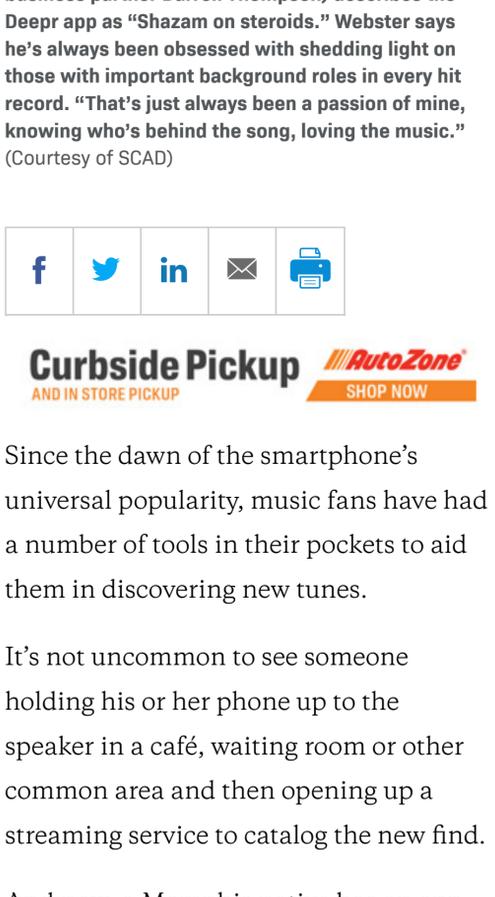




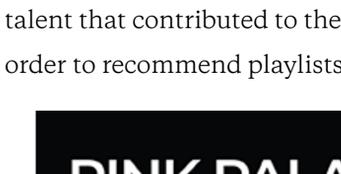
Deepr app shines light on creators behind the music

By [Jared Boyd](#)
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Memphis native Austin Webster (left, with his business partner Darrell Thompson) describes the Deepr app as “Shazam on steroids.” Webster says he’s always been obsessed with shedding light on those with important background roles in every hit record. “That’s just always been a passion of mine, knowing who’s behind the song, loving the music.” (Courtesy of SCAD)



Since the dawn of the smartphone’s universal popularity, music fans have had a number of tools in their pockets to aid them in discovering new tunes.

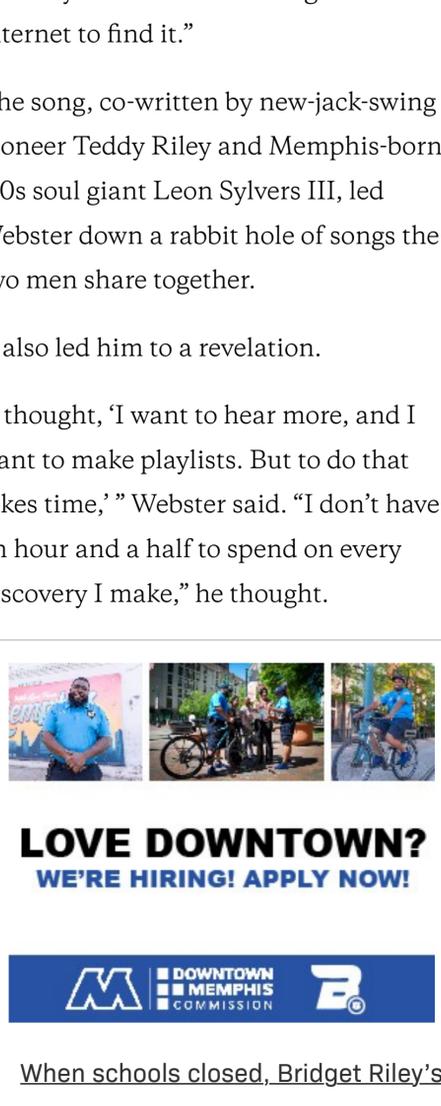
It’s not uncommon to see someone holding his or her phone up to the speaker in a café, waiting room or other common area and then opening up a streaming service to catalog the new find.

And now, a Memphis native has an app that combines both those efforts.

The app, Deepr, has been touted by its founder, Austin Webster, 36, as “Shazam on steroids.”

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Like Shazam, the service can listen to a user’s surroundings and recognize what songs are being played. However, the technology goes a step further to consider the producers, songwriters and other talent that contributed to the song in order to recommend playlists.

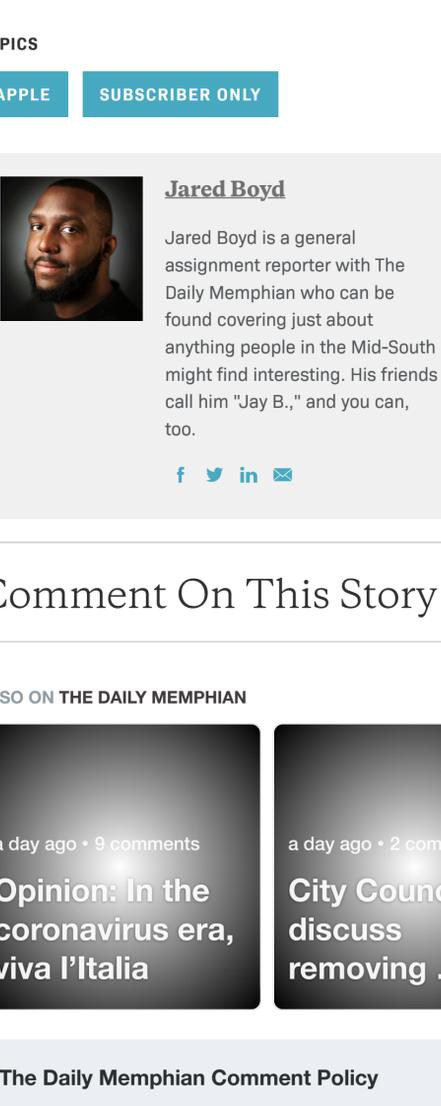


Webster says he’s always been obsessed with shedding light on those with important background roles in every hit record.

“That’s just always been a passion of mine, knowing who’s behind the song, loving the music,” Webster said.

“I would go every Tuesday to Cat’s Music or Pop Tunes with the little money that I had to buy singles, cassettes, CDs. The first thing that I’d do when I got home was look at the liner notes.”

After graduating from Ridgeway High School, Webster studied industrial design at Savannah College of Art and Design. There, he wouldn’t learn about music or mobile apps. Instead, he learned the theory behind human-computer interactions and how user experience informs them.



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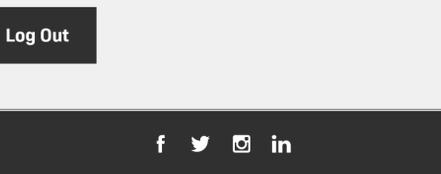
In 2016, he heard a song on a podcast that caught his attention with its funky R&B groove. He was shocked to learn the song was performed by ‘90s boy band New Kids on the Block.

“Immediately, I went home and looked up who the producers and songwriters were,” Webster said. “It’s the stuff we used to get so easily - now we have to dig on the internet to find it.”

The song, co-written by new-jack-swing pioneer Teddy Riley and Memphis-born ‘80s soul giant Leon Sylvers III, led Webster down a rabbit hole of songs the two men share together.

It also led him to a revelation.

“I thought, ‘I want to hear more, and I want to make playlists. But to do that takes time,’ ” Webster said. “I don’t have an hour and a half to spend on every discovery I make,” he thought.



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His first instinct was to wait for Spotify or Apple Music to figure out a way to fill the niche. But it wouldn’t be long before he’d decide to take it upon himself.

After securing a founding partner following a pitch at an Atlanta music and tech conference, the app was beta tested throughout 2018. Deepr is now compatible with Spotify, Apple Music and YouTube Music, allowing users to dig into their existing playlists to draw connections between their favorite songs’ background players.

More than a year later, the app is taking its next large step - rolling out its Independent Creator Credit Program, a paid service that helps indie musicians devise a portfolio. Functioning like LinkedIn for underground artists, producers and songwriters, the registry allows applicants to file to receive credit per song or collection of songs.

Ideally, young artists will be able to share large playlists of music to which they’ve contributed. And as artists collaborate, the app will demonstrate the web of connections each artist facilitates as the tools of the digital age allow numerous like minds to work together, regardless of geography.

“At the core is the creator,” Webster said. “We’re serving the creator, and we want to give them a spotlight. Those are the ones who typically get lost in the streaming music shuffle.”

TOPICS

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Jared Boyd is a general assignment reporter with The Daily Memphian who can be found covering just about anything people in the Mid-South might find interesting. His friends call him “Jay B.,” and you can, too.
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This is great!! My favorite thing was always reading the liner notes to see who actually played on the album. Some of the best music wasn’t the hits but the songs that didn’t get airplay. I hope Mr Webster has great success!! This can help a lot of musicians collaborate.
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