

ELEMENT 1

Reflective Summary

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Every day decisions are taken, which impact our lives, and often we reflect upon our decisions to fully understand the reason we acted in a certain way and improve the outcome. Critical reflection is meant to discuss the experiences before, during and after the task was completed. In the critical process, both positive and negative experiences have to be addressed (Fook & Beres, 2019).

This assignment was designed to enhance our abilities to work as part of a group and understand the meaning of teamwork. If every person from the group understands the importance and the benefits of teamwork, the project can be a real success. Bringing several ideas and having the ability to accept criticism and adapt it according to the team's point of view, can turn a common project into a distinct final work (Gemmil & Schoonmaker, 2020). Our task was to develop a campaign for an original artist who will be digitally releasing a single and/or its remix. Within a theoretical budget of £500, we had to incorporate the audio and video recording costs, mixing, artwork, and promotion costs. The members of this project are Christian Gillet, Caitlin Skea, Alexandru Madalin Oprisanu and Aston New.

The first step of our collaboration was to set up a weekly Zoom meeting where we discussed, planned and shared our responsibilities. We started by naming our label, Orange Crush followed by the proposal of several artists we believed will be fit for this project. However, before we wrote down our artists' names, we agreed to confirm if they would be interested in collaborating with us for this assignment. After receiving their approval and sending the link of their music in our WhatsApp group, we organised an online session where we listened and voted openly, justifying the choice we made. Everyone had an equal chance to speak as communication is an important factor in every project, and depending on its level, it can negatively or positively impact the future of the project. Each member of the team had the

right to an opinion and the obligation to accept criticism (Larson & LaFrasto, 1989).

Effective communication skills play one of the most important roles. Poor communication can lead to misunderstanding and frustration over the workplace. Good communication skills allow others to understand the subject discussed through the accuracy and simplicity of the information delivered and conclude the work with the result desired (Tchikovani, 2020).

After careful consideration, we decided to work with the independent and already established artist, Jerome Thomas (candidate proposed by Aston New). For the producer, we jointly decided to go with Toma Lazarov, a fellow student at Tileyard Education currently pursuing a Production course (candidate proposed by Caitlin Skea). As Jerome had already prepared to release the single beforehand, we decided to create a remix for the song *Right There* and plan for its digital release.

After we chose the artist and the producer, we had a formal zoom call with both of them where we introduced ourselves, presented the main objective and the project timeline. This meeting was followed by another call amongst the 4 group members in order to distribute the roles and the assignments proposed. This division of the workload was based on the actual skills we possess which improved the project output and timelines, as everyone was maximising their competences thus eventually minimising the final costs. Everyone contributed towards the project equally with no grievances about the workload given.

This was definitely a positive aspect of how we managed our team, given the difficulties and restrictions imposed by the national lockdown. However, due to the way the technology evolved during the past two decades, it became accessible to conduct work and study via online video call platforms. In this way, even through tough times as the pandemic, many people managed to keep their jobs just because of the existence of online platforms such as

Zoom, Skype, and GoToMeeting. This industry revolutionises the way people work and study, plus it also proved that many companies may not need the same amount of space for an office anymore as they learnt to adapt to working online (Anscombe, 2020).

As part of my main task, I volunteered to create the artwork associated with the remix and the label's logo in Photo Scape X. The team's logo was a success as I managed to create way before the set deadline and the team approved it from the second draft. The only change I had to do was a slight modification of the initial colour. To create a design concept for the artwork, I listened to the original song for inspiration and therefore proposed an image of a sunset over the sea. As the song title suggests *Right There*, the lyrics of the song express the love towards a dear one and the intimacy shared. The image of the sunset on a beach usually brings back feelings of nostalgia, calmness and relaxation (Shah, 2016). After several drafts, the team struggled to select the design's font even as we all found it challenging to match the vibration and the feelings generated by the background image compared to the fonts available. After trying both roman and fluid fonts, we decided the best option would be a simple, clean font and therefore unanimously agreed on one. Once the artwork was finished, I started to research the exact size of the banner required for Instagram and Facebook as each platform has different image sizes for specific type of ads (Agarwal, 2018).

Software such as Photoshop and Photo Scape majorly impacted the way people create artwork especially when they became easily accessible to the public. They have not just completely changed the way art is produced, but also impacted the number of details which can be altered and the time it takes. From the longevity of hand drawing a picture to now being able to modify every detail in just a few minutes, the tools made accessible in these products changed the approach to graphic designing. With basic knowledge of this software,

influencers, YouTubers, promoters can use it to create their own unique artwork without involving a meticulous and expensive process (Beuzeval, 2019).

I also created the budgeting spreadsheet and worked with Christian to search for the promotion costs and companies to collaborate with. The budgeting spreadsheet helped us keep track of our expenses, have a clear picture of our allowance and constantly check the remaining balance. I also created a section with the amount of money saved due to the work we executed through our own skills. In order to achieve the results we wanted, it was crucial to manage the budget correctly and allocate the funds accordingly. A company without a clear financial plan can end up easily in debt or, even worst, it can become insolvent (Owen, 2007).

Due to the constantly evolving software applications, there is no more need for keeping handwritten books. Hand calculating and the hard work it required was replaced by platforms such as Microsoft Excel. The information is kept safe as unlimited copies can be created. As an extra safety measure, the file can be uploaded on an online storage drive. The results of the calculations for the entire project can be generated in just a matter of a few clicks through formulas and useful tools (Logitout, 2019).

To keep up with the workload, we created a spreadsheet on Google Drive that helped us track our assignment's completion. However, we were delayed with a week on our plans due to Toma, our producer, who did not have the time to work on the remix, and so, by the time the first draft was ready, the singer became unavailable for the recording within our time frame. Our team acted very professionally, apologising for the delay and scheduled future acts around the artist's and producer's calendar.

Even though Toma did not have access to a Tileyard professional production studio, he managed to complete the entire project at his own place. Current technology has revolutionised recording studios which in fact favours new upcoming artists and producers. Just a couple of decades ago, opening a recording studio would have been very expensive thus necessitating a proper business plan for investing in the equipment needed. Nowadays, with the help of the relatively cheap DAW's, microphones and laptops, a decent homemade studio can be created with as little as £4000. This drop in price for the recording instruments allowed the vast majority of people, with a hobby in music, to start creating their own beats and record their tracks at home; example being artists such as Foo Fighters (Allisons, 2020).

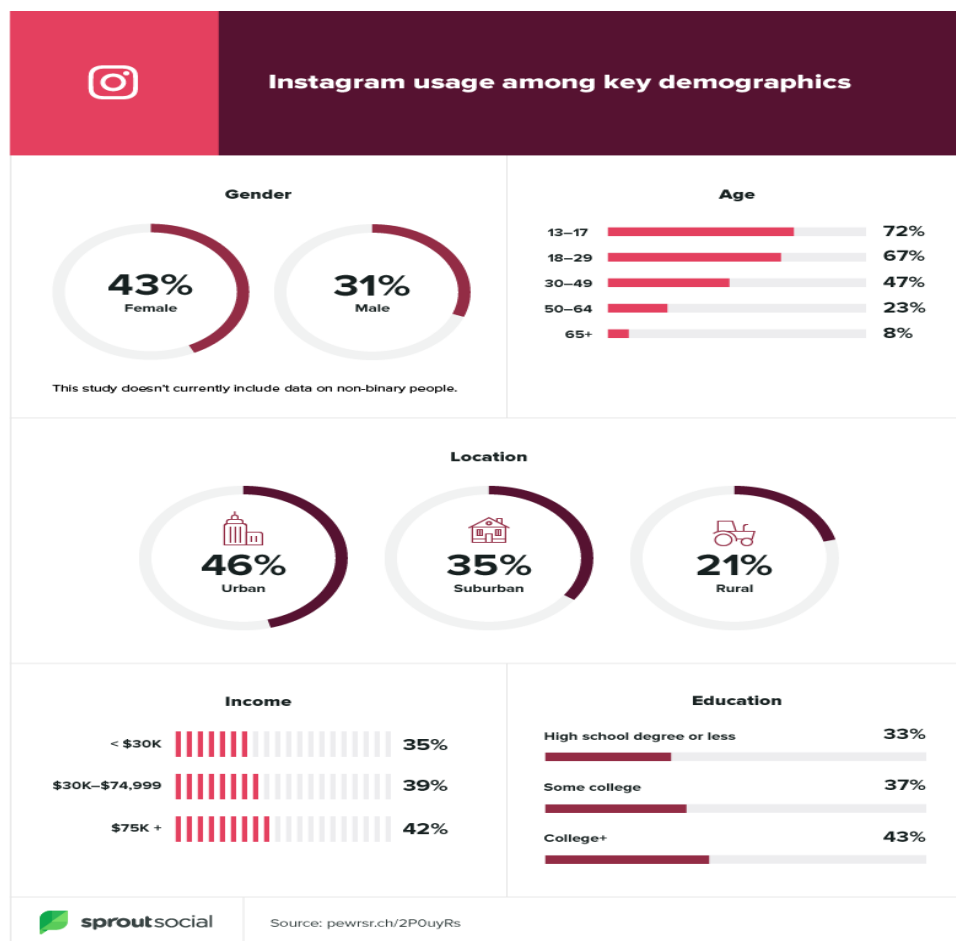
From the beginning of this project, the main challenge that we faced was the inability to meet face-to-face due the factors brought about by the current pandemic. The music sector has been strongly affected by this virus as concerts are banned globally as the virus can spread even quicker through singing or blowing in an instrument (Cooper, 2020). All the planning took place online and we had to adapt to the situation which meant we could not organise a live show. Even though Jerome has great experience on stage, which would have amplified our results, it was impossible to organise the event. We therefore lost a significant income from streams and possible connections within the music industry that could have made a difference for Jerome's career. We then had to rethink the entire concept of a concert to which I proposed to have a virtual show where people would attend via Zoom or Skype, which led to much more uncertainty as we could not have control over the internet connection and its stability. In the end, we decided that in order to get the engagement we are looking for, we had to take the risk of organising a live online concert. Even though we did not manage to do everything as planned with the live show, the team showed professionalism by adapting and finding the right solutions within a brief period and without generating any

intern conflict. Problem-solving skills are important and highly valued in any industry as it can save time, money and the reputation of a company. It requires an analytical mind and creative thinking to understand the issue and come up with the best possible solution (Watanabe, 2010).

The team worked around the clock to have all the material necessary for this campaign. Christian deeply researched and carefully wrote the legal documents for the Remix Contract and the Photography Release Form which clearly stated all the legal terms the artist, the producer and the photographer had to understand, accept and follow. The presence of a contract simply states the obligations that both parties have to follow making it easy to settle a possible dispute (Roach, 2014). These documents were created to allow Orange Crush Label to make use of the material under legal influence. The team proofread and made necessary amendments before issuing them.

Choosing the right platforms to promote music can make the final difference between a successful or unsuccessful campaign. Searching for the demographic details, the most popular use of it and the number of active users of a platform are key factors in making the right decision (Kan, 2020). The first platforms we chose to use for our digital release was Instagram. Jerome had a solid fan base on Instagram, which we decided to use to our advantage to draw more viewers and possible listeners through this platform. This was the first option where part of our budget was invested as the platform provided a high level of user engagement. The social media content was carefully chosen through an agreement between the team and the artist under the photography legal form. The content was carefully edited, considering all the details of the artwork, by Aston and Caitlin. Instagram has over 1

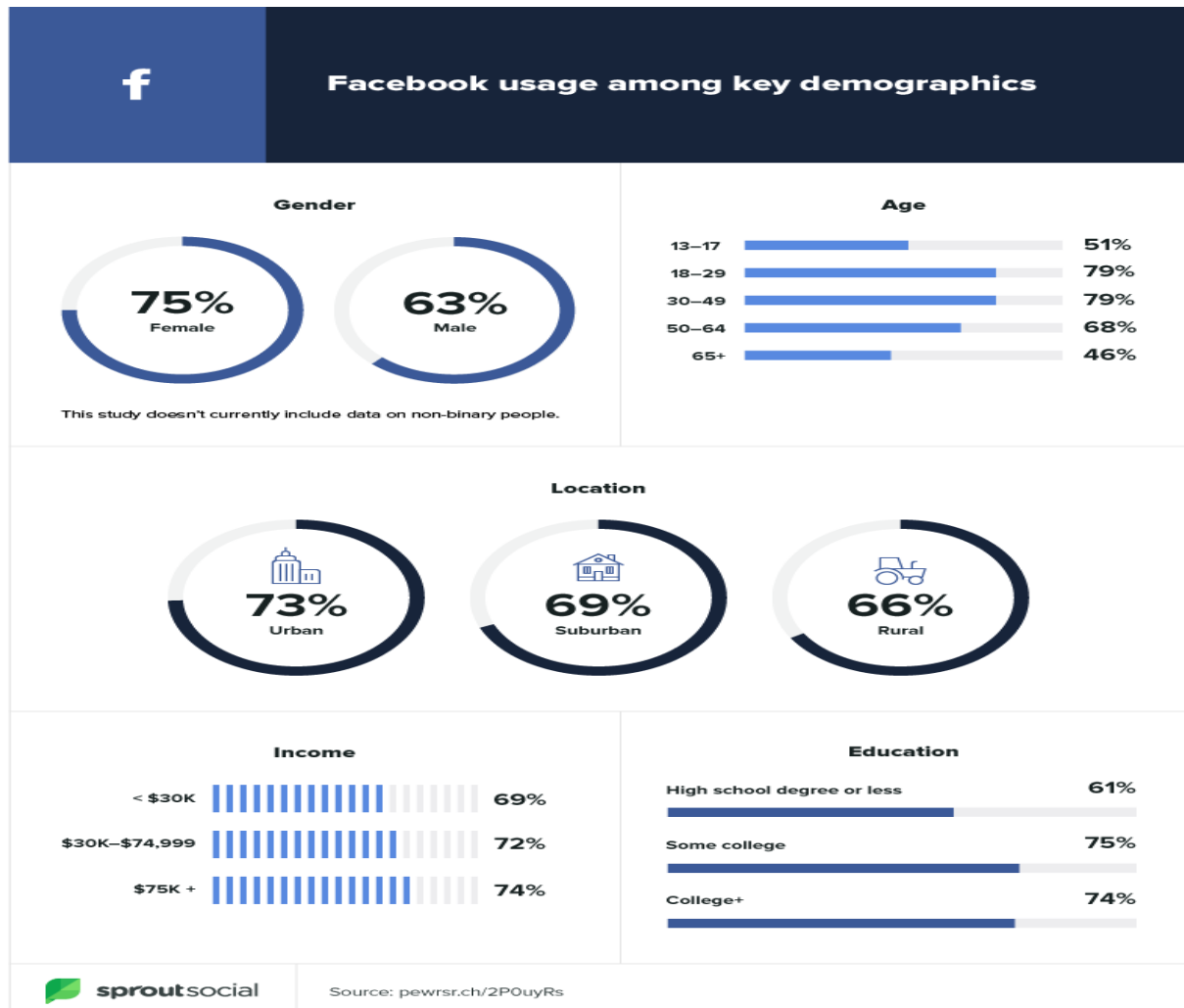
billion active users, and Jerome's music appeals to the age group between 15 to 40 years, which represents 62% of the total amount of the platform's users (Chen, 2020).



Graph 1 (Chen, 2020)

Another platform we chose to use for the distribution of the music was Facebook. With more than 2.7 billion monthly users worldwide, this platform has an immense base of possible customers to be targeted (Statista, 2020). Even though Facebook is more popular than Instagram for people aged 30 to 64, it is considered less popular with the younger generation. The platform is believed to exhausted its creativity options thus the younger generation prefers to use Instagram, Snapchat and Ticktock (Theron, 2020). As we were looking to

promote the music in the UK, we decided to invest a smaller amount and take further actions based on the first results. (Chen, 2020).



Graph 2. (Chen, 2020).

The third platform we decided to use for promotion was Submit Hub. This is a website where some of the most influential bloggers, YouTubers and Spotify content curators will accept to listen and rate a song in exchange for one or more credits. For a specific number of credits, they will accept or not to share the music for a specific number of days. Aside from the Premium credits, there are 2 standard credits per hour which can be used for contacting the

curators who offer free promotion. Every content curator has their own terms and conditions (Reiling, 2019).

Active blogs and labels

Snapshot (updated every 5 minutes)
There are currently 623 active blogs & labels using SubmitHub, with a combined reach of 70.8m fans (9 taking a quick break and 4 in weekend mode). In total, they have received 5,454,531 submissions, with an average response rate of 80%.

Name: a to z ▼

Name	Fans (Total)	Stats	Notes
 100FM (Line Out with Dor Dekel) Radio 📻 Joined 24 months ago • online now Nothing sent to them (yet)	84,000	Received: 20,374 Response rate: 100% Approved: 10.2%	About: "House, Tech House, Deep House, Future House, Electro and Progressive. Everything that's good - We Play!" The good: Shares quickly (6 days average). Worth knowing: Tends to provide lower-rated feedback. Additional notes: Generally not able to feature songs with profane lyrics; Typically shares as radio database (96%); Listens to each premium submission for an average of 1 minute and 28 seconds. Genre bias: Commercial (36%), Electro Pop (26%), Singer Songwriter (22%), House / Deep House (10%), EDM (7%)
 12XU onetwoxu.de Blog 🇩🇪 🇮🇹 🇵🇹 Joined 22 months ago Last online 3 days ago Nothing sent to them (yet)	500	Received: 4,141 Response rate: 99% Approved: 0.9%	About: "Punk Rock, Noise Rock, Post Punk, Garage Punk, Postcore or loud & oldschool Indie Rock. Or something closely related." The good: Part of the "Really Good Bloggers" (#RGB) program; Shares quickly (a day average); Tends to give very good feedback. Worth knowing: (!) Last approved a submission 3 months ago. Additional notes: Typically shares as blog post + social (83%), blog post (17%); Speaks German. Genre bias: Post-Punk (42%), Indie Rock (18%), Alternative (18%), Punk (11%), Shoegaze / Dream Pop (11%)

Graph 3. (Reiling, 2019).

For promotion, we also decided to create a video based on the behind-the-scenes moments including a personal video with Jerome and Toma which highlights their creative process.

A positive concept to be noticed is the impact of online platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube, who are playing a vital role in promoting an artist and businesses in general. It became easy to create a campaign and help a brand become known anywhere globally with a relatively affordable budget (depending on the campaign and coverage). The access to online promotion has changed the criteria users are receiving their share of information. The giant platforms tend to feed the viewers with promoted articles. On the other hand a basic account can attract a high number of followers without having to pay for promotion which can create income for the content creators (Union, 2020).

In conclusion, despite the several concerns we had to deal with, issues mainly caused by the pandemic and its restrictions on movement, we managed to finish our project and better

understand what it means to be part of a team. I personally learnt that it is important for each and every single member to do their part, otherwise the flow of the work will be interrupted, not for one, but for the entire team. Overall, it was a good learning experience that helped me evolve and become more aware of the many details that are part of the process of creating a digital campaign but with even more aspects left to learn. Timeline wise, except the remix delay, we managed to be on track with all the assignments proposed. Many other points could have been better managed if I had not been limited to work from home, but this challenge posed a valuable lesson.

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