

**2.6M+**

**VISITORS**

**256k**

**PAYING  
CUSTOMERS**

**\$15M+**

**IN MONTHLY  
RECURRING  
REVENUE (MRR)**

**CLIENT: RHAPSODY (REALNETWORKS)**

**PROJECT: SEO**

**DURATION: 3.5 YEARS**

How our template-engine SEO hack (and super vintage web design chops) won an early-2000s music streaming service 8-figure recurring revenue.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

# AN UPSTREAM BATTLE.

Rhapsody.com (now Napster) was a streaming music service formerly owned by RealNetworks. When they hired us in 2004 they had a small budget, little known brand, and were chasing the same customers as some of the biggest music companies on the planet (easy, right?).

To help Rhapsody stand out in the noise and convince music fans to pay for a relatively unknown service, we needed to dive deep into our sea of SEO tricks.

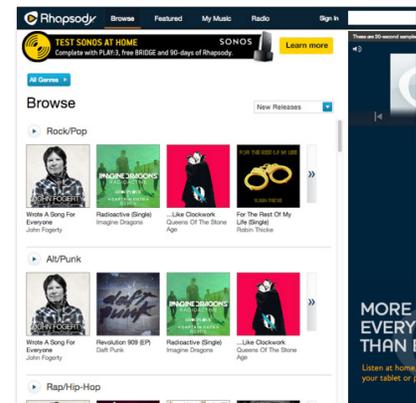
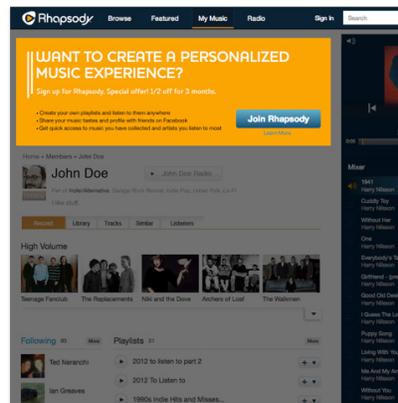
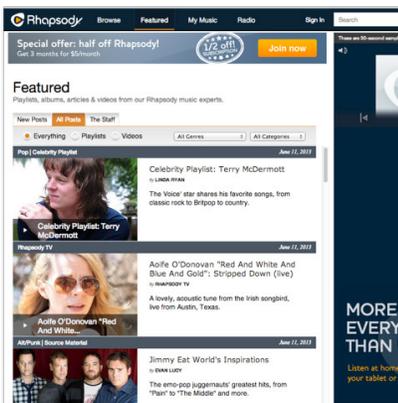
## THE CHALLENGE

# OUT-SWIMMING THE BIG FISH.

We knew the big players like iTunes, Amazon, Yahoo Music and MP3.com were competing heavily on keywords related to “online music”, “buy music online” and “free music “. While the volume for these keywords was huge, we certainly didn’t have the ad dollars to compete on these search terms.

We used a tool called Keyword Spy, which tells us how much our competitors are spending on clicks (CPC). We then applied the average conversion rate of 2.5% provided by RealNetworks to determine the cost to acquire a new customer. Most competitors were running their paid search and display campaigns at a loss, paying upwards of \$100 to acquire a free trial user. We had a \$35 CPA to work with. We managed to get our CPA down to \$15.

We did however notice a lack of competition on long-tail keywords—especially keywords related to artist, song and album titles (“refugee tom petty damn the torpedoes”).



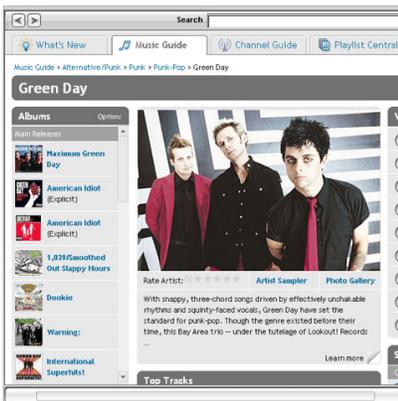
## THE RESEARCH

# FINDING THE BAIT.

There's no way to test keywords without buying click, but we did have some tools at our disposal that helped us narrow down our original keyword set. First, we queried the Billboard charts to identify top selling artists and albums. From there we generated a list of song titles.

Next, we used the Rhapsody API to see which genres were being requested the most by current users. We found Jazz, Country, Folk, Classic Rock, Christian and R&B were the most popular genres for logged in users of the Rhapsody service. Once we identified these genres we used open source databases to retrieve artists, albums and keywords from each of these genres.

We now had research to inform two distinct keyword campaigns. One for top selling albums and their associated artists and songs and another long tail campaign containing keywords and ad groups for popular artist, albums and songs as requested by current Rhapsody subscribers.



## THE MORAL OF THE STORY

# SMALL FISH THINKING BIG (500 PAGES BIG).

For Rhapsody, longtail was the road to profit. By taking those keywords (ex: “creedence clearwater revival have you ever seen the rain”) and supporting them with hundreds of auto-generated landing pages with unique content, we were able to beat the major players using SEO.



*OneNet*

**TEMPTED TO WORK WITH  
OUR TALENTED CREW?**

Send us an email and we'll get started.

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