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Listening to Folk on Spotify - contributed by David Gibb

Whilst recently visiting the Traditional Arts Team, we entered into a discussion about the availability of traditional music to the general public. After sheepishly confessing that my own knowledge of traditional music had some serious gaps, they very kindly lent me one of their *Voice of the People* CD's with loads of great recordings of old singers performing unaccompanied versions of even older songs.

When I returned the CD a week later, I mentioned to the Team that I'd found all the other *Voice of the People* CDs available online on Spotify. They didn't know much about Spotify and asked if I could write an article explaining what it is, and the benefits it has in finding different versions of traditional songs.

What Is Spotify?

Spotify is an online music player that lets you stream millions of tracks on demand. Whether it's folk, jazz, pop, rock or rap, its all there to listen to. It's completely free of charge, with adverts around every 30 minutes similar to the way they are used in television. It's basically your own personal radio station, with which you have complete control over the music!

How Can I get Spotify?

First of all you need to download Spotify onto your computer. Go to www.spotify.com and click 'try spotify now'. It will then ask you to create an account with Spotify. Once you've done that it'll take you to another page where you can download the Spotify player.

(If you create an account with a username and password of your own choosing you will need to log out and log back in again with the Lichfield Lighthouse Company username and password which can be obtained by emailing lichfieldlighthousecompany@gmail.com. To do this click on "File" in the top left hand corner of the Spotify screen).

I've got the player ... now what?

Once the Spotify player is open on your computer you should see a box at the top left. This is where you can search for an artist you want to listen to. Type in a name of an artist and press enter. You should see a list of search matches appear below. To play the song you want to listen to simply double click on it.

This is great! Is there anything else I need to know?

Spotify has some really nifty features which is where it comes into its own when researching traditional songs. You can search for songs by decade by clicking the 'radio' icon in the top left hand side on the player. You can also search for songs by genre simply by clicking the same icon.

Once you've found some songs you like you can create 'playlists' by dragging the track and dropping it onto the 'new playlist' icon at the bottom left hand side of the player. This is really useful for building a collection of your favourite songs.

What about the artists? If it's free how do they get paid for people listening to their music?

Artists can collect royalties from Spotify in the same way they can from radio airplay, although the amount they get is considerably smaller. However next to every track is an icon which when clicked on will take you the artist's online store where you can purchase/download their CD. I strongly urge you to do so if you discover an artist you like whilst browsing on Spotify!