

New Gatekeeping Processes in the Digital Music Business

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New Gatekeeping Processes

- Gatekeeping is a difficult term – used in many different settings, and with a range of connotations and values added to it.
- Two particular approaches:
 1. Gatekeeping the entry-point
 2. Gatekeeping the audience

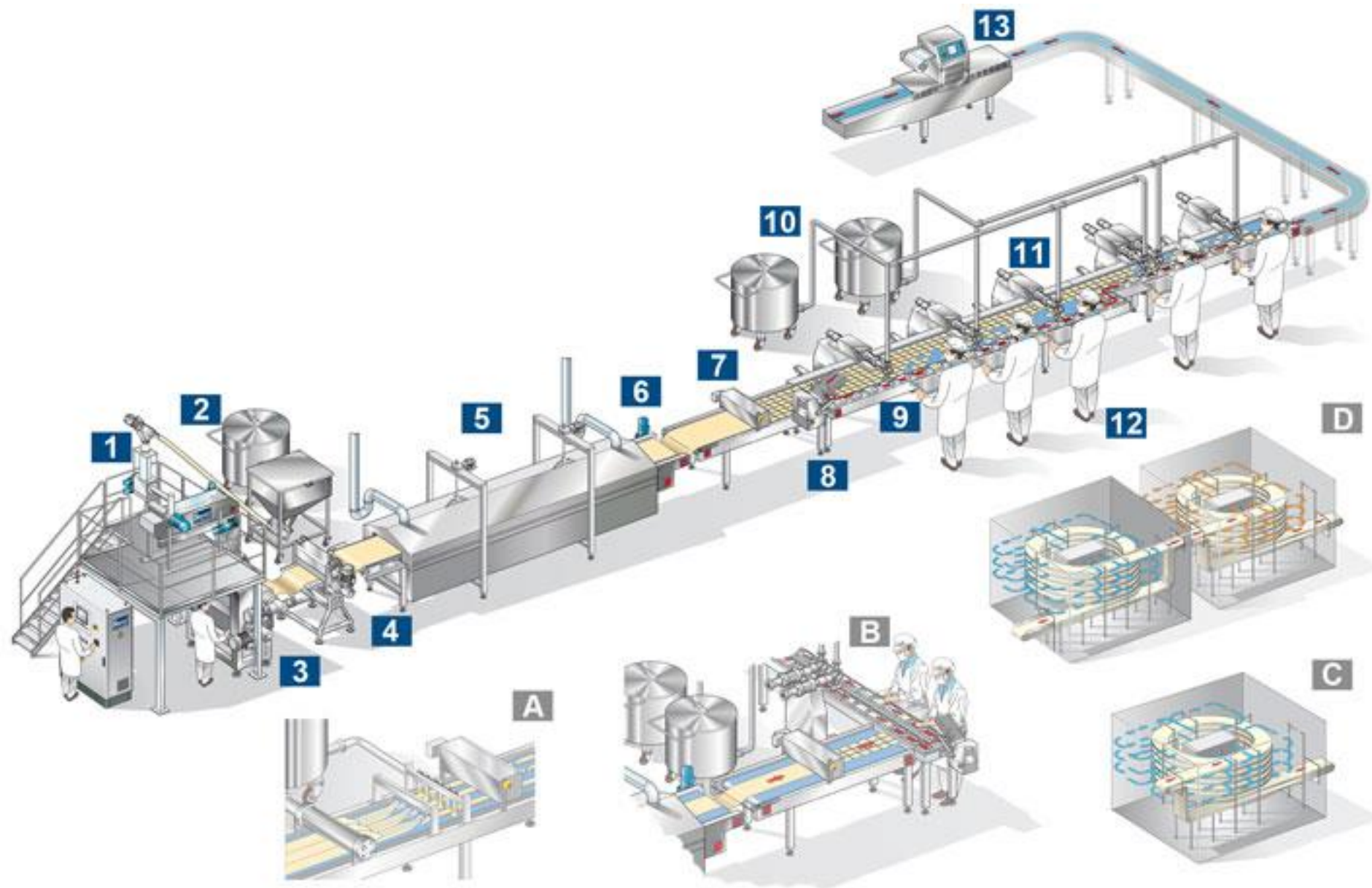
Gatekeeping processes as in creating new types of experiences

Gatekeeping the entry-point

- Pre-web: Labels were gatekeepers
 - High barriers to enter!
- Linked to traditional concepts of the music industry
 - Conservative, negative, passive
 - Concept of control
 - Position to say yes or no

Gatekeeping the entry-point

- Connected to the concept of the music industry as a Fordistic assembly line
- With a defined (and narrow) entry-point
- And an equally narrow and defined exit-point
- Ex: Paul Hirsch (1972)
- *We see the consumer's role in this process as essentially one of rank-ordering cultural styles and items "preselected" for consideration by occupants in the managerial and institutional subsystems.*



Gatekeeping the entry-point

- Digital change diminished the record companies to mere distribution-systems which were deemed to be outdated and replaceable (Graham et al. 2004: 1089).
- Digital change, linked to digital enthusiasm (Hesmondhalgh, 2013)
- That digitalisation has caused the evaporation of the powers of the gatekeepers
 - Linked to concepts of democratisation
 - User-involvement
 - Artistic freedom

Gatekeeping the entry-point

- Change has been synonymous with disintermediation
- Digital substitution of traditional stakeholders and their functions
- *I look at record companies and I think about what they can do for our artists and I have to say, not very much. I mean the physical distribution, I'd be very happy to do a deal with a record company just for physical distribution. Everything else, the artist holds. It's as simple as that.*



Gatekeeping the entry-point

- Anita Elberse, Value chains have channel functions!
 - “The Iron Law of Distribution” dictates that no function simply disappear.
 - Must be taken by someone else
- Traditional gatekeeping function: to regulate entry-point?
- Anyone can record and distribute anything (literally)
 - With little, or no budgets
- Barriers to enter have evaporated/dissapeared

Gatekeeping attention

- However, while barriers to enter have dissaperaded, the fight for attention has increased
- It's easy to get in, but hard to get on!
- Prof. Ursula Huws, COST network, Dynamics of Virtual Work
- By bypassing the gatekeeper, the market gets flooded!

”Nordgård-Committee”

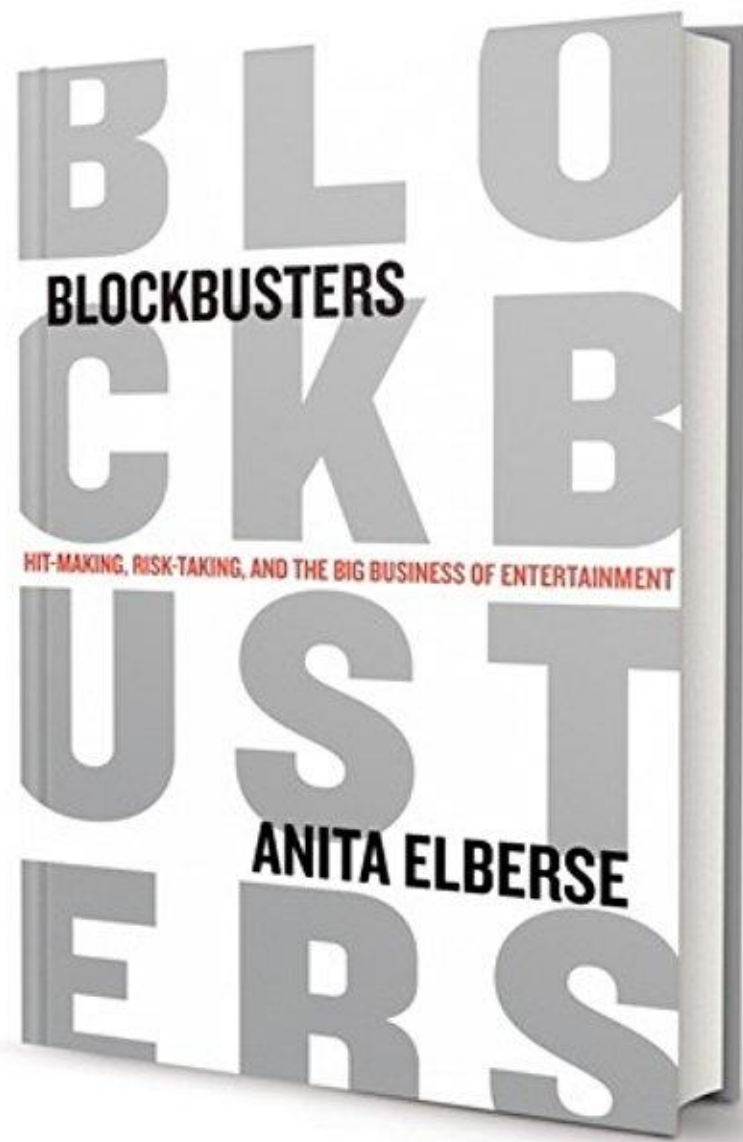


Rapport

Rapport fra Nordgård-utvalget

Juli 2013



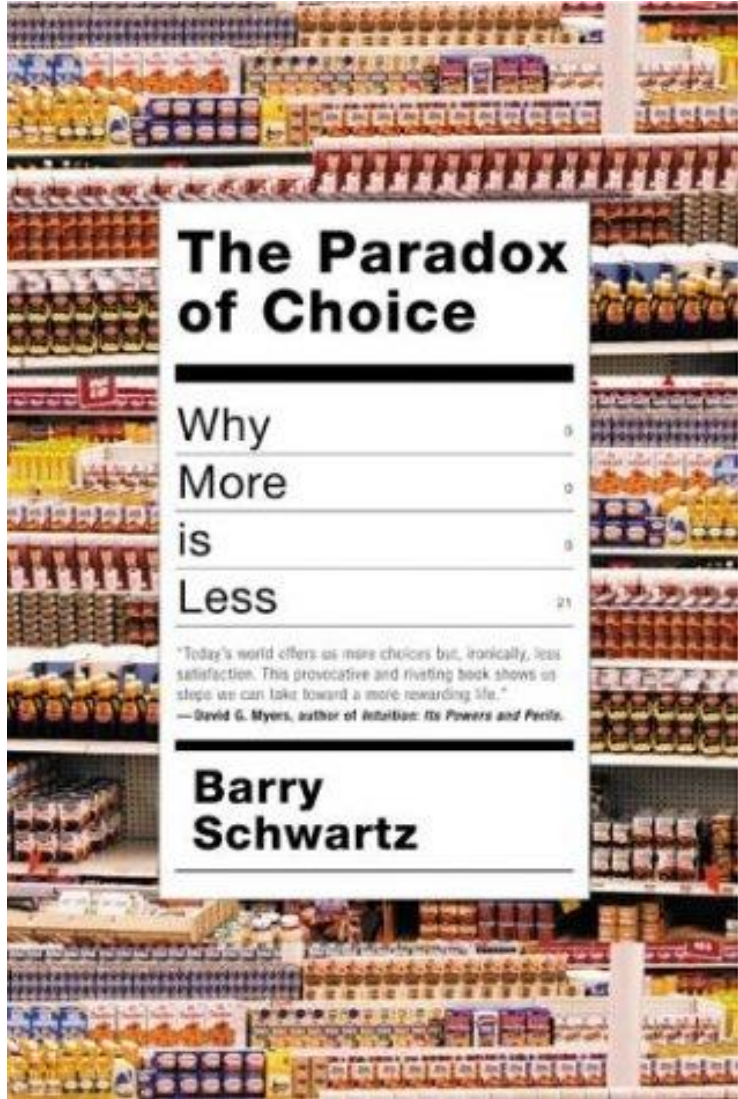


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HIT-MAKING, RISK-TAKING, AND THE BIG BUSINESS OF ENTERTAINMENT

ANITA ELBERSE



The Paradox of Choice

Why	0
More	0
is	0
Less	21

"Today's world offers us more choices but, ironically, less satisfaction. This provocative and riveting book shows us steps we can take toward a more rewarding life."
—David G. Myers, author of *Intuition: Its Powers and Perils*.

Barry Schwartz

The Paradox of Choice



Gatekeeping attention

- The Paradox of Choice dictates two significant and evident developments in streaming:
 - The increasing importance of marketing
 - The growth (and importance) of playlists
- Both represent some challenges....

Gatekeeping attention

- Who controls playlists? Algorithms? Attention
- Who owns the shelf-space?
- Spotify?
- Major label?
- Back to the starting point: Being a major meant you controlled distribution.
- Attention = distribution!
- Ex: Sony-Spotify contract of 2011



Looking towards the future

Curating attention

- Here lies the true potential: Curation!!
- Robotics and algorithms are great at sorting big data
- But suck at giving advise!
- On things that matter!
- Ex: Tha case of Death in Vegas/Nitti Gritti Dirt band

Gatekeeping attention

- Meta-data is key!
- Curated services, specialising in genres and sounds: better data and better services
- A return to music shop!
- Perhaps a revived role for alternative business-models?
- User-centric model could be applied with much effect.

Thank You!

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