



★ **SCROLL  
STOPPERS** ★

Part 5 of 6

# UNSCROLLABLE

# 5. UNSCROLLABLE

In a time of **fast-paced growth** across technology, culture, media (and, er, everything?), it's interesting to see the value we still give to **formats of the past**—vinyl records, radio, handwritten notes etc. And when it comes to our media habits, we're seeing similar behaviours.

Our research shows **audiences are facing a cognitive dissonance** between being able to choose from literally any kind of content about literally any kind of subject, and feeling like they can't be intentional with their choices. (Netflix homepage, we see you.)

Unlocking our phone screens is like powering up a slot machine—we never know where the imminent sequence of events will lead. And in response we're seeing people move away from infinite scrolling and algorithms designed to take us down the rabbit hole, and instead turn to **less scrollable single-channel platforms**.

It seems there's value to be found in **unskippable media**. When we asked respondents about the types of content they couldn't live without, music, podcasts, and books came out on top.

**"I dislike how much control I have over my time. I feel that everything has to be such an active choice that it could get overwhelming. That's what I like about radio—that I do not choose the music."**

Not only are we seeking a **reduction in cognitive load**, but perhaps there's a nostalgia in unscrollable formats like radio.

Audiences are craving the serendipity of stumbling upon great content, tuning in midway through a funny segment or Shazam-ing a song as they browse through Urban Outfitters.

Like most of the behaviours our research identified, there's a **desire for personal connection** in the types of media we consume, and curators, tastemakers, and friends' recommendations are continuing to trump the algorithm.

**"Face-to-face recommendations bring accountability. Phone communications make me lazy to follow up on recommendations. But if they came in person or via email, I would feel compelled to answer and more likely to follow up on them."**

**According to our respondents when asked what the one type of content is that they cannot do without, even if they don't have too much time, the top 3 are all unscrollable mediums:**

- 1. Music (e.g. Spotify)**
- 2. Podcasts**
- 3. Books (physical)**

*"I feel that there is a real pushback against screens, and the slot machine feed. The reliance on personal recommendations has gone through the roof." (Interviewee)*

## **Takeaway:**

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We can't hide from the fact that the avalanche of choice has made it harder for the makers of good content to find audiences. **But it is not impossible.**

- Before you create your stories, **think about where people might find them** - how you're going to reach your audience's audience, because that's whose recommendations they trust.
- **Think about offering unscrollable media as an option:** can you make a book out of your online magazine, or a Spotify playlist?
- How can you reduce the number of choices you give your audience? If you know them well, **pick a few states of mind they are likely to be in, and only give options to cater to those needs.**