International Journal of Music Business Research

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AIMS AND SCOPE
The International Journal of Music Business Research (IJMBR) as a double-blind reviewed academic journal provides a new platform to present articles of merit and to shed light on the current state of the art of music business research. Music business research is a scientific approach at the intersection of economic, artistic, especially musical, cultural, social, legal, technological developments that aims at a better understanding of the creation/production, dissemination/distribution and reception/consumption of the cultural good music. Thus, the IJMBR targets all academics, from students to professors, from around the world and from all disciplines with an interest in research on the music economy.

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Editorial

Peter Tschmuck[1]

This issue of the International Journal of Music Business Research (IJMBR) is the first published by the International Music Business Research Association (IMBRA), founded at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna on October 2nd this year. IMBRA's foundation board confirmed the three current editors; Dennis Collopy, Peter Tschmuck and Carsten Winter in their roles and also appointed Daniel Nordgård of the University of Agder in Norway to the role of book review editor. This editorial team will be responsible for publishing the IJMBR over the next two years.

In a fundamental article, "Life is live: Experiencing music in the digital age", Beate Flath highlights how digitisation has dramatically changed the experience of music reception. Based on Alvin Toffler's concept of prosumption, she argues that the separation between active music producers and passive music consumers has become porous. *"As a result, music reception through digital devices is shifting towards experiencing music similar to in live settings. Within the paradigm of an experience-driven society the sensual and, therefore, the immediate experience becomes an added value, created also by customers, users and recipients"*, Beate Flath concludes.

The changing modes of music consumption in the digital age are also the focus of José M. Alvarez-Monzoncillo and Juan Calvi's article "Music consumption in Spain: from analogue to digital in the shaping of music". Whereas Beate Flath analyses the new possibilities for participation in music production and music dissemination, Monzoncillo & Calvi highlight the other side of digitisation. Consumption of digital music takes

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place in a new type of mass market, one that is ever more concentrated. They based their arguments on a comparative study of fifty of the most listened-to songs in Spain across digital and physical formats as well as radio airplay. Their analysis indicates there is no difference between music consumed on digital channels, on the radio or in physical formats. The authors conclude that; *"consumption is concentrated in mass-market musical products that are produced, precisely, to satisfy what are considered to be 'mainstream musical tastes'."* Music recognition and music recommendation systems; *"strengthen the social logic of imitation and repetition, reinforcing even further the gregarious behaviour of cultural consumption."* This results in increasing power of the mediators in the digital music industry such as (major) record labels.

Music blogs also play an important role in formulating music tastes. In her article "The Evolution of music blogs: From a fan's passion to a promotional outlet". Beatrice Jetto argues record labels *"went from suing blogs for digital copyright infringements to collaborating with them for the promotion of their artists"*. She highlights four different phases in the evolution of music blogging: (1) the amateur phase; (2) the diversification phase; (3) the promotional phase and (4) the professional phase. Her findings are based on thirty semi-structured interviews the author conducted with 18 music bloggers in Australia. The interviews highlight the evolution of music blogs from fan diaries to music consumer guides. She concludes; *"music blogs play an important role as intermediaries for the music industry and they have assumed an important status as gatekeepers of taste."*

The IJMBR is aimed at all academics around the world, from students to professors, from all disciplines and with an interest in music business research. Interdisciplinary papers will be especially welcome if they address economic and business-related topics in the field of music. We look forward to receiving as many interesting papers as possible and request that you send paper proposals to:
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Life is live: Experiencing music in the digital age

Beate Flath[2]

Abstract

The music industry has seen many changes over recent decades: one of the most discussed is the change in user behaviour and its implications for buying behaviour. Although music reception has become omnipresent in everyday life, the music industry has faced a decrease in recorded music revenues while the live music sector has grown. This paper argues that through digital information/communication technologies the "immediate experience of music reception" is becoming a shared concept of "life 2.0" and live settings.

Keywords: Customer experience, digital information and communication technologies, experiencing music, mediatisation

1   Introduction & objective

In 1966 Glenn Gould predicted *"the public concert as we know it today would no longer exist a century hence"*, and that *"its functions would have been entirely taken over by electronic media"*. (Gould 1966: 47) Since then the music industry has seen many changes and one of the most discussed in recent decades is the change of using behaviour and its implications on buying behaviour. Due to the development of information and communication technologies, music reception has become omnipresent in everyday life. At the same time the live music sector has grown while the traditional recorded music industry has seen decreased revenues. Within the context of the "Erlebnisgesellschaft" ("experience-driven society", see Gerhard Schulze 1992) this development poses the question how these two growing fields are linked.

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What Gerhard Schulze observed empirically and described in the early 1990s is formulated in upcoming marketing concepts that focus on experience-based added values of products or services. Experiences, rather than products or services, are sold, and customer-experience management has become a scientific subject. Adapting the customer experience model of Pine & Gilmore (1999) and the co-creation model of Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004), this paper argues that through digital information and communication technologies an "immediate experience of music reception" has become more of a shared concept of "life 2.0" and live settings.

To outline this, the paper is structured as follows: after presenting and discussing relevant theoretical approaches of musicology, media studies and economics, a theory-based conceptualisation of the "immediate experience of music reception" is introduced. Following this, aspects of music reception within the digital age are posed in relation to the structures and constraints of the music industry. The paper concludes with a critical discussion and suggestions for further research.

2   Theoretical contexts

This issue has to be considered within a broad interdisciplinary theoretical framework. Nevertheless, four theoretical approaches are considered; a) a musicological theoretical approach, which describes music as a phenomenon of mediatisation (Jauk 2009); b) the model of mediamorphosis (Weber 1921; Blaukopf 1989; Fiedler 1997; Smudits 2002); c) theoretical concepts of music reception in everyday life and d) a theoretical framework of customer experience management (CEM).

These approaches focus on three different aspects of the objective: a) the relation of music and its media fixations as well as the impact of media (especially of digital information and communication technologies) on cultural/musical work; b) modalities of music reception in everyday life and c) its embedding in a framework of CEM.

2.1 Music & Media/Media & Music

Media are literally "in-between"; within music-related contexts they occur in various forms, for example as a visual embodiment of music or as technical devices, etc. (e.g. transmission or storage media). Media free music from time and space and are the basis for its distribution and reproduction. The following section focuses on two theoretical approaches regarding the relationship(s) of music and media: the first considers music in terms of different levels of "mediatisation", while the second describes the impact of information and communication technologies on the reception, distribution and production of music.

The music as a phenomenon of mediatisation (Jauk 2009) approach follows the anthropological-based assumption that the cultural development of music can be seen as a process from "un-mediated" emotional expressions in sound and body movement to "high mediated" representations (e.g. fixations of music through notation). This theory allows a systematic description of "levels" of mediatisation and can be applied to music reception as well as to music production and distribution. In relation to digital information and communication technologies the relationship between mediatisation and music can be described as follows: from a technological point of view music reception in daily life is high mediated even if at the same time music reception itself is less mediated (Jauk 2009: 375-6). Whereas the first aspect refers to specificities of digital musical devices out of a technological point of view, the second refers to their high intuitive and therefore low mediated handling and its implications for reception. So the term mediatisation is used on one hand in order to describe the level of technologization of media, on the other hand it is used in order to describe the level of intuitive handling.

Through technological changes as well as the (economic, social and psychological, Jauk 2009: 432) availability of music-related digital technologies, music reception has become highly integrated in everyday life and is embedded in a network of expectations. Aside from genre-specific conditions, three aspects are crucial in choosing music: "availability" (music has to be available always and everywhere), "connectivity" (music has to be shared with friends in social networks) and "fitting of mood

and music" (Borgstedt 2011: 234). This leads to the second theoretical approach: the model of mediamorphosis (Weber 1921; Blaukopf 1989; Fiedler 1997; Smudits 2002), which formulates the impact of information and communication technologies on the production/creation, distribution and reception of culture, as well as on music. In this regard the so-called "digital mediamorphosis" is of central interest. The term "digital mediamorphosis" describes the impact of digital information and communication technologies on the production/creation, reception and distribution of culture in general and music in particular. In relation to music reception, the fusion of music reception and the creation of music (see Toffler 1984; Winter 2012; Bruns 2008) has to be considered. Furthermore, music reception takes place within extended (also multimedia) contexts (e.g. YouTube, social networks) and is highly integrated within daily life. The interaction with music (almost in real time) and the integration of music (technology) in everyday life are the main characteristics of music reception in the digital age providing alternative opportunities for the experience of music reception. In the following section these opportunities are contextualised within the theoretical framework of modalities of reception.

2.2 Modalities[3] and modes of music reception

The literature provides several approaches to conceptualise music reception: a) an ecological approach to perception (Gibson 1982; Clarke 2005), b) approaches that consider "consciousness" to be the basic principle to differentiate modes of reception of music (e.g. Rauhe 1975; Rösing 1985; Herbert 2011)[4], c) approaches of media studies to reception modalities (e.g. Gehrau, Bilandzic & Woelke 2005; Schramm 2005) and d) approaches of social psychology to reception strategies in everyday life (e.g. Hargreaves & North 1999).

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[3] Although there is no clear distinction between the terms reception "mode" and reception "modality" in literature, it is suggested here that "modality" terms an abstract concept whereas "mode" terms the realisation of abstract reception patterns. This distinction follows the suggestion of Hasebrink & Paus-Hasebrink (2005: 240).

[4] This concept includes in a broader sense the differentiation of autonomous and heteronomous listening and therefore the differentiation of "listener" and "hearer".

Reception modalities and strategies can be examined in regard to the question at hand. Whilst early approaches suggested an individual person is assigned one mode of reception (see Adorno's typology), it can be argued that, even when there are dominant individual modes of reception (e.g. Suckfüll 2004: 114), an individual has a repertoire of modes[5] to listen to music. These are affected by each other (Behne 1986; Rösing 2002: 188) and are related a) to habitual and situational listening patterns (e.g. Lehmann 1994), b) to the music genre (Schramm 2005a: 214) and c) to strategies of music reception and to functions of music in everyday life (Rösing & Bruhn 2002; Suckfüll 2002: 206; Hargreaves & North 1999). Furthermore, reception modes relate to the medial/non-medial (re)presentation(s) of music. Taken together, modalities of music reception depend on individual, social, situational and technological parameters.

An example that sheds light on the impact of music technology on reception modes of music, is the longitudinal analysis conducted by Behne (2002). This analysis was undertaken between 1991 and 1997 and found changes within the "concentrated", "compensatory" and "diffuse" modes of music reception. It showed the third mode (the "diffuse" mode, in terms of background music) grew whereas the "concentrated" and "compensatory" modes declined (Behne 2002: 115). However, the data only map the situation of teenagers in Germany between 1991 and 1997, i.e. an early stage of the digital era. . It could be argued this observation was simply a result of the new technology-based possibilities for music reception. Additionally, Simon Frith's suggestion of the musical experience being a "soundtrack to everyday life" is worth considering here (Frith 1996: 236). According to Huber, the digital natives' general approach to music *is playful, short-term, social, very visual and mobile. They like their music to be uncomplicated, convenient and inexpensive"* (Huber 2013: 31). The first sentence of this quote goes beyond reception

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[5] Behne (1986) empirically found eight modes of music reception: motor, compensatory, vegetative, diffuse, emotional, sentimental, associative and distancing. Schramm (2005a) empirically found five modes of music reception: emotional-vegetative, motor, diffuse, associative and distancing, whereas, in terms of individual relevance, the emotional-vegetative mode was rated highest and the distancing/analysing mode was rated lowest (Schramm 2005a: 159).

modes in the narrow sense and describes aspects of an experience-driven society.

2.3 Customer experience & customer experience management (CEM)

Theoretical frameworks of customer experience are basically divided into a) behavioural-oriented models and b) economic models (Bruhn & Hadwich 2012: 10).

In relation to behavioural-oriented theories of customer experience, two approaches have to be distinguished. The first refers to the "Computational Theory of Mind" (Pinker 1997, modularity of mind), based on the assumption that humans use various mental modules of the brain for various tasks. Following this, a customer's experience results from the collaboration of those various mental modules. The multi-dimensional conceptualisation of customer experience is based on this approach. There is no common opinion on the number of those dimensions. Gentile et al. (2007) provide a theoretical structure of six components: a sensorial component, an emotional component, a cognitive component, a pragmatic component, a lifestyle component and a relational component (Gentile et al. 2007: 398). The relation of those dimensions and the perceived experience of the customer are determined by situational and customer-related moderator variables (Bruhn & Hadwich 2012: 14).

The second approach is based on the theory of hedonic consumption, which assumes the customer is considered to be hedonic as well. At the beginning of 1980s, Holbrook and Hirschman conceived customer experience in terms of hedonic consumption. Hence they focused on those facets of consumer behaviour that are related to multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects (Holbrook & Hirschmann 1982: 92) and provided an additional approach to the predominant approach at that time of information processing.

Economic models are among others provided by Pine & Gilmore ("Experience Economy") and by Prahalad & Ramaswamy ("Model of Co-Creation"). Pine & Gilmore (1998) argue that Western economies are moving from service to experience economies: therefore economic val-

ue is generated through customer experiences in which the customer is more or less involved. They map various forms of CEM within the two dimensions "active-passive" (which maps the level of participation) and "absorption-immersion" (which maps the "*kind of connection, or environmental relationship, that units the customers with the event or performance*", ibid: 31). In contrast, the role of the customer is considered explicitly to be an active one within the approach of Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004). According to the authors, value is generated in collaboration between the company and the customer. Following this, co-creation is about "*joint creation of value by the customer and the company, [...] allowing the customer to co-construct the service experience to suit her context, [...] creating an experience environment in which consumers can have active dialogue [...] and co-construct personalized experiences.*" (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004: 8) The interaction of customer and company is central to the value chain.

On a very basic level, customer experience can be defined as "*the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company.*" (Meyer & Schwager 2007) Therefore customer experience is based on a set of interactions between the customer and a product, a company, or a part of its organisation (Gentile et al. 2007: 397). In general there are various determinants that influence the construct of customer experience. Based on a review of the literature, Bruhn and Hadwich (2012: 18) found five determinants of customer experience: a customer-related, a company-related, a performance-related, a situation-related and an environment-related determinant.

CEM terms a process of strategic management in order to optimize the customers' experiences at all customer contact points (Bruhn & Hadwich 2012: 23).

3 Conceptualisation

The term "experience of listening to music" is derived from two economic models of customer experience (Pine & Gilmore 1998 and Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004).

As mentioned above, the model of Pine and Gilmore consists of two axes, which map a) the participation of the customer and b) the connection of the customer and the experience. Under additional consideration of the model of "co-creation" (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004) it is adapted to conceptualise experiencing music in the digital age. The two axes are modified in terms of "interaction with music" in general. More precisely, the horizontal axis maps the interaction as "co-creation" and the vertical axis maps "bodily interaction with music". Yet what do these two forms of "interaction" mean?

"Interaction as co-creation" captures the possibility of "affecting" the music, not merely by starting or stopping a musical piece on a technological device, but by the possibility of affecting music "itself". This includes, for example, all actions that fit into the concept of "prosume" (Toffler 1984) and "produse" (Bruns 2008). Within the context of live settings it includes all actions of the audience that become part of the concert (e.g. encores, singing/shouting popular refrains, etc.) and which influence music. "Interaction as co-creation" within the context of experiencing music is interaction that influences the "appearance" of music intentionally. "Bodily interaction" is derived from the mode of music reception, which is characterised by accompanied body movements, e.g. dancing, tapping one's feet (Schramm 2005a: 159) or body movements in everyday life, like walking, cycling, etc. (see Bull 2007). This aspect is highly related to socially accepted behaviour and essentially refers to the relationship between body movement and music reception.

 Following this, "the experience of music reception" is captured through a) interaction with music in terms of "co-creating" and b) bodily interaction with music in terms of body movement in the broadest sense.

It is suggested that both types of interaction can be graded in terms of "intensity", which is considered to be a "quality" with an ordinal character. It is assumed the "range" of this "intensity" is limited by the following constraints: a) there is no "zero point" of the intensity of interacting with music because 1) musical devices themselves "shape/influence" music or have an impact on music (see: model of mediamorphosis) and

2) within the context of live settings, music cannot be thought as strictly separated from the audience as a music influencing system. Furthermore, it is assumed that 3) there is no "zero point" of the intensity of bodily interaction with music, because music reception is sensory and therefore per se bodily.

Thus the levels of intensity (of these two kinds of interactions) differentiate the "experience of music reception" in terms of "immediacy". Based on the assumption that the recipient/customer and the experience of music reception are not considered to be "separated" "immediacy" is conceptualised as unipolar.

4   Experiencing music in the digital age

The following section describes combinations of extreme forms of those two types of interactions with music. In general they differ with respect to mobility of technological devices (portable or not) on the one hand, and to being on- or offline on the other hand.
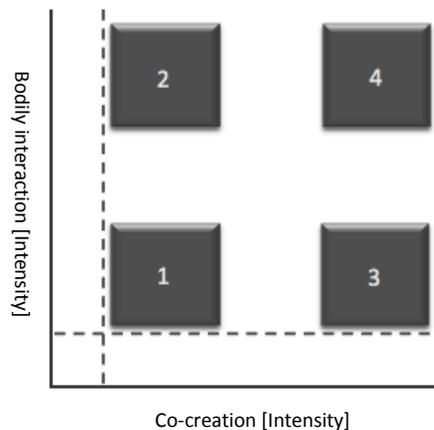

Figure 1: Schematic diagram of the combinations of extreme forms of interaction with music in mediated daily life settings

Case 1: Interaction with music in terms of co-creation is not intense, and bodily interaction with music is not intense either. This applies to the use of technological devices that do not provide the possibility of interacting with music in terms of co-creation and only provides possibilities to interact bodily to a small extent (such as non-portable technological devices that are mainly offline like Hi-Fi systems).

Case 2: Interaction with music in terms of co-creation is not intense but the bodily interaction with music is. This applies to the use of portable technological devices even though they do not provide the ability to interact with music in terms of co-creation and participation (such as portable mainly offline technological devices like the iPod[6], MP3-Player etc.).

Case 3: Interaction with music in terms of co-creation is intense, while the bodily interaction with music is not. This applies to the use of technological devices that are not portable, but provide the possibility to interact with music in terms of co-creation (non-portable online technological devices, like a PC or laptop).

Case 4: Interaction with music in terms of co-creation is intense and bodily interaction is also intense. This applies to the use of digital devices: recipients interact with music in terms of co-creation and interact with music bodily (such as portable online technological devices e.g. smartphones). Furthermore, the additional option (probably case 5) of shaping/creating sounds through body movement (e.g. shaking a smartphone, Jauk 2011) should be mentioned here. Following this, the experience of music reception results from a fusion of "co-creation" and "bodily interaction". Cases 4 and 5 apply to settings of a life 2.0 as well as to live settings: "bodily interaction" (with technological devices as well as with musicians on stage) affects music in terms of co-creation and the other way around. Both cases require a new "interpretation/understanding" of music, which is connected to a specific legal and economic structure.

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[6] It should be mentioned here that in September 2014 it was announced that the iPod would no longer be produced.

The traditional music industry assumes music is immutable and in-flexible, and intended for reproduction for passive recipients. Creating value is more or less located within the structure of the music industry. Whereas in many industries it is common practise to include the customer in the value-chain (e.g. furniture, etc.) in terms of a "bottom-up economy" (Redlich 2010), the music industry seems to be constrained by its own historical value chain.

Ueda (2008: 55) describes three types of value chains: the model of providing value, the model of adaptive value and the model of co-creative value. Whereas the model of providing value assumes that the value for the consumer and the product or service provider is independent and the environment is predictable, the model of adaptive value assumes that value for the consumer and product or service provider can be specified but that the environment is changing. The co-creative value model assumes that the value for the consumer as well as for the product or service provider cannot be determined independently because they interact. *"The producer (provider) and consumer (receiver) are, in addition to the environment and the service themselves, formed at the service site [...]."* (Ueda 2008: 55)

With regard to the "co-creation model", the well-known concept "prosume" (Toffler 1984; Winter 2012) and the concept "produse" (Bruns 2008) should be considered. Toffler suggested that mass-markets disappear in favour of individualisation and in his publication "The Third Wave: The Classic Study of Tomorrow" he identified three so-called waves of socio-economic paradigms: the agrarian economy, the industrial society and the information society. He exemplified and described these shifts and their implications for society across different industries. In reference to the newspaper, mass circulation magazine, radio and television markets, Toffler argued as early as 1980 that "de-massified media" is one characteristic of the third wave (1980: 155-7). Following this, he outlined the concept of the so-called "prosumer" as the associated "customer" of this paradigm (1980: 265). The concept "prosume" describes *"a much closer involvement of the consumer in production".* (1980: 275). Although his argument mainly relates to the U.S. market, as

distinguished from the European or Asian media market structures he described the starting point of a development with great impact on media and music consumption nowadays. Whereas the concept "prosume" originally refers to the involvement of the consumers including their ideas or preferences within the framework of feedback loops in the value chain (essentially a passive role), the role of the consumer has become more and more active over recent decades, and the term "prosume" has been redefined in various ways. In 2005 Kevin Kelly adapted this concept in terms of Web 2.0 characteristics and suggested a prediction for 2015: *"What matters is the network of social creation, the community of collaborative interaction that futurist Alvin Toffler called prosumption. As with blogging and Bit Torrent, prosumers produce and consume at once. The producers are the audience, the act of making is the act of watching, and every link is both a point of departure and a destination."* Consequently, two new aspects become apparent, namely the simultaneous consumption and production (essentially one service characteristic) and a network-based communication in order to generate content. Kelly adapted Toffler's understanding of "prosume" to include the relationship between consumers as well. Subsequently the concept "prosume" is accompanied by the concept "produse" (Bruns 2008). This term consists of the words "produce" and "use" and reflects the rise of a "new" actor (the user) and a "new" action (using) as new concepts within a society constituted through digital information and communication technologies. In contrast to "prosume", "produse" focuses on a networked, collaborative creation of contents. Typical examples are Wikis, blogs, etc., as well as more and more creative content, like music. It is characterised by being open to all, heterarchical, process-oriented/not finalized and the commons.

Wikström's (2011) typology of music distribution models is worth mentioning here. Along the axis "ownership – access – context – play" he describes strategies to distribute music. The "play" model "*allows consumers to create music, to play with music, to remix others' music and to distribute it*" (Wikström 2011: 6). As a result, the paradigm of a "finished piece of music" is softened, while concepts like "property" and

"copyright" reduced in importance. Through portable devices music has become omnipresent and, provided that it is socially acceptable, is available in nearly every daily situation. Bull (2007), who shed light on using sound/music (iPod) for structuring everyday urban areas, argues that numerous, diverse bodily actions are accompanied by the functions of portable musical devices. Whatever may not have been feasible with an iPod is nowadays commonplace with the use of smartphones: shaping sounds in real time (also through body movement) in order to manage one's mood or to provide an appropriate individual sonic environment.

Taken together, these aspects suggest that the term "reception of music" has become blurred and will probably have to be replaced by "experiencing music". This shift is essential in supporting the proposition of the convergence of life 2.0 and live settings. Whereas the "immediate" experience of music in live settings is realised through enveloping, immersive sounds and interacting with music bodily, those aspects occur increasingly in life 2.0 settings. This means that the fusion of "bodily interaction" and "co-creation" is the basis for the immediate experience of music. It can be argued that until now, this kind of "experiencing" has not been implemented fully as a key factor in traditional music industry business models. There are various possible reasons for this: two noticeable ones are mentioned below

The first refers to the deeply rooted image of recipients being enemies of the music industry. Shoshanna Zuboff's (2002) approach is relevant here, given her argument, that the next (third) stage of capitalism is the so-called "Support Economy". Zuboff argues that after producing products and supply services, the next stage of the economy enables the support of individuals, to fashion their lives according to their ideas. This coincides with companies moving from asking what can be sold to asking consumers about how they are, what their needs are and what support they need, meaning implicitly every individual becomes part of the creation of value. This approach fits into the general shift of including the customer in value creation. According to Zuboff, this is a future scenario although currently she only observes hybrid models, like Apple, Google and Amazon. Apple for example recognised the music industry's troubles

and launched iTunes to provide a means to combine hardware and software. The reason Zuboff interprets this model as a hybrid model is a result of Apple releasing technical devices at frequent intervals on the market. In this paradigm value creation occurs exclusively within the company. Although Zuboff's approach seems to be somehow Utopian and perhaps unrealistic, especially with respect to the present issue, it is relevant because it leads to a second possible reason for the difficulties faced by the traditional music industry in providing frameworks to improve and stimulate experiencing music in a broader extent. The music industry assumes that music is immutable and inflexible with a focus on recorded music; this thinking is embedded within existing legal structures that support and strengthen this notion. At present an entire generation has grown up, without a restrictive and rigid understanding of music and it has developed a different "embodiment" of music. This generation can find its own ways to experience music, often away from the predominant economic paradigms. It is clear that the music industry must work on providing a new framework for the various forms of experiencing music. This does not mean designing technological devices or platforms, but rather enhancing the possibilities and immersive qualities for experiencing music by changing the legal and institutional conditions.

Critical discussion

The following section sets out specific aspects of the argument to be considered in more detail. This concerns the conceptualisation, concepts that are related to the term "experience" and additional conditions that have not been covered earlier within this paper.

The first point focuses on the cases outlined in figure 1. As mentioned this maps the combinations of extreme forms of interactions and excludes transitions and moderate forms. It is assumed that, especially in order to develop business models, transition ranges must be noted in more detail, because customers are using music and technology in addition to these prototypes. This leads to another important aspect: both types of interaction have to be elaborated to include factors like music

genre, age, gender and cultural background[7] (most of the studies mentioned here were conducted in German-speaking countries) and associated user behaviour. This paper focuses mainly on the digital natives in order to extrapolate on a trend and ignores the earlier generations that had not grown up with digital information and communication technologies.

The following paragraph focuses on concepts that deal with the quality and intensity of the "relationship" between the recipient and medium/stimulus, for example involvement and immersion.

Originally involvement is defined within the context of television advertising as the *"number of conscious 'bridging experiences', connections, or personal references per minute that the viewer makes between his own life and the stimulus".* (Krugman 1965: 355) Krugman conceives involvement as process oriented and integrative in relation to the effect(s) of media and media use. Krugman's definition has been used within various media studies approaches and becomes nearly omnipresent in many research questions: as an independent variable, as a dependent variable, as a stimulus-related concept, as an intervening variable, as an effect, as property of recipients, etc. Without a doubt, involvement influences the experience of music. In the case of rock concerts (Hafen 1997), involvement is relevant for the emerging experience. Based on Hafen's results, involvement is caused by the interaction of the audience with the musicians as well as by bodily expressions and sensations of sound (Hafen 1997: 373). Applied to the conceptualisation of experiencing music mentioned here, involvement is part of the musical as well as the bodily interaction. To what extent and in which ways has to be clarified in further research.

According to several definitions, involvement relates a lot to the concept of immersion; immersion is defined as "attentional involvement", some kind of condition to *"derive enjoyment from an activity or to access an experience".* (Hansen & Mossberg 2013: 211)

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[7] See e.g. Nettama, E., Nirhamo, M. & Häkkilä, J. (2006) "A Cross-Cultural Study of Mobile Music – Retrieval, Management and Consumption".

Pine & Gilmore conceive immersion as *"becoming physically (or virtually) a part of the experience itself"* (Pine & Gilmore 1998: 31), thus as the opposite of "absorption". Given the unique characteristic of music reception/experiencing music as being per se bodily, the current concept replaced "immersion" with the "bodily interaction" dimension.

Furthermore the social interaction aspect has not been considered within the current argument. It is assumed that social interaction has a strong impact on experiencing music, so the two dimensions of interaction could to be adapted to take this into account.

5   Conclusion

To conclude, I will quote Gould's statement again: "*In an unguarded moment some months ago, I predicted that the public concert as we know it today would no longer exist a century hence, that its functions would have been entirely taken over by electronic media*." (Gould 1966: 47). Apart from the fact that since then the characteristics of public concerts as well as music genres have changed, to date Gould's prediction has not come true and needs to be refined. Within the digital age, experiencing music in everyday life is converging towards experiencing music in live settings. The structure that dictated the listening to recorded music for decades, namely the effective and perceived "separation" of musicians and recipients as well as the "separation" of music and recipients, has become porous. As a result, music reception through digital devices is shifting towards experiencing music similar to in live settings. Within the paradigm of an experience-driven society the sensual and therefore the immediate experience becomes an added value, created also by customers, users and recipients.

In summary, it seems that the whole story is not primarily about monetising music in terms of developing business models in the narrow sense, but rather how to design further possibilities and conditions for experiencing music. As history has shown, there has always been access to music, legal or illegal, and the dominant structures of the day are always too slow and ponderous to respond when undermined. Demand

seems to be that music needs to be experienced in diverse and uncomplicated ways and work is needed to widen the possibilities for recipients to experience music in an immediate way.

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Music consumption in Spain: From analogue to digital in the shaping of music

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Abstract

This paper analyses the relationship between the types of music consumed on Internet and the thought leaders for this new digital consumption: i.e. the social agents or new mediators that influence consumption. Mass consumption is determined by traditional mass media such as the press, radio and television since they are very effective marketing tools. The Internet reinforces the presence of mass consumption products, in fact, data relating to so-called "long tail" music consumption shows that the majority of cultural consumption is increasingly concentrated on the top ten lists. Nevertheless, the media's role has gradually begun to lose steam and is being substituted by recommendation systems and/or the rise of new on line agents. To support this analysis, we carried out a comparative study of 50 of the most listened songs via streaming, radio, physically or digitally purchased or illegally downloaded.

Keywords: Music industry, music consumption, new opinion leaders, mediators, music market

1   Introduction

In recent years, recorded music sales in Spain nosedived with revenues between 2003 and 2014 dropping from €530m to €149.9m. Digital music sales in online shops have not been successful either, totalling just €63m

in 2014, even though online music consumption has increased, albeit outside of commercial channels via alternative methods and systems.

Taking account of all the venues and players that participate in the broad and complex web of creation, dissemination, and consumption, music is currently one of the most widespread cultural products both in terms of its reach and presence in society. From creation and live performance to reproduction and dissemination through multiple traditional channels – such as radio, records, television, the cinema, advertising, dance halls, nightclubs and live performances, new systems and channels as well as the new digital social networks, and the various public and private venues of creation and consumption, music is an omnipresent cultural product.

Clearly, music is currently a means of expression and communication and an essential cultural product that comprises a major part of the daily entertainment diet. The same conclusion can also be reached if we take account of its economic contribution, as a directly consumed cultural product or an element for producing other products, works and cultural expressions embracing a wide spectrum of the overall economy (KEA 2006; APRA 2011).

In Spain, music consumption habits differ little to the rest of the world but, consumption, audiences and measurement systems are changing (Napoli 2011). The habitual daily listening to music has increased substantially and music is always present among the leisure pursuits of the Spanish population. Indeed it has become the only artistic manifestation that accompanies, to a greater or lesser extent, the daily activities of two-thirds of Spaniards.

Various reports and statistics indicate that more music than ever is being produced and consumed worldwide, especially via Internet dissemination (IFPI 2013, 2014). In this new digital context, the question of what types of music people listen to on the Internet and the influence of the new mediators that contribute to shape the musical tastes of the majorities has become even more relevant.

In order to answer this question we must examine an old issue that can be traced back to the beginnings of sociological research on cultural

consumption namely the complex and unresolved relationship between mainstream and subculture consumption and the difficulties associated with researching and representing the latter. Generalisations of individual social behaviour and cultural habits are unrealistic and it is almost impossible to sum up the complex diversity of different individual or collective patterns of cultural creation and consumption. In fact, even the term "social", according to one of the first sociologists, Gabriel Tarde, is a mere abstraction of something we cannot truly measure, since it implies situations outside of a social context (Tarde 1890).

Starting from the problem of representing the consumption patterns of individuals or subcultures, it becomes difficult to demonstrate that the cultural supply determines demand, in other words that the record companies determine consumers' musical tastes or that labels produce what people want to listen to. In relation to music consumption, indetermination and randomness are key factors and therefore labels organisational strategies aimed at meeting music demand often fail because of the impossibility of aggregating the individual complexity, inherent in cultural consumption, into a supposed generalisation (Calvi 2010).

Nonetheless, today's digital networks offer a privileged place for observation and research on the development of these new music consumption behaviours, which have moved beyond the traditional industry and markets. In classic analyses of communication, it is assumed that cultural products disseminated by cultural industries and companies impose a more or less homogeneous supply on a broad public, which consumes the same contents at the same time, which tends to standardise and smooth out the habits and tastes of cultural consumption. Nevertheless, there is evidence of new possibilities and modalities of music creation, dissemination and consumption, which are much, more complex than those studied until now (Sterne 2014; Calvi 2014).

The new digital paradigm is pushing creators and consumers to converge: *"Custom playlists, loop sampling, re-mixing, and audio editing software in general provide tools which blur the distinction between the artist who creates the music and the user, who once passively consumed*

it" (Hughes & Reiner 2003: 186). This is also in a context of social networks that are using musicians to promote themselves (Salo et al. 2013; Jetto 2014). Within this new musical consumption scenario it is imperative to take account of the role played by digital mediators and opinion leaders willing to participate, recommend, and share.

In this report, we analyse the mediators and thought leaders of the music sector, as well as market data and consumption habits in Spain. Thereafter, we compare the music most listened to via a subscription service such as Spotify with the music with the most physical sales in the Spanish market.

2   Music mediators and opinion leaders

Music is a mean of expression and of interpersonal relationships "par excellence" in all cultures and has been throughout the history of mankind across all cultures and throughout time and has been studied from broad perspectives in terms of its role in social mediation. For example, German sociologist Georg Simmel, in early sociological research on culture, already considered music to be the expression of the "substance of society", a fundamental element of interpersonal social relationships, a form of relationships between individuals, and a model of communication that maintains, structures, and restructures human relations. Thus, he considered music in the broad context of social relations namely. Integrating it into the processes of social communication or from the same perspective contemplated by many contemporary theorists of sociology of culture and art (Simmel 1968; Bourdieu 2002).

Along the same lines as the cultural sociologist P. Bourdieu, A. Hennion aims to reveal more completely the complex framework of social mediations and the role that mediators play between the processes of music creation and music listening. In his words, *"regarding the confrontation between an object of aesthetic admiration and a subject worried about attributing the source of its beauty to its respective qualities, it is sufficient to substitute it for the multitude of hidden mediators which are solely capable of making this relationship possible, from the environ-*

ment, the institution and the market to the critics, tastes and social differentiation". This means for a large segment of contemporary cultural sociology, music has *"become the ideal art for providing the sociologist with an exuberant display of the heavyweight fabric of heterogeneous mediations ... Sociological approaches to the work of art have branched out into highly diverse directions, a common effect of restitution of intermediaries of all sorts - human, institutional, and material - through which the relationship between art and the public passes (academies, art patrons, collectors, critics, fashion, means of communication, etc.)."* (Hennion 2002: 16-17).

As a result, carrying out a study of the complex world of mediations in the music field entails taking an extensive journey through all of the possible opinion leaders, who mediate, between music creation and the listening of that music. These players could range, in no particular order, – from the family, to an immediate social group such as friends or significant others, the education system, the economy revolving around musical activities, and, later, the music industry and the means of communication, new media and digital social networks and, finally, what might be called the cultural system as a whole (Hennion 2002; Sterne 2014; Calvi 2014).

Among mediators, the music industry has played a fundamental role as an opinion leader of mainstream musical tastes and consumption, mainly through records. Along these lines, the role played by the recording industry, as is the case of almost all 20th century popular music, is substantial. It is impossible to imagine the development of the different musical genres and languages of the past century without the mediation of the record and the recording companies as the main support for recording and transmission of music (Negus 2005). Nevertheless, the role of the recording industry as a system of production, distribution and sales of music on a mass scale should be specifically analysed in the context of each particular music genre. The recording industry operates fully within mass consumption genres such as rock and pop music, while it plays an indirect role in minority genres such as jazz or classical music. For example, the roots of jazz are pre-industrial and not originally asso-

ciated with a commercial model. The economy of jazz was primarily developed by live music performances with records acting more as a cover letter for artists, meaning jazz musicians did not make a living via selling records alone. The relationship between record companies and jazz is not as direct as with the rock and pop, genres that are directly coordinated with the industry itself, but rather there is a wide range of models that are difficult to fully pigeonhole from a commercial standpoint.

A lot of classic research regarding the music industry is coloured by certain clichés. An interesting hypothesis to develop, contrary to the majority of studies on the recording industry, is the one that explains how some of the most important innovations in a musical genre can take place within well-established recording companies which belong to large communication groups: i.e. at the heart of the dominant cultural system.

The record, the greatest mediating means of support for popular music throughout the 20th century, would not have managed to have the impact it had without radio. The main channel for mass dissemination of records, since the early decades of the 20th century, has been radio, the usual means of communication for popular music. Commercial radio stations belonging to large multimedia conglomerates have historically tended to disseminate the most successful artists.

Nevertheless, it cannot be directly deduced that mass media has been and is the determinant of musical tastes and of what audiences listen to. The great mediator, the so-called media operates mainly as enhancers of the social logic of "gregarious" cultural consumption: i.e. the tendency of human beings in community to imitate the behaviour of others, the propensity to consume what is perceived to be the consumption of "the majority", starting with the family, the closest social interaction group, and ending with what is established as mainstream by mass means of communication.

In short, the entire web of industrial means of communication of music heads in the same direction, underpinned by the commercial logic of the rock and pop industry: i.e. focused on the commercial management of those musicians with the greatest probability of satisfying the tastes of what is considered to be the "majority" by producers, although

real innovations in musical genres are often disseminated via other venues. In fact, as pointed out by some authors, *"The major corporations still retain crucial control over the marketing and promotion that will largely determine what music most consumers get to hear and know about"* (Hesmondhalgh 2013a: 344). Even though the Internet promotes individualisation of consumption via the so-called "mass-self-communication" or "networking media", the traditional means of communication and the power of large global entertainment business conglomerates still have a greater weight shaping musical consumption tastes.

With the development and emergence of new digital means of communication, such as the Internet, social networks and new music broadcasting channels, a major disruption in the rationale underpinning the operating modes of the entire cultural industries took place. Every cultural production sector, from music to recording companies and radio to the publishing industry and to audio-visual conglomerates, have entered a restructuring phase with an uncertain outcome.

Specifically with music, this new situation, in theory, could lead to greater specialisation of audiences due to an increasing diversity of music artists and genres available in the digital networks. Never before in the history of music has it been possible to access so much music so quickly from all over the world.

Musical consumption habits are much more diverse and complex than indicated by reports and statistics. The most interesting aspect is to observe how users can seek experiences involving access to music and satisfaction of their musical consumption needs and companies aim to profit from these new habits. Our main hypothesis suggests that new music mediators and thought leaders on the Internet tend to promote the same products already listened to and consumed in the traditional music market dominated by the established mediators, namely the large recording companies and mass communication media.

The main underlying forces are the social rationales of imitation and repetition of musical consumption habits, where users tend to consume what is seen as mainstream consumption, not only as projected by me-

dia but also through contacts with and mouth-to-mouth recommendations of peers and social groups. Music consumption thereby takes on the characteristics of a viral contagion rationale where what is most listened to, is what is most recommended, which, in turn, is also what is most consumed both on the Internet and in the traditional cultural consumption markets.

The cyber-utopia of a music economy based on the mutual collaboration of users of new social networks is open to question. The cultural and musical competence of "thought leader peers" via new platforms for listening to music show that what is most recommended are the same products marketed by the large recording companies.

3   Consumption and markets

The consumption of music is embedded in leisure for people living in Spain. Consumption and markets appear to be two united variables, but with the development of the Internet and the proliferation of music reproduction devices, these ideas are less fixed. The market is linked to a supply and demand rationale and at a price per transaction, yet. Consumption can be about many types of listening without the consumer needing to pay. For example, a large portion of music consumption via Peer-to-Peer (P2P) networks take place outside of the market. However, the emergence of the Internet is modifying these concepts and a "new form of capitalism" is appearing" (Ritzer & Jurgenson 2010: 32).

From a historical perspective, the current paradigm shift is similar to others that occurred during the past century, not only in the ways of creating music, but in the production and music innovation (Tschmuck 2012). In the old model of production-distribution music, record companies kept a tight grip and there was a low level of connectivity between the companies themselves. Following the emergence of the Internet, *"the new music dynamics is characterized by high connectivity and little control"* (Wikstrom 2009: 6). The music on the Internet is perceived more as a service rather than a product. And this radical paradigm shift in the music industry has broken the traditional business model, so that

the new model will still take a few years to set, and it will be shaped by *"four variables: media presence, audience reach, audience approval and audience action"* (Wikstrom 2009: 86).

The digital environment has significantly changed the music industry and consumption in Spain.

According to the Ministry of Culture (MCU, 2011), 64.8 percent of the Spanish population listen to music daily, 79.8 percent at least once a week, over 83.7 percent at least once per quarter, and 84.4 percent at least once per year, followed by reading (58.7 percent) and cinema (49 percent). Males listen to music more frequently than females but the greatest differences are by age. This gives us an idea of the importance of music relative to the Spanish population's leisure activities.

In spite of the development of the Internet and portable music players, the radio is still the most frequent means of listening to music (used by 80.7 percent of the population), followed by media such as CDs or DVDs (32.4 percent). 22.8 percent of the population tends to listen to music on a computer or using devices connected to a computer and 9.8 percent using their mobile phone. Regarding where they tend to listen to music, 83.3 percent do so at home, 43.6 percent in the car, 16.8 percent at work, and 6.2 percent while using public transportation.

According to data from the Ministry of Culture report, the preferred musical genres of people who normally listen to music at least once per quarter are primarily Spanish pop-rock (58.2 percent of the population), foreign pop-rock (39.2 percent), Latin pop-rock (35 percent), melodic songs (33.9 percent), singers-songwriters (31.6 percent), flamenco (21.5 percent) and classical music (16.1 percent).

Of all of the cultural industries, the market, which has declined the most in recent years, is the music sector. According to the sector industry association (Promusicae 2014), between the years 2001 and 2014, sales of recorded music decreased in value from €626.0m to €149.9m or a drop of -76 percent (figure 1). This sharp downturn is due primarily to the influence of the Internet and, to a lesser extent, to the economic crisis. The Internet has been a disruptive technology for the music industry and it is yet to be seen if, in the future, it can become a sales channel

or merely a network for the dissemination of music similar to other tele-communications networks such as the radio.
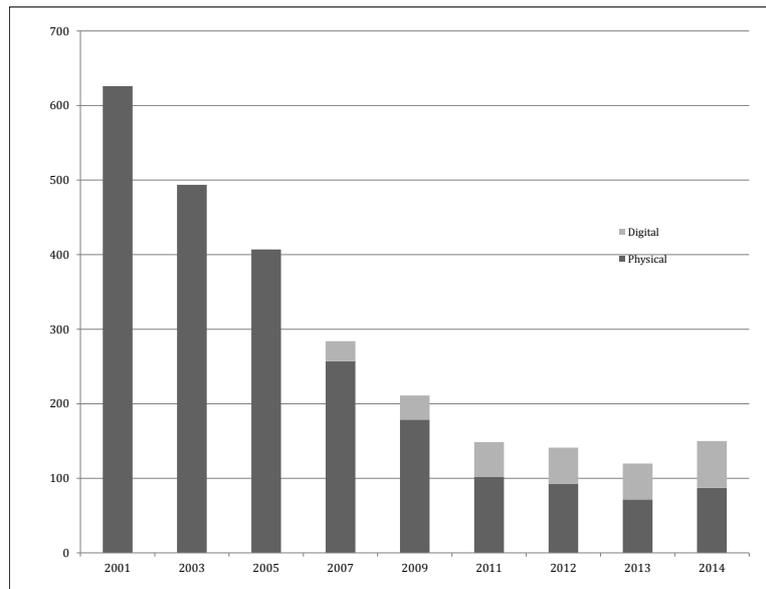
Figure 1: Music market development in Spain (2001-2014) in millions of Euros (Source: Promusicae 2014)

According to the latest report from Promusicae, Spanish people spent €62.9m on the digital format in 2014, over than 26 percent for the last four years, showing a modest recovery for the music industry sector (Promusicae 2015). The damage caused by piracy has been considerable although it is not regarded as damaging by most users of non-legal music platforms. Some studies even show that illegal music consumption may lead to greater consumption from legal platforms. (Aguiar & Martens 2013). Other reports indicate that during 2014 1,831,000 albums, with a market value of €6.773m (www.lacoalicion.es) were illegally accessed.

Hopes that the digital market would gradually expand and fully off-set the physical sales downturn have clearly been dashed. Not even the rise in niche market sales, which enjoy much more efficient distribution,

has offset this bloodbath as digital sales only accounted for 8 percent of 2013 total sales. Twenty years after the Internet's beginnings, physical sales are still much bigger than digital sales, which remain almost a testimonial market and have even declined, in recent years. The largest digital sales category is subscriptions, followed by the Internet and mobile phone downloads (table 1). Currently, the latter looks like an important business model for the future recorded music market.

SALES	2011	2012	2013	2014
Internet & phone downloads	13.8	14.6	13.2	14.2
Mobile products	2.5	2.1	1.7	14.1
Subscriptions	9.5	18.5	20.2	47.2*
Advertising streaming	16.6	11.7	11.2	
Others	3.7	1.2	1.5	0
TOTAL	46.3	48.2	48.1	69.9

Table 1: Digital Market in Spain (2011-2013) in millions of Euros (Source: Promusicae 2014. * includes advertising streaming income)

This data could hardly be worse from a business point of view: only 15 percent of the population pays for music downloaded while 18 percent download music for free.

According to data from the same report (Promusicae 2015), streaming, i.e., listening to music without downloading it, which is available (either for free or by subscription) on such platforms as Spotify, YouTube, Napster, Vevo, Deezer and XBox Music has generated income of €47.2m, (36.3 percent more than the €34.6m obtained in 2013). This has mainly been the result of an increase of around 30 percent in the number of subscribers. The boom in this type of consumption has coincided with the stagnation in the downloading of songs and albums on

iTunes or similar (14.2m, which is 2 percent fewer than in the previous period), whilst music products for mobile phones such as ringtones or ringback tones only amounted to 1.4m – an inter-annual fall in excess of 20 percent. As regards physical sales, the CD market has stemmed its downturn and sold 11.6 million units – 22 percent more than in the previous period. At the same time, the return of vinyl as the favourite format for music-lovers and collectors continues. The 260,000 LPs sold is still a discrete figure but it represents an increase of 85.7 percent on the 140,000 sold in 2013.

Regarding attendance at live music events in 2011, official statistics indicate that 7.7 percent of the population attended a classical music concert during the past year. However, nearly half of the audience attending classical music concerts had free tickets. One out of every four people attended a modern music concert over the past year although one-third had free tickets. The rates of attendance at modern music concerts are higher among males and young people.

In short, we are observing the paradox of ever-greater levels of music consumption but with a shrinking and highly concentrated market. As many reports have showed recently, the music market (physical and digital) is more a traditional "Superstar Economy" rather than a "Long Tail" market, because *"a very small share of the total artists and works account for a disproportionately large share of all revenues: the top 1 percent account for 77 percent of all artist recorded music income"* (MIDIA 2014).

A handful of companies with international links control the bulk of the market, both physical and digital, and the most profitable business strategy is not the "Long Tail", but its converse: the traditional and well known Blockbuster Model. This strategy is based on big investments in a few products designed to appeal to mass audience consumption (Vogel 2001; Elberse 2013). But the future of the music digital market depends on the development of business models, still being developed, with indications of an increase importance of creative industries within the music economy (Pratt 2009). Over the long term, its seems reasonable to predict that online distribution and consumption will be a determinant fac-

tor for establishing types and genres of music and the ways they are consumed. Music consumption is shifting towards portable players connected to the Internet with storage services in the cloud (Gartner 2011). Today's consumer is a nomadic omnivore and believes that music should be free.

4   Comparison of music consumption in physical and digital format in Spain

In Spain the overall trend towards replacing the purchase and listening of music from physical to digital formats continues although. In sales terms, physical formats still outpace digital formats. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, it is not possible to measure and present digital music consumption clearly given uncountable difficulties in quantifying minority micro-consumption and the immense diversity of music listening and consumption situations. Although not reflected in available reports and data, it can be surmised that music consumption on the Internet is much greater than shown by such figures.

There are no doubts, however, regarding the increase in and predominance of music listening of songs (singles) vs. complete albums (records), creating increasingly fragmented consumption. While the traditional recording industry continues to launch its music products in the physical format of full albums, the music listening and consumption trend continues to shift towards singles (IFPI 2013; Promusicae 2013).

Table 2 gives a comparison of the 50 most listened to songs in Spain in 2014. The physical-digital column shows physical and digital sales and also illegal downloads.

	Physical/Download		Streaming		Radio	
#	Artist	Song	Artist	Song	Artist	Song
1	Enrique Iglesias	Bailando	Pharrel Williams	Happy	Enrique Iglesias	Bailando
2	Pharrel Williams	Happy	Enrique Iglesias	Bailando	Pharrel Williams	Happy
3	David Bisbal	Diez mil maneras	Avicii	Hey Brother	John Legend	All of Me
4	Faul/Wad Ad/pnau	Changes	John Legend	All of me	Clean Bandit	Rather Be
5	John Legend	All of me	Dani Martin	Emocional	Romeo Santos	Propuesta ind.
6	Avicii	Hey Brother	Nico & Vinz	Am I Wrong	Wisin	Adrenalina
7	Shakira	La La La	Coldplay	A Sky full of stars	Pibull	Timber
8	Enrique Iglesias	Loco	Leiva	Ter. cruel	Calvin Harris	Summer
9	Milky Chance	Stolen Dance	One Republic	Counting Stars	Nicky Jam	Travesuras
10	Wisin	Adrenalina	Pibull	Timber	Katy Perry	Dark Horse
11	Robin Schulz	Prayer in C	Birdy	Wings	Nico & Vinz	Am I Wrong
12	Meghan Trainor	All about that Bass	Milky Chance	Stolen Dance	Milky Chance	Stolen Dance
13	Sia	Chandelier	Faul/Wad Ad/pnau	Changes	Yandell/Daddy Y.	Moviendo Caderas
14	Birdy	Wings	Jason Derulo	Trumpets	Enrique Iglesias	Noche y de dia
15	Mr Probz	Waves	Sia	Chandelier	One Republic	Counting Stars
16	Coldplay	A Sky full of stars	Imagine Dragons	Demons	Sia	Chandelier
17	Marc Anthony	Vivir mi vida	Katy Perry	Dark Horse	Avicii	Hey Brother
18	Clean Bandit	Rather Be	David Bisbal	Diez mil maneras	Mr Probz	Waves
19	Pibull	Timber	Jason Derulo	Talk Dirty	David Bisbal	Diez mil maneras
20	Shakira/Rihanna	Can´t remember	Miley Cyrus	Wrecking Ball	Shakira/Rihanna	Can´t remember
21	Pablo Alborán	Por fin	Ellie Goulding	Burn	Jason Derulo	Talk Dirty
22	M. Jackson/ Timberlake	Love Never …	Robin Schulz	Prayer in C	Coldplay	A Sky full of stars
23	Juan Magan	Si no te quisiera	Avicii	Wake Me Up	Jason Derulo	Trumpets
24	Dvicio	Paraiso	Magici	Rude	Imagine Dragons	Demons
25	R. Madrid Feat	Hala Madrid	Calvin Harris	Summer	Faul/Wad Ad/pnau	Changes
26	Auryn	Puppeteer	Meghan Trainor	All about the bass	Magici	Rude
27	Calvin Harris	Summer	Dvicio	Paraiso	A. Grande /I. Azaleea	Problem
28	Romeo Santos	Propuesta ind.	Mr Probz	Waves	Robin Schulz	Prayer in C
29	Martin Garrix	Animals	Lorde	Royal	Maluma/Eli Palacios	La temperatura
30	One direction	Story of my Life	Bruno Mars	Locked Our of.	David Guetta	Bad
31	One Republic	Counting Stars	Katy Perry	Loar	Prince Royse	Darte un Beso
32	David Guetta	Dangerous	Luis Fonsi	Corazón en la M.	Meghan Trainor	All about the bass
33	Klingande	Jubel	Pharrel Williams	Happy	Imagine Dragons	Radioactive
34	Shakira	Boig Per Tu	Passenger	Let Her Go	Marc Anthony	Vivir mi vida
35	Passenger	Let Her Go	Shakira	La La La	Shakira	La La La
36	Leiva	Ter. cruel	Malu	Me Fui	Avicii	Wake Me Up
37	Magici	Rude	Imagine Dragons	Radioactive	K-anarias	La conoci bailando
38	David Guetta	Lovers on the Sun	Macklemore & R.L.	Ray Dalton	Passenger	Let Her Go
39	Pitbull	We are one	Martin Garrix	Animals	Jason Derulo	Wiggle
40	David Guetta	Shot Me Down	Christina Perri	Human	Maroon5	Maps
41	Katy Perry	Dark Horse	Taylor Swift	Shake It Off	Jose de Rico	Soltera
42	Taylor Swift	Shake It Off	Antonio Orozco	Llegará	Dani Martin	Emocional
43	Jason Derulo	Trumpets	David Bisbal	No Amanece	Enrique Iglesias	Loco
44	Ina/J. Balvin	Cola Song	Clean Bandit	Rather Be	Martin Garrix	Animals
45	Miley Cyrus	Wrecking Ball	Antonio Orozco	Temblando	Coldplay	Magic
46	Avicii	Wake Me Up	Bruno Mars	Young Girl	Leiva	Ter. cruel
47	Chayanne	Humanos a Marte	Maldita Nerea	Mira Dentro	Juan Magan	Bandera al viento
48	Enrique Iglesias	Noche y de dia	Wisin	Adrenalina	Dvicio	Paraiso
49	Imagine Dragons	Demons	Malú	Deshazte de Mi	Macklemore & R.L.	Ray Dalton
50	Dani Martin	Emocional	Matthew Coma	Wasted	Ariana Grande	Break Free

Table 2: List of most listened to songs in Spain in 2014 (Source: Promusicae 2015).

The physical data came from the GFK panel, in addition to the following outlets: Amazon, Buongiorno, Gran Vía Musical, Google Play, iTunes, Jetmultimedia, Media Markt online, Movistar, Orange, Vodafone, Nokia, Zune and 7Digital y Zune. The songs and artists in the second column represent the most listened to on the streaming format. The data came from the following players: Deezer, Spotify, Xbox Music and Napster. Finally, the data for the most listened to songs on the radio came from audience surveys carried out by the radio companies themselves. The information obtained from these three supports belongs to Promusicae and they are the most objective data to be found in Spain.

The songs and artists, which appear in all three columns, are in bold in Table 2. Of the 50 songs, there are 27, which appear in all 3 media and which confirms the initial hypothesis. It is also worth noting that the labels of the 50 songs belong to the multinational companies of the sector and that, despite the considerable drop in the music market, there is an even greater concentration of the business than in previous years.

These lists indicate that music consumption tends to be the same within the same country, in both physical and online markets, but tends to differ between countries, even within the same listening support category. This indicates that the most highly disseminated music within the territory of each country is the music offering by the large record mediators companies, and it will have a greater level of dissemination via that country's digital networks, even though the networks are global and are firmly anchored to the cultural consumption of a specific socio-cultural, economic and linguistic territory. Moreover, the Internet also appears to reinforce the ancient socialising role of music (Hesmondhalgh 2013b).

It is important to bear in mind the symbiosis between digital networks, the mass media and the social logic of musical consumption. Music products may be produced by large recording companies that control the commercial music markets and the means of dissemination, and these successful products may also be successful in terms of online music consumption of music. However, in some cases, music products that achieve success independently on social networks may be recognised by

the recording industry and re-launched as hits in the traditional music markets.

Very complex and overlapping commercial and social logic is at work here. On the one hand, we have the traditional commercial logic of the recording industry that aims for large-scale sales of the products and attempts to control those, circulating successfully through the digital social networks even when they are consumed for free on the Internet. On the other hand, we have viral contagion logics underpinned by habits of imitation and repetition which, therefore, promote the dissemination of what is already circulating on the Internet for free and is later replicated by other cultural industry sectors (e.g. audio-visual) and finally jumps to the mass media (Calvi 2010).

All of the above is taking place within the context of a cultural globalisation broadened by the new digital social networks, within which there is a convergence of multiple cultural expressions from all around the world along with convergence of the means of communication towards the same dissemination platforms. This means the segmentations in music consumption appear to be the same as in the socio-cultural arena. As a result, the networks tend to replicate the same cultural consumption structure found in traditional cultural markets.

5   Conclusion

Never before in history has such a large and diverse amount of music been available as on the digital social networks, with consequences that are yet-to-be analysed. There are musical products to satisfy all tastes, but the problem is still that there is not an appetite for all musical products. In other words, consumption is concentrated in mass-market musical products that are produced, precisely, to satisfy what are considered to be "mainstream musical tastes".

On the Internet listeners are also influenced by peer-to-peer comments and recommendations by people with the same musical tastes and affinities, an amplified form of word-of-mouth communication. Yet this trend strengthens the social logic of imitation and repetition, rein-

forcing even further the gregarious behaviour of cultural consumption. What is most recommended is what is most listened to which at the same time, is also what is most recommended, creating an endless circle. As a result, people are listening to even more of the same products, already mainstream, in a specific socio-cultural territory. This is the music that is produced and distributed by the large recording companies and distributed via mass means of communication.

The quantitative increase in music on the Internet does not necessarily entail a qualitative increase in listening. In any case, the long and laborious process of listening and cultivation of musical tastes requires the same effort as in earlier eras. From the creative standpoint the situation has not changed a great deal either as musicians need the same long time and effort to learn and prepare as in the era of record players and radio. From the production standpoint, there is the question of whether, in the current post-recording era of high technology mediation, it is possible to develop innovations in musical products such as those which took place in the heyday of the large recording groups and their hefty production budgets.

High technology can distribute lowbrow culture, while highbrow culture can survive with a low technological level and, in fact, the majority of art was produced under such circumstances (Williams, 1995). The support through which social mediation is carried out (the means of communication) does not determine the quality of the contents transmitted. It can be observed that, even though today every type of music is accessible from almost every part of the world, the most listened to music on digital networks tend to be that which is the most simple, commercial, and easiest to produce: i.e. classified within the broad genre called pop-rock.

While music and the recording industry, plus the more complex media-broadcasting-radio sectors, have played a key role in the dissemination of music, the format of their economy is not new: depending primarily on live creation, performances and listening. Today, in the midst of the emergence of the digital world, the live music experience seems to be resurging with increased strength.

Moreover, on the Internet two opposite and sometimes also complementary logics co-exist: on the one hand, the logic of distribution, reproduction and free access to cultural products; and, on the other hand, the logic of merchandising and marketing of the same products. This situation, as in the case with other cultural products, creates significant social gaps.

In short, music consumption in Spain is very diverse and varied, underpinned by the expansion of the Internet and trends in reproduction devices. Nevertheless, mainstream music consumption is reflected in commercial music products, the production of recording companies, and mass communication. These firms remain the main mediators and thought leaders of mainstream musical tastes and consumption. In each country, the most listened to and consumed music outside of the Internet is basically the same as that which is most listened to and consumed online.

New digital arenas are mainly amplifying what already exists outside of them. The Internet tends to reflect what is already occurring in the social world: the music which is most widely circulated and consumed in traditional markets is the same as that which is most circulated and consumed on commercial online platforms. Nevertheless, the Internet reveals a heterogeneous and eclectic range of cultural consumption habits that are as diverse and complex as society itself and the shape that its future development might take is yet to be seen.

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The evolution of music blogs: From a fan's passion to a promotional outlet

Beatrice Jetto[9]

Abstract
As music blogs have recently become an essential outlet for music and artist's pro-motion, this article looks at their evolution from simple fans' personal diaries to key collaborators of the music industry. Record labels went from suing blogs for digital copyright infringements to collaborating with them for the promotion of their art-ists. In particular, four different phases will be identified, each one characterised by particular blogging practices. It will be argued that the increasing influence of the blogosphere and the music industry on blog content strategies can be considered seminal factors in the evolution of music blogs. The emergence of new dynamics in blogging approaches may lead to a need to redefine what a music blog is. It also requires finding new theoretical frameworks to help analyse the newest version of a music blog.

Keywords: Music blogs, music industry, music scenes, music blogosphere, music blogs evolution

1 Introduction

In 2005 Gerd Leonhard, the tech sector's self-described media futurist, argued that music blogs would use their popularity and influence to build empires. The people running them would be those sharp, tuned-in, hyper-networked and resourceful BlogJs formerly known as bloggers (Leonhard 2005: 21). Today it is easy to regard Leonard's vision on the future of music blogs as not far from reality as their influence in shaping music taste has grown exponentially. They have been defined the new gatekeepers of taste (Jennings 2007) and marketers have realised their crucial position as tools for spreading their messages or advertising their products (O'Donnell & McClung 2008). However, the first music blogs to

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appear back in 2002 were just music fans looking for a space to express their passion for music.

This article will argue that music blogs went through a transition from a pure amateur space, mainly focused on reflecting the subjective taste of the author and adopting an archetypal fans approach, to being more professional, subsumed, to a certain extent, to the dynamics of the music blogosphere and the music industry.

As music blogs are primarily written by music fans, they started to develop a reputation for being a credible source of information. Their reputation for being online personae as opposed to the detached objectivity of traditional journalism, gained them greater credibility than the traditional media (Carlson 2007). This reputation garnered them increased popularity across fans communities to the point that, eventually, the music industry noticed their potential as promotional outlets (Bruno 2006). Additionally, the connected nature of music blogs through links and comments made them part of a bigger space: the music blogosphere.

2   Research methodology and data collection

The analysis centres primarily on an ethnographic study of Australian indie music blogs and, to a degree, of the music blogosphere at the broader level. Ethnography describes particular cultural practices, grounded in data obtained through fieldwork and situated in conversation with a broader theoretical framework (Boyd 2008: 46). Ethnography makes possible the analysis of the complexity of culturally driven practices and norms and produces a topological map of a particular set of cultural practices (ibid: 47). As a methodology for investigating the relationship between music blogs and the music industry, ethnography provides a mechanism for determining the norms and processes that inform the ways blogs select content as well as the values and routines that shape their practices.

The focus of this paper is predominantly on Australian indie music blogs. Choosing to concentrate a part of the analysis on Australian music

blogs was intentional; restricting the boundaries of observation to a particular music scene as the music blogosphere is too large and diverse for a consistent and homogeneous analysis. The data, consistent with Liav Sade-Beck's (2004) integrated ethnography, came from a variety of sources and were collected over an extended period of time. Liav Sade-Beck (2004) provides a good framework for developing an integrated ethnography. Online postings, interviews, discussions in forums, online and offline press were all taken into considerations when examining how music blogs' changed their practices over time. Specifically, ethnographic data collection took place over a period of two and a half years, beginning in March 2009. The body of data that informed such analysis consists of digital content captured online, semi-structured in-person interviews along with online and offline press content analysis[10].

From May 2009 to April 2010, 30 semi-structured interviews (Bogdan & Taylor 1975) were conducted[11]: 18 with Australian music blogs, three with PR companies, two with independent record labels, one with a major record label, and four with Australian artists[12]. Content analysis

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[10] Online observations were carried out for 30 months, spending between 10–20 hours per week online. Overall more than 1,000 hours were spent online observing music blogs. Between 10–15 music blogs profiles were scanned every day during the first six months, with the aim of grasping a general sense of music blogs content. The intent was to get a general sense of what type of content blogs were featuring, to establish whether it was possible to identify consistency across posts, and what type of interaction was occurring in the blog and, more broadly, to try to find some common denominators across blogs.

[11] The sample for the 18 semi-structured interviews with bloggers was chosen to ensure a representation of a range of cultural settings. Precisely, 10 interviewees were from Sydney, 4 from Melbourne, 2 from Brisbane and the remaining 2 from rural areas. The recruitment was done using a combination of networks of personal contacts and emails introducing the research and the researcher.
The 85 percent of the interviewed bloggers was males and the remaining 15 percent females. The majority of the bloggers was aged between 25 and 35 years old. Only four of them were younger than 24 and five older than 35. They were all English native speakers, coming from a mid-high socioeconomic background.
Four of them were still studying and university and the remaining 14, they all had tertiary education, working in professional roles. However, only three of them worked in the music industry and only one as a journalist. Two of them considered themselves as musicians, 3 had their own radio show consistent with the content covered on their blog and one involved in radio programming.

[12] The sample was chosen to ensure representation of a range of cultural settings. In Australia, interviewees were from Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane, as well as from rural areas. The recruit-

of coverage of music blogs in the press usefully complemented the sub-jects' points of view, either confirming or invalidating the set of social and cultural practices revealed in the interviews.

3   Music bloggers as music fans: the amateur phase

Music blogs first emerged from a passionate community of music lovers posting MP3 files, usually from non-mainstream artists, accompanied by personal reviews of songs, information about the artists, and any other personal input that the author decided to include (Wodtke 2008: 8). As such, the personal touch of music blogs made them comparable to mu-sical diaries (ibid: 9). The music blog format started to emerge by 2003; a band or song is introduced with a paragraph describing the music fol-lowed by a link to download the MP3 from the artist (O'Donnell & McClung 2008).

A number of bloggers soon started to include the actual MP3 file of the song in their posts, which readers could download and listen to (Fox 2008). Avid consumers of music, music bloggers started writing because their passion for music pushed them to communicate to other people. According to Leung (2009), blogs are motivated by gratification, psycho-logical empowerment and a yearning to be a part of social group.

According to Eric Harvey, *"music blogs can be seen as indicative of a new agency possessed by music fans, and the desire of many to make their presence known to other fans"* (2005). As the Australian blogger Lee explains (2009): "*I guess the first music bloggers were just fans taken to the next level where they like someone so much that they want to write about it and let the people know about*".

Sean started his blog 'A Reminder' in October 2005 and he was one of the first music bloggers of the Australian music scene. He emphasises how bloggers have an urge for self-expression and communication with their peers:

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ment was done using a combination of networks of personal connections and emails introducing the research and the researcher. The formal in-person interviews were semi-structured and lasted 1–3 hours.

"All the bloggers that I personally know in Sydney are fans of the music and they started the blog because of that ... they wanted somehow to express themselves. I guess there is not much difference between a fan and a blogger. I am a music fan before a blogger and I am a blogger just because it happened to be a big music fans".

The first music blogs appearing in the Australian scene had a typical amateur approach rooted primarily in aesthetics and taste rather than in commercialism. Their discursive position as fans, presumably similar to their readers, but also as speakers from a position of expertise and authority, differentiated them from other fans. Comments, opinions and judgments were all central constituents of the information that could be found in music blogs, often accompanied by MP3s, videos, photos. Wayne from the blog 'Ocean Never Listen' says (2009):

"I guess what I mainly write about are shows I go to and review CDs I like and just give out any general music news that interests me. Anything other than just write about what I love. I post songs, MP3s when I can which, you know, obviously helps any readers to listen to it".

In this phase, one of the most frequent types of posts was the blogger revealing the releases they have been listening to with a critical comment accompanied by the MP3 file of the song to be listened to or downloaded by the reader.

One of the first roles embraced by music blogs was also as referral sites, pointing readers to other interesting music sites and blogs. For example, Sean says:

"I spend a lot of time reading other blogs, my RSS feed is huge ... when I find some interesting content, I like to make a post about it for my readers. But I don't like to just post a link, I like to add my personal commentary on it".

What is posted on the blog lies somewhere between the opinion making of music critics and journalists and the expertise of music fans. Fans as writers and professional writers as fans are very similar. Fans are meaning-makers of popular music and their knowledge, on the contrary

of professionals, comes from autodidactic enthusiasm (Atton 2009: 61). For Dan (2009), from the Sydney blog 'The Boudist'*, the* position of blogs lies between a music fan and a music critic:

"A music blog, if it is done well, is about one person's passion, one person's personality, it's kind of an opinion point of view paper. After reading it for a while you get to know that person personality and [their] likes and dislikes. And so you read it especially because you want to know what that person thinks about something. While fans is just completely bashing about absolutely everything and posting pictures about the bands they love, etc. A blogger is probably more considered and critical".

Blogs generally express their opinions based on knowledge acquired through a careful listening and consumption of music. This autodidactic display of expertise gives blogs a type of authority different to that of the traditional music critics. Their authority is displayed from personal experience of music. Music critics, on the other hand, tend to present their opinions not as personal views but more as historical and cultural claims about the artists and their body of work (Atton 2009). The fact that music blogs are inherently positive further substantiates their origin as an expression of fan culture. Among first generation bloggers, many said they rarely feature music they don't like and their choices are primarily based on their personal taste. Since taste is something, which revolves around a multitude of elements, often not related at all with the music itself, bloggers' discussions are generally based more on a personal and subjective connection, which then prompts the desire to create a post about it. In fact, Frith (1981: 185) argues that, historically, the meaning of music has always been articulated more clearly by fans and that the roots of rock journalism are in non-professional projects, following an ideology based on authenticity and originality. Accordingly, it can be argued that music blog ideology is not only built around values of integrity and opposition to the mainstream, but also originates from fans' desires to express their views and an urge to communicate them to other like-minded fans.

There is good reason for music blogs to remain distinct from main-stream culture, such as record labels and the traditional music press, in order to promote those artists who are not yet famous and who can afford very little promotion through mainstream channels (Wodtke 2008: 38). The writing comes from a fan's compulsion to express their opinion and curatorial subjectivity that are the main identifying features of the amateur phase. In this phase, music blogs not only started to become an essential resource of information for fans, but also for emerging artists struggling to secure coverage on radio or in the press. Emerging artists that were too small to get radio airplay or press coverage were often written about in blogs, triggering the interest of journalists and radio DJs. Often journalists and radio DJs are among the "lurkers" on some blogs to such a degree that, in certain circumstances, they have been accused of plagiarising blogs' content (Hardy 2008).

4   The diversification phase: music blogs as subcultural media

As music bloggers reputation as a trusted source for non-mainstream music information spread, they gradually began to become a major communication platform for fans to interact with each other and share information (Hodkinson 2006; Baym 2007). During this second phase their role as the major information platform for music scenes and fans communities consolidated. Getting news from an independent source rather from than a corporate-sponsored one sat well with the whole ideal of independent music and indie music scenes (Fonarow 2006). Most indie fans rejected the mainstream and blogs were thought to possess street credibility. In this phase blogs were primarily conceived as anti-corporate underground media. As Jenkins points out: "Many bloggers explicitly define themselves in opposition to mainstream media and what they see as its corporately controlled content (ibid: 220).

During this phase music blogs focused on trying to establish themselves within the music scenes through very niche music knowledge and taste. Thornton (1995: 186) considers knowledge about obscure music

as a form of subcultural capital because is the kind of information that can't be acquired from mainstream media. Thornton (1996: 11–12) states that:

"Subcultural capital can be objectified or embodied. Just as books and paintings display cultural capital in the family home, so subcultural capital is objectified in the form of fashionable haircut and well-assembled record collections … Just as cultural capital is personified in good manners and urbane conversations, so subcultural capital is embodied in the form of being 'in the known', using (but not over-using) current slang and looking as you were born to perform the latest dance styles".

According to Thornton, subcultural capital is built up through style and consumption, through taste in music together with clothes, haircuts and so on. With reference to club cultures, Thornton describes how people owning subcultural capital (like DJs, club owners, music journalists) often retain a lot of respect not only because they possess a high level of it, but also because they have a role in defining it and creating it. For example, Lee says:

"I do a show on FBI and it's called Local Fidelity and it's all Australian music and a lot of the bands they only have demos and they send it to FBI and I was coming across a lot of really great bands but because they were so small you don't really get to read about them in Rolling Stone or anything, they're not big enough for big music magazines. So I wanted to have something that looked at these smaller bands".

Lee is trying to gain subcultural capital by featuring Australian artists, which are quite obscure, as they are not yet signed and are rarely discussed in other music outlets. Being on track with the emerging underground local acts, being active participants in the local scene, frequently attending gigs and writing about obscure acts long before they get signed, are all practices that sustain blogs in building subcultural capital. Another example is Cameron from '*Before Hollywood,*' a Brisbane based blog that focuses on the Brisbane music scene, featuring local acts only:

"A friend of mine from Brisbane raised the idea of starting a blog about the local bands, the local Brisbane music scene. The focus was on purely Brisbane music. We don't worry too much about writing about the bands that we see as not really needing our support anymore. Our focus is definitely on the new and the more unrecognised acts".

Cameron tries to accrue subcultural capital by featuring music, which belongs firmly to particular niches and is localised in opposition to other blogs, which might only feature more popular or international music. Essentially, music bloggers' subcultural capital is communicated through the music they choose to post: the more obscure, localised, new, and alternative the posted artists are, the more likely the blogger is to gain credibility. The indie community, which also includes other music blogs, is more likely to judge and classify bloggers by which bands and artists are featured and written about than any other criterion. In this way, the subcultural capital becomes a means of distinction articulated through unique and specialised knowledge. Wodtke (2008) argues that those in possession of subcultural capital are able to set the parameters of what is "cool" in the indie scene and thereby be credited with subcultural status. As Ned (2009) from 'Electrorash', a well-established Australian blog, believes:

"Certain blogs have got an audience of people who come back there to regularly check out, they like that style of music that's coming out of the blog or that voice that's coming out of it and they'll come back regularly to see that and find out what these people are talking about. And that includes people in the industry, managers, record labels; it also includes advertising people. I wouldn't say we've really broken anyone, we've been the first to post stuff about many artists that after got signed by a label".

In this phase, therefore, the subcultural capital of music blogs is primarily expressed through the music they feature. When music blogs gain the status of sub-cultural insiders within a music scene, other scene members will automatically trust them. Artists and music featured on their sites will gain a sort of subcultural credibility, making it easier for

people to like the artist and accept their music. For example, among Sydney bloggers there are a few, such as 'Polaroids of Androids', 'Oceans Never Listen', and 'Who the Hell', which gained a reputation among other bloggers for being credible blogs and they became the kind of 'place-to-go' to find out what is happening at a local level. As Sean (2009) says:

"So, I read everything that Wayne writes, everything Johnny writes. I read every word those people write even if it's about a band I don't like. If 'Electrorash' writes about a band I don't know I might look at it quickly and then say no I'm not going to read anymore, but if Wayne writes about a band I don't like I will still going to read it because just because I know him and so I might be able to convince me to check this band out".

This purpose of music blogs points to a new type of authority quite different to that of music journalism, whose authority comes from their institutionalised position of credibility (Carlson 2007). Music blogs' authority comes from their subjectivity and their sub-cultural status. 'Who the Hell', for example, is considered to be one of the most influential blogs in Australia because, over the years, it built its subcultural capital by being one of the few blogs focusing only on Australian music. As Lee (2009) says:

"I read 'Who the Hell' more because I feel like I have to because all their content is Australian. Because I don't love everything that's in that blog, in fact I read it less to find out about music I like, more to know what people are talking about. I guess that's the difference between a blog you read for fun and a blog you feel you need to read".

The sociological effect of the work of these blogs, which emerged during the second phase, was the creation of a select crowd of Internet savvy music consumers in touch with the new trends and proudly aligned with an indie ideology and values. The idea of good music being an exclusive privilege for the few who did not conform to the dominant taste of the mass that feeds the charts was predominant in this phase. As Crossfield (2010) argues:

"Some of the first music blogs on the scene were known as MP3 blogs. Sites like 'Fluxblog', 'Stereogum', and 'Buzzgrinder', offered the music geek a chance to hear music outside of the TRL mainstream. Since its beginning the sites have offered a way for those interested in indie rock a way to hear new up and coming artists".

As Wodtke (2008: 14) argues, bloggers came to fill an important gap between the music industry and what was happening in the under-ground circuit, especially at a local or genre-based level, particularly considering the shifts in music journalism that made it more impotent and less relevant socially and politically. While publications such as 'Rolling Stone' were taking broader approaches to music coverage, and music reviews were becoming more and more like consumer guides, music blogs, like 'Argued by Baym', were very niche-oriented, focusing on specific music-genres and connecting with music communities (2007). In doing so, music blogs changed the politics of record labels and contributed to the acknowledgement of music blogs as serving a crucial role as cultural intermediaries for the audience.

5   The promotional phase: music blogs and the music blogosphere

This promotional phase sees the establishment of music blog aggregators as a new category of website that aggregates MP3 blogs' posts into the same platform. They compile lists of all the files being hosted or linked to on hundreds of different MP3 blogs (Goldstone 2006). Users can look for an artist they desire to hear and the site will take them to a blog covering the artist they are looking for. MP3 blog aggregators have introduced a search function for music that would not have been available with just the disparate blogs themselves (Wodtke 2008: 6). One of the most popular music blog aggregator is considered to be 'The Hype Machine' (ibid: 114).

Through its organisational and selective functions, aggregators have given to music blogs more power as a collective entity than if they existed as scattered opinions across cyberspace. Wodtke (2008: 25) explains

how MP3 blog aggregators accomplish an editorial role in helping read-
ers to find and read blogs. The importance of aggregators is further con-
firmed by the fact that many blogs aspire to be included on them and in
their most popular blog lists (ibid: 24). Being included on aggregators
started to become an important practice for blogs to promote them-
selves and gain validation in the music blogosphere.

The music blogosphere is composed of all the music blogs and the
interconnections they have with each other. Music bloggers perceive the
music blogosphere as a virtual environment where they all share the
same values and where, as in other music scenes, social hierarchies
based on status exist. Status in the music blogosphere can be estab-
lished across different dimensions. In broad terms, the blogs with the
highest status are those considered to be most worth reading. The music
blogosphere, like other blogospheres, is dominated by A-List blogs, a
small minority with a large influence on the smaller blogs that comprise
the vast majority (Adamic & Glance 2005). The A-List usually includes
early starters, blogs who show persistence and, broadly speaking, those
blogs with very high numbers of readers and links (Mortensen & Walker
2003). This happened because *the number of sites has been growing
exponentially since the inception of The World Wide Web, which means
that there are many more young sites than older ones"* (Huberman 2002:
5). For example, in the Australian music blogosphere, 'Who the Hell', 'A
Reminder' and 'Oceans Never Listen' are considered to be the A-List
group because of their considerably higher number of incoming links.
They were also among the first music blogs to appear on the Australian
scene. The prominence of these sites was confirmed during the inter-
views with Australian bloggers, as many of them mentioned 'Who the
Hell' and 'A Reminder' among the most influential blogs on the local
scene.

In fact, because network forces favour early entrants through link-
ing patterns, older blogs have more opportunities to acquire links. This
highly unequal distribution of links in the blogosphere constitutes a
"power law" distribution model (Shirky 2003), which arises from a pro-
cess called preferential attachment where blogs with higher numbers of

links are more likely to receive new links than less connected ones (Barabási 2002). Shirky used such a framework to argue that in the blogosphere, the "rich get richer", implying that the best positions in the network are reserved for those bloggers with a longer history. Hence, the hierarchical structure of the blogosphere gives A-List blogs a position of authority, not necessarily through quality content, but because of their links and early presence in the field (Marlow 2004). Marlow (2005) argues that links are so important to blog social hierarchies that they have been defined as the currency of the blogosphere and those with a high number of links tend to have higher status. Thus, linking practices, which normally lead to a larger audience, create a hierarchical structure led by the A-List followed by the thousands of smaller blogs.

Because the group of A-List blogs is relatively small, it has an increased importance in terms of defining what matters, and what they consider important becomes the agenda. A-List blogs earned their status over a number of years, building up trust and respect together with readership and links.

Despite their genuine motives for expressing unique taste or promoting niche artists, music blogs would still like to build up some sort of reputation as well as a following. It can be argued that the majority of blogs would prefer to gain an audience as well as esteem from their peers. In general, being linked by other bloggers is seen as a sign of reputation and respect. Nonetheless, as previously argued, overcoming the linking dynamics of social networks can be very difficult. One way for blogs to defeat such a dynamic is to link to other blogs, especially the more established ones, in the hope that the target site will notice them, visit them, and link back to them (Mead, 2000). According to Eric Harvey (2006):

"It's probably not a surprise that music bloggers are the biggest commentators on other music blogs. Comment boards and link lists are the most prominent self-promotional, self-sustaining and provincial aspects of the network of music blogs."

Another practice used by bloggers to increase readership is trying to be the first one to post the newest content available, as it might lead to increased readership and linking. New music, for example, especially if it is from artists already established in the blogosphere, is considered to be content worth of attention.

Because the Internet is such an immediate medium, and because the genre of blogging, with its posts stamped in real time, is a genre based on immediacy, music blogs can often be affected by the need to compete with other music blogs in the discovery of new music (Wodtke 2008: 65). The reality is that the act of writing about music in the music blogosphere is greatly affected by the environment of cyberspace immediacy and this hyper-immediacy results in the constant need to stay as current and forward thinking as possible. Being the first to post about a new song or artist will make a blogger's popularity increase very quickly. Aggregators and their practice of listing only the first sites to post a specific track, amplify this need, reinforcing a culture of "must post first" in order to get the traffic, often at the expense of content quality. Being able to post fresh content before others is seen as a faster way to gain readership. The enormous importance given to publishing new content is becoming a crucial aspect of music blog practices as it forces blogs to rely on the music industry to obtain new information. As Matthew Perpetua commented in a recent interview (Smith 2009):

"A lot of it comes back to exclusivity—what can you post that other people are not? That's not just a question of obscurity from the past; the other model is to create relationships that will allow you to have exclusive, new content."

An additional tactic for music blogs to gain fast readership, other than new content, is by blogging about music or bands, which are already receiving attention in the music blogosphere. The fact that aggregators place disparate posts into a more collective context generates a sense of hype around the artists and bands that most bloggers post about. Consequently, the hyper immediacy of the blogosphere often pushes bloggers to become popular by blogging about what is already

popular. Smaller blogs are likely to pick up information generated on A-List blogs and, through the hype generated by aggregators, spread them into the blogosphere. According to Cameron (2009), from the Brisbane blog 'Before Hollywood':

"I guess there's a bit of a domino effect in that if one blog writes about something, especially if it's one of the more influential blogs, then the rest of the blogs say "okay well if I am to be seen as a legitimate source of information then I should probably think about writing about this band too."

This practice can be explained as a phenomenon of social contagion due to normative pressure (Coleman, Katz & Menzel 1966). This can be explained as the discomfort felt, when peers have adopted an approach one feels obliged to consider (Kaya et al. 2010). According to Burt (1987), the degree of pressure relates to the intensity of socialisation of the parties involved. Recognising this type of influence is important for understanding music blogs practices. It can be argued that a blog's musical preferences can be influenced by what other blogs like, especially if they feel a normative pressure toward them. There is also another type of social contagion emerging from competition among persons, called the structural equivalence model (Burt 1987: 1291):

"This model applies more generally to the competition of people merely using one another to evaluate their relative adequacy … The more similar ego's and alter's relation with other persons are – that is, the more that alter could substitute for ego in ego's role relations, and so the more likely it is that ego will quickly adopt any innovation perceived to make alter more attractive as the object or source of relations."

In relation to blogs dedicated to the same music genre or which belong to the same indie scene, Cameron (2009) states:

"I think there's definitely an element of trying to keep up appearances and keep up the idea that your particular blog is just as good as the other blogs and whatever and trying to be, not missing out on a band

that takes off, and, you know "okay that band's taken off now and we missed the boat, everyone else wrote about them and we didn't."

This quote clearly confirms that competitive concerns do occur among bloggers. The collective hype generated by social contagion might have some side effects on the supposed curatorial purpose of music blogs. Some of them might actually feel that they have to feature a particular artist or music because others are doing it. Preferring what catches public attention over what is considered important usually helps the blogger to reach the maximum audience. Carles (2008), author of the blog Hipster Runoff, cynically articulates the problem:

*"All bloggers get the same emails from the same marketing companies who are getting paid to let me know about crappy new indie bands. I think the difficult part about 'creating a good blog' is a blogger being able to ask himself 'Do I **really** care about this band/newsbit/mp3 or do I feel pressure to blog about it because I think it's what people want to hear about? You can call this theory the 'Popular Artists on HypeMachine' theory. When entry-level bloggers see that 'a lot of people are downloading Radiohead, they think that their blog becomes a more valuable resource if they re-blog a popular song to increase their traffic. At the same time, entry-level alts see that Radiohead is #1 and feel like 'I am supposed to appreciate this band/music because a lot of other people are appreciating it."*

This emerging practice, as the above shows, has become particularly prevalent among new blogs, which, instead of following their personal taste, tend to feature artists that are already hyped on the blogosphere. This is an efficient tactic to remain relevant and quickly gain popularity with the audience. Therefore, blogs who want to increase their popularity in the music blogosphere will tend to feature music they believe will promote their blogs in the most effective way. The purpose of self-promotion is further confirmed by the desire of some blogs to monitor site traffic, to be linked to other blogs, to be included in major aggregators and then to be popular on these aggregators. Sean Michaels (2009), founder of the music blog 'Said the Gramophone', remarked:

"I had hopes for music blogs – Finnish hip-hop fans, explaining how their favourite music makes them feel; Havana jazz blogs, describing their Friday night out; Japanese avant-gardists, writing about new noises. That really, really, really hasn't materialised. Instead it's hundreds of bloggers writing the same sort of things about the same sort of songs. This tendency of blogs to imitate other blogs causes saturation and over-repetition of stories, which have become a common feature in the music blogosphere."

The above quote shows the emergence, during this phase, of blogs without any particular music taste or musical knowledge, replicating the taste of more influential blogs and basing their agenda on which artists are popular at a particular point in time. Stuart (2009), from 'New Weird Australia', explains how Australian bloggers often try to gain cultural cachet by replicating what is happening overseas while, he asserts, in order to gain status overseas, music blogs should not replicate what is on other overseas blogs. He criticises Australian bloggers who ignore Australian music:

"There are still Australian blogs talking about Grizzly Bear and still doing what the Americans are doing, what the English are doing. Hey guys, watch what's in your backyard, there are bands as good if not better that those bands and the world he's not used to hear them. If we don't blog about it, no one else is going to find bands playing at warehouses in Marrickville. We do have a responsibility because if we don't blog about it none of the Americans are going to blog about it, they are never going to find their work."

Stuart seems to suggest a sort of provincialism among Australian bloggers, which emulate more established American or English blogs. According to Stuart, the excessive attention given to certain artists or music phenomena can lead to the alienation of the blogger from local production. Bloggers might, in fact, experience a struggle between the *"motives of altruistic promotion of music that the mainstream media ignores"* and *"the reality that MP3 bloggers are often blogging to promote themselves and gain validation"* (Wodtke 2008: 80). The central

idea of music blogs to promote music that they truly love, often clashes with the fact that many want more traffic to their blog; so they post what they believe will most effectively popularise their blogs. Often music blogs might only post hyped artists occasionally, simply to boost the traffic of their blogs through new readers that might navigate to their blogs to download popular MP3s. They hope that a portion of that audience will keep reading the blog and become regular readers. 'Squashed' (2006), a member of the Elbows forum, says:

"After a spike one should be able to retain 20–25 percent of the spike. If after repeated spikes the number keeps dropping back that means the blog design/content needs retooling."

Aiming at "spikes" is frequently legitimised by claiming that more readers are only desired in order to improve awareness of bands that do not get enough attention. The above analysis shows how during the promotional phase a divide in the music blogosphere emerged between those blogs mainly concerned with popularity and those concerned with the quality and uniqueness of the content. While the latter group will aim to achieve subcultural status through their cultural capital, the former will aim to achieve popularity status through their social capital (Bourdieu 1973). Drawing on Bourdieu's definition (1973), social capital comes, not from what one knows or owns, but from whom one knows. Therefore, during the last phase music blogs started to see social capital, especially in relation to their connection to the music industry, as a way to gain reputation.

6.   The professional phase: Music blogs as collaborators of the music industry

Until this point it has been argued that blogs reached an influential position of authority as subcultural media. Because of their increasingly influential role, the music industry, especially independent labels, began to realise their importance as promotional outlets (Jetto 2014). Therefore, the professional phase is characterised by the music industry ac-

tively seeking the collaboration of music blogs for the promotion of their artists. It seems generally agreed that music blogs, although only read by a very small part of the music market, have a positive influence on fans' preferences. Of crucial importance here is the idea that the readers of music blogs are a small, but culturally important and influential group or people (Jennings 2007). Jennings calls music blogs: savants, music experts, and musically literate opinion leaders who occupy an important and persuasive sphere between music and the wider public. They are people that others turn to for advice on record purchases. Nonetheless, the important role that some of the more established music blogs have played in the discovery of new talent, which eventually get signed to record companies, has contributed to their relevance as intermediaries. This kind of indirect artist promotion made the music industry recognise their importance in promoting new music and convinced record companies and others to include music blogs in their promotional strategies. This is when a further shift in their practices began.

A substantial part of the music blogosphere has embraced such collaborations by featuring certain artists on their blogs (Jetto 2014). In exchange, labels and PR companies provide music blogs with free supplies of the latest music and promotional material. Such emerging practices have decreased the independence of bloggers to some degree, as bloggers have started to rely more and more on the music industry for access to information. This interest of the music industry in music blogs was a determining factor in their evolution from fan-based personal outlet toward a more professional outlet centred on the ideas of becoming popular and collaborating with the commercial interests of the industry. The fact that the music industry, which prosecuted thousands of file sharers for copyright infringements, started to provide music blogs with music that might end up in the same file sharing communities, was a further sign of the indisputable power of blogs.

This phase was also characterised by older blogs becoming extremely influential. Some of the so-called A-List blogs adopted proper business models, with some of them turning into record labels, organising events, and making music videos. Their role in influencing fan practices has been

compared to that of traditional media such as magazines and radio (Wodtke 2008). For example, in the April 2008 issue of 'Spin' magazine, David Browne (2008) included music blogs in the list of how much people involved with music industry earn. The inclusion of music blogs in this list pointed to a legitimisation and recognition of music bloggers as professionals in the music industry. This has furthered the divide in the music blogosphere between blogs that positively embraced such collaborations in an attempt to get a foot into the music industry, and others, which remained committed to their original subcultural purpose (Jetto 2014). As Scott Tennent (2007a), author of the blog 'Pretty Goes with Pretty', argues:

"It seems that there are less and less MP3 bloggers out there who are purely concerned with sharing their personal discoveries (and hopefully articulating what they like), and more and more who have become a conduit for press releases … The 'professionalisation' of the blogosphere toward what amounts to a big network of cable news tickers is disheartening."

Hence, in order to have a complete understanding of the intermediary role of music blogs, it is important to recognise the transition from a service promoting artists and reflecting personal taste, following a typical fan's impulse, to a type of music blogging more subservient to commercial logic. This dynamic occurs when the search for professional status translates into the acceptance of collaborations with the industry, which are generally achieved by featuring music pushed through by the labels or PR agencies. Reaching for professional status might compromise the support of the indie community, which would consider such practices as inauthentic and could accuse the blogger of 'selling-out'. The increasing influence of the industry on music blogs' editorial strategies is therefore important in tracing the evolution of music blogs.

7 Conclusions

Music blogging as a phenomenon is less than two decades old, and it is still evolving. This article examined their history and the cultural and social practices typical of each phase. It has emerged that music blogs have evolved over the last 15 years from fans' diaries to spaces grounded in the 'indie' values of authenticity and independence to spaces more aligned with consumer guides. What was important in this shift was the transition from blogs focused on promoting artists on the basis of the blogger's personal taste, following a typical fan impulse, to a kind of music blogging more subservient to commercial logic. This evolution has led to a fragmentation and differentiation within the music blogosphere. The different types of blogs analysed in this paper still exist today, each one with its own very different sets of practices leading to very different blogging approaches. Such variations can be explained by the fact that music blogs are influenced by different values and motivations that legitimise particular blogging practices. Notably different and often opposing dynamics guide music blogs in how they define their content. While, on one side, music bloggers are music fans and they operate under fans' impulses, on the other hand, they are also players within the music industry. In summary the music blogosphere has changed over time toward a more fragmented and diverse space where the genre of the music blog is dynamic and continuously negotiated among its users.

Many music fans have embraced the music blogging culture as a core component of their musical experiences, changing not only the ways that popular music is consumed, but also how it is promoted and discussed in the commentaries that surround it. As Wodtke (2008) argues, there are a number of different types of music blogs, many of which can remediate different media such as radio, fanzines, music magazines and personal diaries. The emergence of web technologies has blurred previously clear demarcations in a number of media industries. Music blogs are no different. Music blogs are vehicles that, while not directly involved in music production and reception, are crucial in mediating between the two. Popular music is a global industry that crosses geographical and social boundaries. Between the artists and the public

there are opinions and choices that play a key role in the music that becomes available to the public. Among the many different forms that mediate the artists and the public is the music blogosphere. Music blogs play an important role as intermediaries for the music industry and they have assumed an important status as gatekeepers of taste. New talent has been discovered and later signed to major record companies and a new generation of artists eventually made their mark on the history of indie music. This article has emphasised the significance of accounting for subjectivity in the decision making process in the study of cultural gatekeepers. Music bloggers' opinions, although lacking the authority of traditional music critics, are still an important source of opinion formation. Their credibility stems from their transparency, reinforced by the fact that the actual MP3 file of the music they are discussing, often accompanies their posts. However, the collector/show-off tendency, that became a predominant practice of music blogs during the most recent phase, makes them more comparable to DJs rather than critics. Therefore, in relation to their potential for promoting discussion and reflection on popular music, this article suggests blogs might not be as relevant. Although blogs could potentially represent one of the few spaces in which music is discussed, we have seen, using an in-depth empirical approach, that this potential is not fully realised.

Finally, it is recommended that future research, rather than considering music blogs as a non-differentiated bloc, should acknowledge their use of different strategies in how they organise their content and how such variations might account for very different blogging practices. Frameworks that categorise music blogs into different typologies according to the subjective approach that the music blogs uses in the decision making process should be developed.

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