

New Technology in Music and Creative Entertainment

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Assessment 1- Essay

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Introduction

'The Scandinavian experience suggests that Spotify is good for the industry's overall revenues because it benefits heavyweight stars, back catalogue and viral hits. Stephan Markovits, who works in the Swedish electronic dance-music scene, points out that Million Voices, a 2012 single by local DJ Otto Knows, has been streamed more than 28 million times. "People create playlists, they have house parties, they go to work on the bus, so a song will live for longer rather than going up and down quickly," he says. However, high-profile sceptics such as the musician David Byrne have argued, it will not help every kind of artist. Consider a cult band who don't have hits but currently sell enough CDs to survive. If every single one of their fans switched from ownership to streaming, the band would need at least 200 times as many new listeners to make up for the shortfall. The numbers game doesn't work for them.' - Lynskey, D., 2013. *Is Daniel Ek, Spotify Founder, Going To Save The Music Industry ... Or Destroy It?*

The quote above is an article from the Guardian, published in 2013. The article discusses and debates the impact music streaming will ruin the music industry or shape it. The accessibility of instant and unlimited music on phones and laptops are the most convenient ways of listening to music in the history of the music industry. It is a digital innovative in the constant evolving ways of listening to music and using it in any aspect of life.

Since 2013 the technological side of the music industry has already shaped and evolved creating new ways of listening to music, watching virtual performances, sharing playlists and tracks onto social media and engaging with what friends are listening to online.

Spotify is now one of the most popular streaming service used by consumers all over the world.

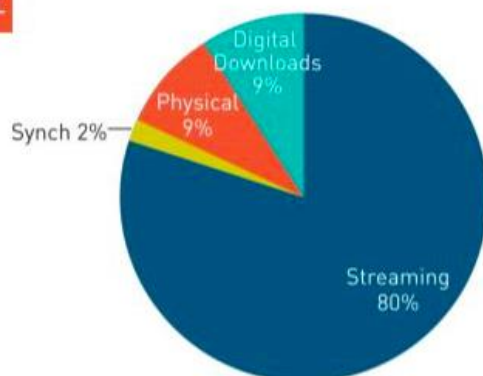
Streaming Services

As briefly mentioned above, music streaming services are the most popular way of accessing and listening to music as the accessibility is more convenient than any way music ever has been.

There is a specific timeline of how music was enjoyed and listened to. The most distinctive ways were/ are;

- Records
- cassette player
- CD
- MP3 player
- ipod
- Computer
- Phone
- Smartphone
- Streaming

FIGURE 2
U.S. MUSIC INDUSTRY
REVENUES 1H 2019
Source: RIAA



The way the technology behind listening to music, has shaped the music industry by challenging the release of music. Some argue that the current technology in the industry has ruined it and differed too far from the traditional way of accessing and listening to music. It is argued that music is not as appreciated or special as it was when buying a new CD with all the tracks on it or, purchasing a favourite Record. CD's have not diminished yet and are still generating income for artists, however, they are slowly becoming less popular due to the high demand for the monthly fee of unlimited music, which is completely accessible on a hand-held device that can fit in one's pocket. The streaming service costs less or the same price as a 10 track CD.

If anything, this has been an advantage to the music industry, by being able to expose artists on social media where they can promote a new track, include a link to the streaming service and allow the consumer to access it instantly.

Although streaming services have made music so accessible, there is a lot of competition between the services. All of the streaming platforms offer different features and some being the same price, makes it harder for users to choose. More streaming services have popped up a lot in the last 10 years with individual features. This is known as a Red Ocean Strategy. Red Ocean is when a business enters an already existing market that currently has competition. For example, Spotify and Apple Music. They cost the same subscription fee and also offer a free trial and freemium feature. Although Apple Music already offered itunes, where consumers can purchase music and make playlists in their library, the service was more expensive for users rather than paying a monthly fee for unlimited music. Spotify was launched before Apple Music, and because Spotify was the first streaming service offering a freemium and premium membership for a monthly fee. Spotify entered what is called a Blue Ocean, which is where a business enters a new market that does not pose a competition.

Streaming platforms such as Tidal, owned by producer and artist Jay-Z, have offered exclusive features including the release of Beyonce's album 'Lemonade'. Tidal streamed the album including the entire music video for the album. Tidal offer a free trial for the service for 3 months, this was a huge

benefit for them as users were using the free trial for Tidal so they could watch the video which lead to a number of them keeping their subscription.

Other artists such as Taylor Swift have had their music exclusively on streaming sites. In 2014 Taylor Swift had all her music removed off Spotify which then meant it was only streaming on Apple Music. Taylor Swift has a big fanbase, which contributed to a lot of users switching from Spotify to Apple Music.

Discovering New Music

A prime example of a very successful artist who was discovered online by posting videos of himself singing and playing guitar was Justin Bieber. Even though he was using YouTube a long time before subscription streaming was created, he was noticed online by well-known artist Usher, who had many connections in the industry. Usher signed Bieber who instantly became a popular demand on itunes. Usher happened to stumble across Bieber's videos on YouTube after some buzz was created prior to this. Rather than an A&R person from a label-scouting-artists at gigs and word of mouth, A&R has moved more towards searching artists online, listening to their tracks and watching live performances on YouTube. It is argued that online streaming and videos have made A&R for labels a lot harder as there isn't always the chance to hear the artists live, without any production. Another fact is that there is so much music online it makes it hard to differentiate the good to the over-produced music. There's so much music to sift through, a new track is released constantly, and new emerging artists are appearing online which makes it hard for A&R as there are only so many artists labels can sign at a time.

'The digital streaming era has made it easier than ever for new artists to make and release music. At the same time, it has made it harder than ever for managers, marketers, and A&R scouts to keep track of what is happening across the entire digital music landscape. Increasing amounts of data on unprecedented amounts of

aspiring artists make it hard to identify the stand-outs. Finding a rising star today is like Where's Waldo on steroids'. - Hayes, J., 2019. The Next Era Of A&R Tools.

To discuss my observation with the above quote, artists know that uploading music and video's online will create buzz. This potentially makes it more difficult for industry representatives.

The discovery of new music doesn't just apply to the music industry though, but towards everyone. Anyone at any age can discover new music that they enjoy, all the time. There are many ways artists can break into online presence, all of which being online. Spotify and Apple Music create their own playlists, these playlists feature any mood, new music, chart music and much more. The streaming playlists are the most listened to, which are how a lot of artists are discovered. Music will be advertised online which is a similar genre or sound to already liked music.

Creating Music

In 1889 the first recording studio was set up in New York, called the New York Phonographic Company. Within a few years of the studio being used, more starting popping until recording studios were scattered around the globe.

The dream of becoming a famous music star has always been there, this dates back before the 1920's even. When artists were signed to record deals, they would have to hire recording studios out in order to produce and play their music in order to distribute it. Studio time has always been known to be expensive and some paid by the hour. However, as recording equipment has been developed and made accessible for producers to use in their own home, a lot of artists are either working it out themselves from home or recording in someone else's living room.

The way musicians are recording is something that has also shaped and changed the recording side of the industry. Musicians no longer have to rely on hiring out a studio and having their songs mixed and mastered when they can just do it themselves. The less need for music producers to professionally record them is declining, and for smaller musicians with less money. The same software used in expensive, professional recording studios are entirely available to everyone else.

The software is constantly being updated, making the sound and creation better quality. A lot of artists not approaching labels also has a lot to do with their creative control. If the artist can professional record, produce, mix and release their own music then they can do it the way they want. This wouldn't necessarily be the case with a label in a private studio.

Social Media

The ability to share music on social media has played an important role for musicians. On social media there is 'Trending', which means a user who is viewed or followed, or music listened to a certain amount of times will show up as trending online, where users can see their profile.

The luxury of becoming famous online within a short space of time has made it easier for some artists to become noticed and with platforms like YouTube where they can post their videos and songs, once they have a large following they get paid for it. Being able to share as much music as one like online has a big expansion for independent artists. There are certain terms such as 'insta famous', which applies to someone with a larger following online and numerous 'likes' on their posts, normally these users will have a blue tick next to their name to show that they are legitimate.

TikTok is a fairly new social media app, although it has become one of the most used social media sites. TikTok allows users to upload a short video where they can mime a song or dialogue. TikTok is particularly targeted at a younger audience being 14-18 years old to Millennials, as younger people tend to use social media more. Artists use TikTok to make videos and upload their music as another way of connection with fans and allowing them to see daily updates on the artist. Another feature TikTok is allowing artists to have their music on it to be used by users in their videos. Users can search for a song or artist and add their music into the short video.

A more recent feature on Facebook and Instagram is the option to stream a live video to all followers, this means any user can create a chat room for fans to engage in. In more recent months' artists have taken to do live performances on the live TV feature so that fans can see them play for free, where they can also create a chat

room where other people can join in with their camera also. A lot of artists are using this feature as a lot of concerts have been cancelled for the Summer of 2020. Fans who are not able to attend their concert can see the whole thing live online, which is also a convenience.

Even if there are concerts going on, artists can still have their concert live streamed online.

Artist pages are often created on all social media platforms for fans to engage and discuss with each other and bond over their interest in the music. Some artists have fan pages also.

Social media is also another way of promoting gigs and tours. Anyone can make a Facebook page and create an event for a party, concert, a gathering, protest etc. This is where artists also use the platform to link to ticket purchase sites and information on the concert. Users have the option of clicking 'attend' or 'not going' and can see those who has also responded. This sometimes creates a community, bringing fans closer together by sharing an interest in the same music, which also relates to fan pages, a forum where users can make posts.

Ticket Purchases

Technology has made it easier for consumers to purchase and present tickets for concerts and festivals. Consumers can follow a link online and very easily purchase tickets, which they can then download onto their phone, only having to show a barcode instead of a physical ticket.

For many concerts this is how people purchase tickets, rather than calling up a call centre and giving bank details and addresses over the phone, then waiting for a ticket to arrive, they are instantly accessible.

Cashless Concerts

Even though cashless isn't the most disrupted part of the industry, it is still worth mentioning due to the high demand in a convenient experience for those going to

see an act. Many festivals and some concerts have introduced 'Cashless payments', where a wristband is presented and can be topped up digitally and used as a contactless wristband to purchase drinks at the bar and merchandise.

This is relevant to the industry because it is convenient. This comes under the category of supply and demand, where people are more attracted to gigs and concerts that are easy and stress-free and can be enjoyed.

The cashless concerts do, to an extent, contribute to the music industry.

Conclusion

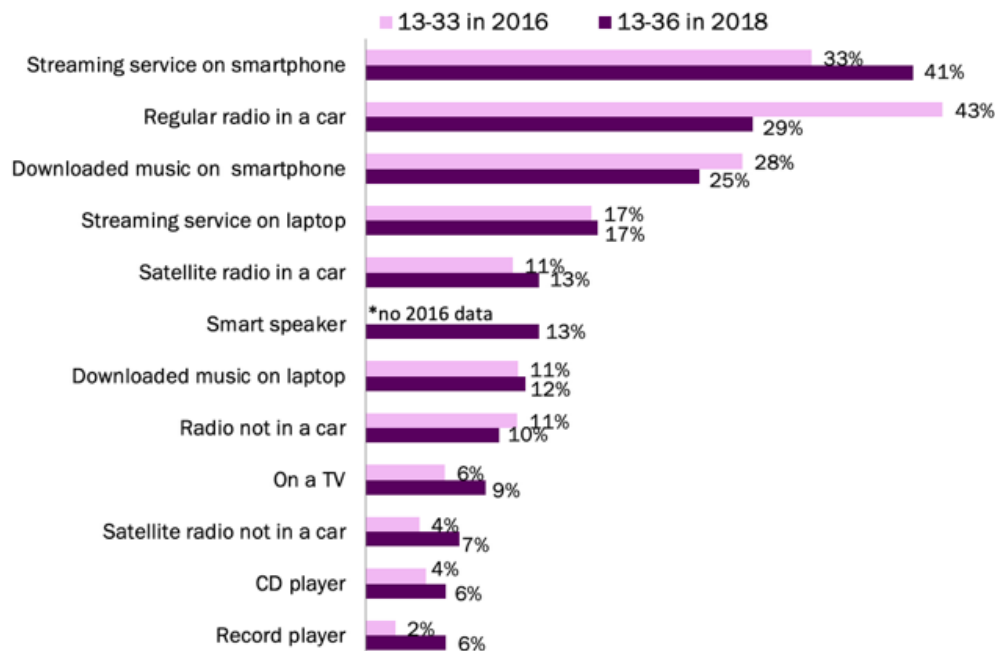
In conclusion to this essay, I will discuss and debate where technology within the music industry will go. Technology is both a disruption and innovation, in the sense that it has done great things for many artists and allowed musicians to self-promote and create their own music. However, it also draws people further away from traditional ways of accessing music and is a constant change for labels to keep up with. Some argue that music was more appreciated 20 years ago when consumers would wait for a CD or tape to be released and go and physically buy it, meaning they physically owned that album. Users have had to adapt to the way music is being listened to, the older generation may not always understand or adapt to a new way of accessing music. But for streaming services, the monthly subscription fee doesn't mean the user owns any of the songs, they are simply accessing the music and borrowing it. It can be argued that people take advantage and do not appreciate music like they used to.

Whether or not they are right, technology will always play a part in music and electronic devices, such as VR which will play a role in allowing people to have a very realistic experience of being at a concert or festival. Every year new ways of accessing music are being released and generated and whilst they are being released, another way is already being created. Consumer behaviour constantly wants more impressive and easier ways of connecting with music and with each other. The iPhone releases a new model every year and this is because of consumer behaviour, as well as new features on streaming sites and social media. We are used to having updated technology available to us, it has become an assumption that better services will always follow.

Festivals and concerts, which are sometimes the main income for artists, are one of the most natural ways of listening to music. Although it is still authentic and traditional in the sense that being at the concert doesn't require the use of technology, apart from getting into the venue. However, even though it is the most physical and engaging way of enjoying music, it is heavily recorded on phones. When going to a concert, it isn't an unusual sight to see everyone's phones recording the live show. By doing this, fans can also live stream the concert, or be video calling a friend so that they can watch it also. These videos are shared on social media where friends and followers can watch them and share them and so on.

Below I have attached a chart of the ways people are listening to music including the demographics to back up my point of millennials and the older generation's experience listening to music.

How Are They Listening to Music Every Day?



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