Genius Moves

A CASE STUDY WITH GENIUS

Home to over 25 million songs, albums, artists, and annotations, Genius opens a window into the minds of musical artists and their work. Over the years, the company has also amassed a loyal community of contributors who annotate and interpret songs spanning eras and genres.

Originally founded as a hip hop-focused lyrics website in 2009, Genius has since expanded its brand and offering to become a full-fledged music media organization, producing everything from written and audiovisual content to live events, as well as streaming integrations with the likes of Spotify and Apple Music, and releasing limited-edition merchandise.

With over 100 million visits a month, they consider a variety of data points to get ahead of trends, inform strategy, and engage their community — at real-time speed. We spoke with the Artist Relations and Community teams at Genius to learn how they use Chartbeat data, specifically, to help connect with today's hottest artists and their fans.

QUICK COMPANY FACTS

2009
Founding year

100,000,000+
Monthly site visits
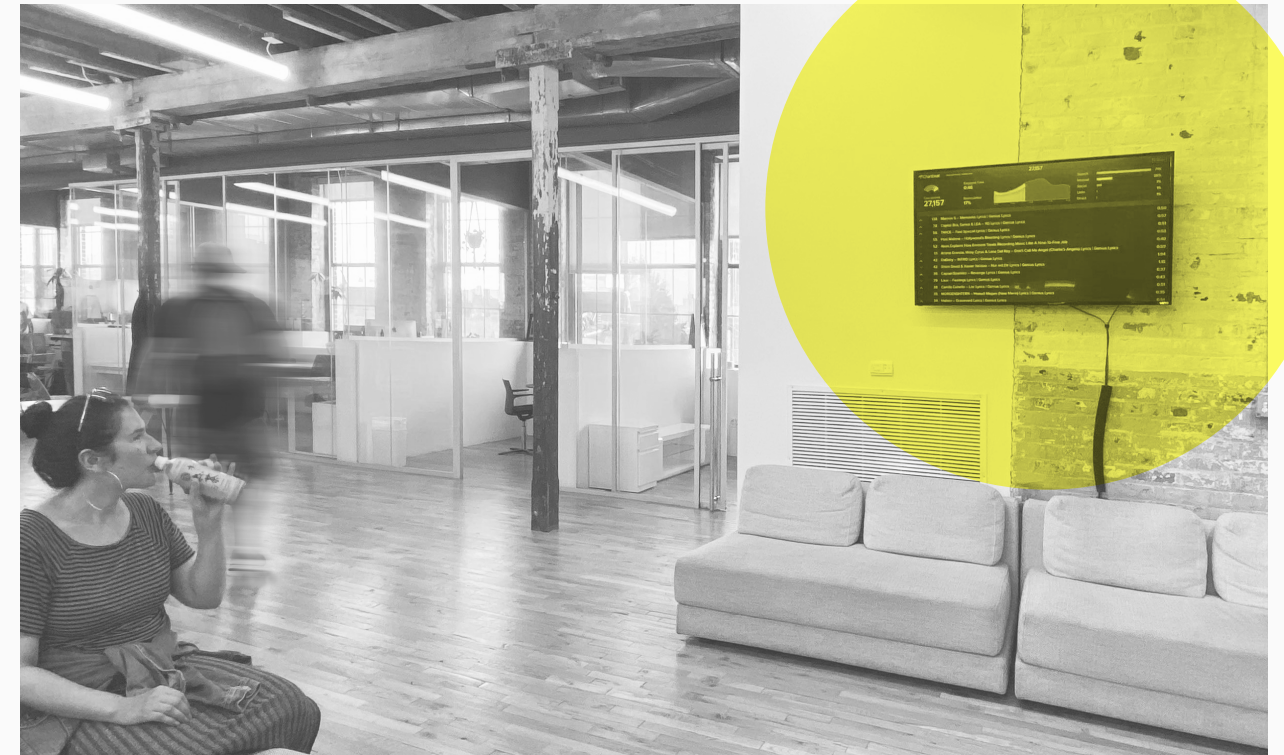
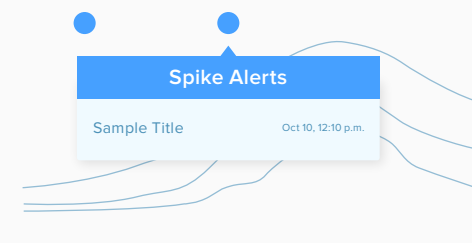## 2,000,000+
Contributors

genius.com

Artist discovery, in real time

Before Lil Nas X broke the record for most consecutive weeks (19) topping the Billboard Top 100, he was an unknown rapper with a lyrics page on Genius that began gathering visits by the handful. The track in question? "Old Town Road."

"I saw the visits increase on Chartbeat and I asked, 'Where is this song coming from?'" said Stacy Aguilar of Genius' Artist Relations team. After seeing that most of the page traffic was referred by YouTube, Aguilar investigated and discovered the song's skyrocketing popularity on the video app TikTok.

Spike Alerts

Sample Title   Oct 10, 12:10 p.m.

> ❝ ## Who is this guy? This song is really blowing up and we need to get him on the site."

— STACY AGUILAR, ARTIST RELATIONS

She found that hundreds of thousand of users were using "Old Town Road" to create memes and short-format videos online.

"As an artist relations person, I thought, 'Who is this guy? This song is really blowing up and we need to get him on the site,'" Aguilar said.

And they did. With help from real-time reader data, Aguilar and the Artist Relations team brought Lil Nas X to do a VERIFIED interview, Genius' flagship video series in which artists break down the meaning of their lyrics. The episode went live on April 8, five days before "Old Town Road" first topped the Billboard charts. It has since gathered over 17 million views, becoming Genius' most watched installment of VERIFIED on YouTube.

Photo by Justin Hogan for Genius

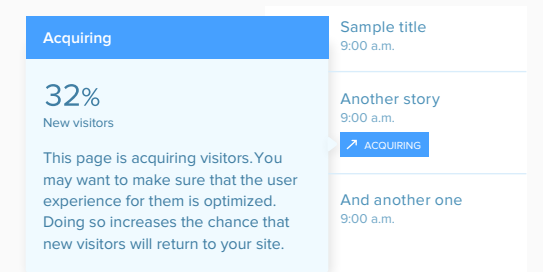Chartbeat data on display at the Genius headquarters in Brooklyn, NY.

Building community engagement with data

As a crowdsourced platform for lyrics and music knowledge, Genius' community lives at the core of the site and helps guide the company's content strategy. As Community Manager, Colby Handy and his team build loyalty among Genius' followers through direct engagement.

"We use Chartbeat as signaling intelligence to discover new songs and artists, so we can optimize our user experience around them," says Handy. "If a single that we don't know about starts gaining traction, that's an indicator for me and my team that we need to work together with our contributors to make sure that song page is a good knowledge product in order to enrich the consumer experience." While Handy primarily uses traffic filters to identify if traffic is legitimate and also pinpoint its sources, community managers like him can also use traffic filters to better understand the social channels engaging the most readers.

Acquiring

32%
New visitors

This page is acquiring visitors. You may want to make sure that the user experience for them is optimized. Doing so increases the chance that new visitors will return to your site.

Sample title
9:00 a.m.

Another story
9:00 a.m.
↗ ACQUIRING

And another one
9:00 a.m.

> ## "We use Chartbeat as signaling intelligence to discover new songs and artists, so we can optimize our user experience around them."
>
> — COLBY HANDY, COMMUNITY MANAGER
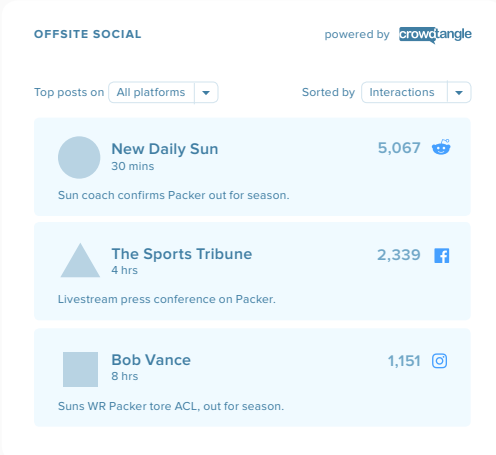
Real-time insights for quality control

User-generated content sites like Genius also require moderation for quality-control and trustworthiness, and Chartbeat helps alert them instantly if something anomalous is occurring with their traffic data.

"It's important to us that our viewership statistics are always accurate to the actual allure of the song, and we rely on traffic source data to confirm that a song page's popularity is legitimate," says Handy. He recalls an instance in which a fan group created Genius accounts to promote their favorite artist's album when its song pages on the site had started decreasing in popularity.

"Fans were flocking to the song pages and trying to bring more people to them," recalls Handy. "That's not the most organic traffic, so we spiked those pages and banned the users. Got to give it to them, though, that's dedication."

PRO TIP #3

Chartbeat's integration with CrowdTangle lets you see where your article is being talked about on social, so you can join the conversation and promote engagement.

OFFSITE SOCIAL	powered by crowdtangle
Top posts on All platforms ▾	Sorted by Interactions ▾
New Daily Sun 30 mins	5,067
Sun coach confirms Packer out for season.	
The Sports Tribune 4 hrs	2,339
Livestream press conference on Packer.	
Bob Vance 8 hrs	1,151
Suns WR Packer tore ACL, out for season.	

Chartbeat