

A reflective summary that reflects on the portfolio for a commercial release and the relevant accompanying assets

Group Commercial Release: A Reflective Summary

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Introduction

This reflective summary aims to critique the group aspect of the creative portfolio we had to submit. The summary will start by talking about my involvement in the group task before discussing how effectively we worked as a team, what went well and what did not, and provide a recommendation for similar projects in the future. Gibbs Reflective Tools (2013) are used to analyse my personal involvement.

The second section of the summary reflects on the impact that digital technology has had on the creation and promotion of a music release and on team development in creative projects. I will provide my opinions on these tools and provide a personal reflection on how they assisted my tasks.

Part 1: Your involvement in the group portfolio and presentation task to create a single, remix, and associated media assets

Gibbs Reflective Tools (2013) will be used as a basis for the personal reflection of my involvement in the group portfolio. The tool has five key elements which will be applied to my task. They are description, feelings, evaluation, analysis, and conclusions.

Description

The creative project we undertook was the creation of a portfolio which showed the process of creating an original artist campaign and included the creation of an original single and remix, digital release plan, promotional plan, theoretical budget of £5000, and the creation of relevant media assets. I was in a team of four; Tom, Fanchon, Valerie, and myself. We figured out what tasks needed to be completed and assigned roles based on our strengths. We then began creating the necessary assets for the assignment with the intention to collate them. We intended to have regular meetings to see how each other is doing and iron out any problems. We also had a group chat to be able to chat without needing to meet physically.

Everything was going well until I contracted covid-19 in the Christmas holidays, very close to the hand in date. I had felt quite awful and suffered from brain fog after for a significantly long time. This was exacerbated by my ADD. It made it hard to get tasks finished but I notified the team and got my necessary tasks completed for the benefit of the group. My main task was creating the merchandise that would accompany the release alongside a cost/profit analysis of what we would sell. I also made mock-ups of two items of supposed merchandise; Lighters and rolling papers.

I did not hand my assignment in but have a new hand-in date. I was active in the group chat, but not as much as others. I did however contribute to necessary conversations, such as having a release party and the live longue ideas, but sometimes in my own time as I was busy.

Feelings

This section references my feelings at the time of the assignment. I will mainly focus on the weeks leading up to the hand in.

Everything was good until I became ill as it severely ruined my motivation and threw me off my trajectory with academic work. It became really hard to motivate myself to get work done, which in effect made me feel mentally worse. However I knew that I would feel even worse if I did not contribute my share to the assignment so ensured that my share of the work was completed for my

team's. My team were quite relaxed and just happy to have the work accessible. Overall, I am very happy with the assets the team made and quite proud of their work for this assignment.

Evaluation

I would have to say that overall the experience was good and was a valuable experience to learn. Generally, we worked very well as a team despite some being more active than others. This was especially evident in the weeks before I contracted covid and I feel like we had a good team dynamic. Although my enthusiasm and motivation severely faltered in the crucial weeks before the assignment, the team kept on working and overcame my temporary absence. In the end all the relevant tasks were completed successfully, and I am proud of the team's effort. I am also glad my team were so nice when I became ill. I also could have been more involved on the group chat but I am not the person to be on messaging apps constantly, I find it exhausting

With regards to the portfolio and relevant assets, the quality was quite good despite none of us really having any of the relevant skills for asset creation. We created a nice range and managed to draw upon effective inspiration. The producer created a great remix and the team created relatively high-quality assets.

Analysis

This section answers the question of why things did go well and why things did not. In my opinion, things went well because the team were all determined to get this task sorted to a good standard and this combined well with the fact that we all go along very well. It made for a good team dynamic. It also helped that the task was personal to Fanchon as we all wanted her to have something that will help her in the future.

What I think did not go well was the quality of the creative assets. I actually think they were good but, if we had some more experience with graphic design, or used a graphic designer, we could have made some really high-quality assets.

Conclusion

One of the main things I took from this is that constant/good, communication is vital when delegating and undertaking tasks. It helps ensure that everyone is up to date with tasks and enables vital questions to be answered at a much faster pace. As a person who is not on their phone too much, I am going to have to learn to force myself to check as it is easy to stay out of the loop and it makes it seem like I contribute less to the group.

One of the main things that I would have liked to change was me having covid. I feel like I missed out on vital conversations and certain decisions because I felt too unwell. It also made me seem lazy, which was not the case, as I was working from the side-lines. I do think that the task went well despite the covid-induced setback on my part.

Part 2: Your reflections on the impact of all types of digital technologies with reference to the creation and promotion of original popular music and team development on creative industry projects.

This section focuses on the digital technologies available, how they effected both the project (the commercial release of a single and remix) and the wider creative industry.

Prior to starting this MA course, I had only really studied business and many of the processes I learned on this task were totally new to me. It has been quite interesting to understand the digital aspect of everything and how it affects the creative process through this hands-on project. One stand-out point for me was definitely realising that artists themselves are businesses and there is a sheer amount of work behind getting them successful, a lot of which is made able through technology.

When we started our task we already knew that the main technologies we would use would be social media (for marketing) and the Adobe Suite for (graphic creation). We barely focused on physical aspects of a campaign as we realised it was not that profitable. The future is digital (Watson and Saidji, 2021) and we needed to tailor our campaign to this. This can be seen all over the industry where technologies such as social media have launched the next super stars.

This can be seen with TikTok and the artist PinkPantheress. She started showing her songs on the app where they quickly gained her a huge following. She has approximately 7.5 million monthly listeners on her Spotify and over 150 million streams on her top song on Spotify alone (spotify,2022). Understanding this helped us plan our more digital strategy.

We also knew that the way we approached the task would be reliant on technology. We were all working from separate locations for the majority of our time apart and used social messaging apps (Zoom and WhatsApp) to communicate from our respective locations. We also used Google Drive to store all the completed assets in one place that is easily accessible to everyone involved but secure to those who are not. Google Sheets also helped make the budget as it meant we could put all our costs in one place for everyone to add to should they need. It was also synched to the drive folder and updated in real time. This made collaboration significantly easier than it would have been many years ago.

The design capabilities nowadays are something I am extremely impressed with. There are so many different programs, apps, and websites that can be used to edit and create graphics with a few clicks. It gives novices the chance to create decent work but also gives skilled creators unlimited scope to create. The range of products on the Adobe Suite and their capabilities are amazing and have become key tools many industries, but especially the creative industries.

One thing people do not realise is that many things are a simple google search away and that the thing you are thinking of probably does exist. I did not need amazing graphic design skills to create the 3D rolling paper mock-ups that we used in our portfolios, I simply googled for a “design rolling papers” service and it was the first one that came up. This was the same for the guitar picks, I found a “design your own guitar pick service”, used Photoshop to create the design that would be printed, and then copied the mock-up that the website generates.

One piece of digital technology that needs a mention is cloud technology. It is something that has become a seamless part of technology nowadays and is something many are grateful for. The Cloud enables people to store files remotely, rather than on their devices, and can be accessed from most devices at any time (internet dependant). It was especially useful in this assignment as it meant my work could be accessed anywhere and could be saved if a problem occurs (e.g. computer crashes).

Cloud technology is pretty widespread services have their own “cloud” services. The most notable are iCloud, OneDrive and Google Drive.

It is truly amazing how much technology has advanced in the last 20 years. With regards to the music industry in general, I think the future will go more towards virtual performances and conferences. This has already been seen in Fortnite (Artists such as Travis Scott and Major Lazer) and on TikTok (Spanish artist Rosalia recently did a special live performance of her recent album, Motomami, on the platform). The creation, and intended implementation, of the metaverse plus virtual reality capabilities leaves a lot of room for development in the virtual entertainment sector.

There are a few other things that I think will be more prevalent in the future. The first is blockchain technology. It has a wide range of uses from banking, real estate, and voting. In the music industry it has the potential to change the way artists get paid appropriate royalties and create NFTs (which seem to be the next step in merchandising). The second is artificial intelligence (AI). This is something which has seen increased implementation since its commercial introduction in the early 2000s (BBC, n.d.). One of its main general uses is in chat support for businesses as it is a cheaper method customer service. I think the future of AI in the music industry will see algorithm-based platforms such as Spotify and Netflix implement more improved AI technology to improve the recommendations they provide to users.

The final thing that I think will be more prevalent in the future is the number of programs and apps that enable users to produce assets that would normally take a lot of skill to create. Examples of this include online video editors like Kapwing and online music editors/DAWs like SoundTrap. The world is becoming increasingly automated, and I think many services will be too.

Conclusion

I found this task to be an extremely insightful and enjoyable experience overall. It was amazing to learn such a large amount about the industry and the ins and outs of commercially releasing a single. This task gave me the opportunity to work on my teamworking skills in a new setting and learn how to relate marketing to the music industry. I also got to develop previously non-existent design skills and use some creativity, which is a change from the undergrad I undertook. This task was definitely an eye opener to huge amount of work that goes into a commercial release and the impact that digital technology has on the creative industries.

I have learned some valuable experience that I hope I can apply to my future career. It has been great experience as I intend to go into marketing, and I will be dealing with similar tasks in the future.

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