following sections.

Getting instant music

You can start playing Spotify tracks almost straightaway, as if you were playing a CD — even though the music's coming from the Internet. Spotify's technical boffins have worked hard to make the listening process immediate. Who needs a digital file for every single thing you listen to, when Spotify can help free up precious space on your computer's hard drive by serving up your tunes instead? I've rarely run into any jumps or skips when listening to Spotify music this way. That's not to say the streaming is flawless every time, but it *is* very impressive. And you can so easily forget that you aren't listening to music you have on your computer or on a disc.

Creating playlists

At the center of the Spotify universe is the *playlist*, which is like the mix-tape of old, letting you create a group of your favorite tracks dedicated to a certain theme, era, genre, artist, or whatever you want. On Spotify, you're encouraged to turn albums into playlists so that you can listen to tracks as the artist originally intended.

Creating playlists is simple after you get the hang of it — there are a few quirks, but to become a pro in no time, just turn to Chapter 6.

Playlists can also be created to complement a piece of news. For example, when the coveted Mercury Music Prize 2011 nominees were announced, a member of the popular Spotify community site ShareMyPlaylists.com posted a link containing all tracks from the nominees' albums in one convenient list. With one click, I could load the albums into Spotify right away and start playing them (see Figure 1-1). Even though I've been using Spotify for more than two years, this simple and obvious process still impresses me.