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**SOCIAL MEDIA, FAN RELATIONS AND THE MUSIC INDUSTRY: A  
COALITION OF UNSIGNED ARTISTS AND RECORD LABELS**

By  
Heather Aponte

A Thesis

Submitted to the  
Department of Public Relations  
College of Communication  
In partial fulfillment of the requirement  
For the degree of  
Masters of Arts in Public Relations  
At  
Rowan University  
May 11, 2011

Thesis Chair: Suzanne FitzGerald, Ph.D.

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## **Dedication**

*I would like to dedicate this manuscript to my mother, Cindy R. Aponte, my father, David Aponte, and the following bands:*

*Catch Me If You Can  
Idlehurst  
Locked Together In Hatred  
Neighborhoods  
Seeking the Seeker*

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Suzanne FitzGerald for her guidance and help throughout this research.

## **Abstract**

Heather Aponte

SOCIAL MEDIA, FAN RELATIONS AND THE MUSIC INDUSTRY: A COALITION  
OF UNSIGNED ARTISTS AND RECORD LABELS

2010/11

Suzanne FitzGerald, Ph.D.  
Master of the Arts in Public Relations

The purposes of this investigation were to (a) provide the music industry with the research it seems to lack in order to understand (b) how social media will change its field and (c) how it can utilize it. To provide the knowledge necessary to adapt to the shift in musical power, the author will conduct both qualitative and quantitative research. This research includes a preliminary content analysis of comment tone on social media profiles and in-depth interviews. The researcher aims to further the understanding of social media networks and the independent musicians who use them. This will provide the music industry, whether record labels, musicians or fans, with knowledge that will aid in using these websites to their fullest extent. Research revealed that social media provides a platform to expand fan bases and interest existing fans. Despite its prominent use by independent musicians for promotion, record labels are still necessary to reach wider audiences, gain financial backing and extend advertising efforts.

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## Chapter 1

### *Importance of the Problem*

“The convergence of music production, creation, distribution, exhibition and presentation enabled by the new communications technology has swept through and shaken the music industry as never before,” (Sen, 2010, pp. 2). The music industry began its steady decline after 1999, a year when music sales peaked. The basis of this slump lies within a shift of media consumption among younger audiences and their primary methods of music access.

Before the evolution of Music 2.0, the music industry was able to decide the fate of musicians. It incorporated a number of intermediaries who charged significant fees, which kept profits high and record labels in control. With limited access to any other channels, upcoming artists were unable to market themselves. “They either end up joining a label or remaining small in a niche market. This allowed music companies to walk away with the lion’s share of the profit. In general, labels collected about 85 to 90 percent of the profit from music sales,” (Sen, 2010, pp. 6).

The transition from the music industry’s reign over artists and fans to its slow demise began with the founding of Music 2.0. The term spawned from the idea of Web 2.0, which “has since been used to describe everything from programming tools such as AJAX or Google page rank systems to popular websites that rely on tagging and recommendations, such as Flickr, Reddit and Digg,” (Collins & Young, 2010, pp. 340). Web 2.0 is seen as a participatory culture with relies on the interaction and elected work of users.

Within Music 2.0, the participatory nature still thrives. The concept started with the use of mp3s rather than CDs. These music files can be accessed through legal, pay-per-download services, but are predominately accessed through peer-to-peer file sharing. This process has been deemed illegal and is punishable under law. Despite the legal ramifications, audiences continued to download because this process presented a convenience factor. Fans could access songs without a trip to a music store or paying for services such as Apple's iTunes.

Music 2.0 continued its evolution with the development of streaming music. This bypassed the legal issues presented by peer-to-peer file sharing by providing constant access to free music on websites. Streamed music became a staple component of band websites and social media profiles.

A study by IDC looked at digital music habits of listeners in 2008, reported that most preferred sources for music listeners were paid online music services (34.5%) and P2P downloaded services (28.1%). But streaming audio from social networks (26.6%) and artists' music websites (21.2%) were catching up in popularity (Sen, 2010, pp. 15).

Social media networks have become an important way for musicians to reach audiences not only nationally, but also on a global scale. Websites such as Purevolume, Myspace and ReverbNation have become commonplace for artists and provide fans with a number of ways to interact. Fans can stream music, access live show schedules and comment on any component of the webpage. This creates two-way communication between musicians and fans by enabling feedback.

Emerging technologies, such as streaming music and peer-to-peer file sharing, have created competition for major record labels. In the past, these music moguls were the only intermediaries for musicians to use to reach their fans. Now, musicians are able

to remain completely independent and still obtain a large following. Marketing themselves has become increasingly simple through the use of social media networks.

Record labels have been in a constant battle for control since the beginning of the peer-to-peer file sharing revolution. After working their way through this issue, social media networks have become the new threat. Creativity is left in the hands on the musicians and they are able to create their own fame through self-promotion.

Without a way to harness this Internet power, record labels face the end of their reign. “As critics point out, piracy first gouged out the profits and now streaming music available ‘on demand’ over the Internet – free and legal – could be the knock-out punch that could seal the deal,” (Sen, 2010, pp. 8). If music industry executives, along with music marketing and public relations experts, are unable to find a way to create profit through social media, independent musicians will be able to dismantle them and provide a truly democratized musical experience.

### *Problem Statement*

The music industry faces the dismantling of music as a business. Since 1999, the record industry has been on a steadily decline and all attempts to reverse the problem have failed. The root of the issue first began with the evolution of peer-to-peer file sharing and has continued with streaming music through social media.

The Internet has become the biggest competition for the music industry and this technological giant’s aim is to democratize music for free consumption. In order to prevent this, one must understand how these websites are being utilized, both in

interacting with the existing fan base and creating a new fan base. However, there is little research done on the subject.

The main question is, “how has social media revolutionized the music industry?” To find a solution to the problem, many areas of the independent musician’s mind must be probed. Their knowledge through experience will begin the process of understanding the social media phenomena and can eventually lead to, with extensive research, the music industry’s capitalization of free music to provide better fan relations and create a different source of profit to keep the music business afloat.

#### *Delimitations*

The author will not conduct research on peer-to-peer file sharing or legal file downloading services.

The author will not interview musicians that are represented by a record label, whether small or large.

The author will not interview musicians outside of New Jersey, thus hindering generalization to other states in the United States.

The author will not focus on social media Web sites other than Myspace, Purevolume and ReverbNation in the content analysis.

#### *Purpose*

The use of social media is an upcoming tool within a number of fields. Other fields, such as consumer products, have presented a vast amount of research on the topic and have been working diligently to harness its power.

On the other hand, the music industry seems to lack the research it needs to understand how social media will change its field and how it can utilize it. To provide the knowledge necessary to adapt to the shift in musical power, the author will conduct both qualitative and quantitative research. The researcher aims to further the understanding of social media networks and the independent musicians who use them. This will provide the music industry, whether record labels, musicians or fans, with knowledge that will aid in using these websites to their fullest extent.

**H1 – It is expected that musicians see social media as a new way to influence their existing fan base.**

“[Fans] spread and endorse the music in places and ways that the artists and labels cannot. As fans mention, discuss or disseminate music they like across the many platforms on which they maintain their own Internet presences and in their local communities, they serve as publicists and filters, steering other audience members towards (or away from) bands and labels,” (Baym & Burnett, 2009, pp. 436).

“To say that fans provide word of mouth is to oversimplify the range of practices through which they accomplish this and the effort it takes to produce it. Spreading word about new music is enacted along a spectrum that ranges from very low to very intense investment, Together these fans create an international presence far beyond what labels or bands could attain on their own,” (Baym & Burnett, 2009, pp. 437).

**H2 – It is expected that if musicians engage directly with their audience, they will cause them to grow a new fan base.**

“Myspace offers bands capital in the form of exposure and referral. For some musicians this can be translated into income through music sales or stimulating ticket

sales, but for most unsigned and amateur musicians the opportunity to be heard is of premium value,” (Collins & Young, 2010, pp. 351).

**H3 – It is expected that record labels will no longer be needed as an intermediary between musicians and fans.**

“Music 2.0 offers self-determination – putting musicians in control of their creativity and careers – a break from the model employed by the industry,” (Collins & Young, 2010, pp. 348).

“The extreme version of Music 2.0 suggests a world without major record labels, one in which individual musicians are able independently to build a fan base and publish their music using new digital distribution tools,” (Collins & Young, 2010, pp. 349).

- The author assumes that interviewees are musicians who reside in New Jersey and are not represented by a record label.
- The author assumes that terms used for coding the social media Web site content analysis represent the areas within major music social media websites and comments presents on these Web sites.
- The author assumes that it is possible to harness the power of social media to reverse the decline of the music industry and record labels.
- The author assumes that Myspace, Purevolume and ReverbNation are considered major music social media Web sites, especially in New Jersey.

### *Procedure*

To determine the components of music-directed social media Web sites and catalog their use by fans, the author will conduct a content analysis of Myspace and Facebook. The analysis will categorize comments submitted by fans as positive, negative and neutral as they apply to keywords. The author will conduct the analysis on three bands' profiles on each of these Web sites in order to better understand the differences, similarities and primary uses of each.

To gauge the viewpoints and common applications of social media Web sites in music distribution, the author will conduct five in-depth interviews with independent musicians from New Jersey. The author will aim to provide a representation of a wide variety of music genres. The interviews will focus on how social media Web sites are utilized to ascertain fans, which social media Web sites are predominant in New Jersey and how interviewees view record labels after being given the chance to remain independent.

Since the late 1990s, the music industry has faced a dismantling of its business model by the introduction of Music 2.0. In the past few years, a main component of this Internet music transition has been the evolution of music-directed social media. Despite its prominence with independent musicians, the record industry has yet to effectively merge the ideas behind social media networks into a new business model. Without change, the music industry as a whole will face its demise in the years to come.

Comparing the results of these two undertakings will allow the author to determine how social media Web sites will affect the music industry in the future and if record labels will become obsolete in accessing fan bases.

To ascertain the most recent body of knowledge on the subject of fan relations and social media Web sites, the author will conduct a literature review of peer-reviewed journal articles, trade publications and other content on the music industry, music 2.0, social media, fan relations and the narrowed topic in Chapter two.

### *Definition of Terms*

Music 2.0 – The flattening of what was a distinct divide between the creator and the audience. It has created the ability for musician to interact directly with audiences through the Internet and to distribute their music directly to fans through vehicles such as peer-to-peer file sharing and streaming music.

Social media - A group of Internet-based applications that build on the foundation of Music 2.0 and provide the exchange of content between musicians and fans. It is the use of a newfound participatory culture within the music industry.

Peer-to-peer file sharing – The act of illegal access of music by providers and download of files by users.

Streaming music – Free, legal music set up for continuous play by users on social media and band Web sites.

Independent musicians – Musicians not represented by a record label and who market themselves through the Internet.

Content analysis – An analysis of three music social media Web sites used in New Jersey for comments related to different components.



In-depth interview – Eight interviews, about an hour in length, of independent musicians who reside in New Jersey to better understand the viewpoints of music social media as related to fan bases and the role of record labels in the future.

Fans relations – A public relations field used in the music industry and sports to accommodate to those who listen, watch or attend and position the client's, whether a musician, band, athlete or sports team, brand identity.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### *The Music Industry: Past and Present*

During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the record industry was in complete control. Major record labels were the only channels in which musicians could reach audiences. Overall, musicians found it difficult to market themselves successfully and reach their desired popularity without the help of record executives. Being the only viable way to access audiences effectively, record labels were able to charge large fees, leaving musicians with a small amount of the profits. Labels often collected 85 to 90 percent of the music sales from each contract (Sen, 2010).

Throughout the 1950s, record sales grew worldwide and the phonogram and record player became highly accepted as major music media. The music industry ignored the demand for music choices beyond the big-band-crooner style and the attempts of musicians who wished to fulfill the public's need. Because of its stranglehold on production, distribution and marketing of new music, the record industry was able to thwart the emergence of new music styles (Tschmuck, 2009).

During the 1970s, sales increased from \$4.75 billion to \$7 billion over the course of five years. Artists during this musical boom era were unable to achieve the distribution they required without the involvement of record labels. Consumers were forced to only accept the musicians record labels represented, as they had little to no access to music labels refused to promote (Hughes & Lang, 2003).

But as the late 1970s approached, the music industry hit a short-lived crisis. Music sales fell by 11 percent in the U.S. and did not pick up until 1984. Until 1979, sales continued to rise (Sen, 2010).

At the end of the 1980s, the record industry had little to worry about. World record sales rose to \$29 billion and the introduction of the CD rapidly changed the mindset of the consumer. After the decline of interest in vinyl albums and singles increased, the industry had little to offer the public. The CD revived the public's interest in music and allowed the record industry to increase the price of its products (Sen, 2010).

For the time being, the introduction of the CD format saved the structure of the music industry and allowed the reign of record labels to continue. Control over CD production and distribution meant that record labels were able to keep the economics of scarcity in motion. As the only providers of CDs, an expensive and hard-to-duplicate product, record executives were able to select prices that ensured maximum profit (Hughes & Lang, 2003).

By the 1990s, major record labels were able to sell their music worldwide. Along with international sales, the increase in cable and satellite television, the deregulation of national television and the widespread use of VCRs created a demand for material other than CDs (Sen, 2010). This led to more profit by record labels.

To further their profit, record labels sought after different sources of revenue other than CD sales in the 1990s. This resulted in the movement away from CD sales to musical rights and royalty sales. Here, music publishers tried to acquire all rights on an exclusive basis in order to control all resources of exploitation and to avoid artists

seeking to sell their music outside of CD format (Tschmuck, 2009). This optimism, however, came to an abrupt end with the invention of digital music technology.

The emergence of audio technology greatly changed the way music is consumed today by transforming music into an information product. Music is now provided at a much lower cost than it was when presented solely in CD format. Music is also produced at a much lower cost to the artist by providing a way to produce music within the household (Sen, 2010). Artists no longer have to rely on the record label to provide means for production.

Digital technologies such as the mp3 have become the standard format for music distribution, creating a smaller dependence on CDs. These types of music files are easily compressed to such a size that provides easy transfer over the Internet. These formats also led to the invention of portable mp3 players, including the iPod and Zune. Mp3 players can download music directly from the consumer's hard drive and play them at the user's convenience.

With the advent of digital music technology, the Internet has transformed the music industry into something completely different than what has been commonplace in the past. The Internet has reduced the stranglehold record labels have on music choices and has provided the access to millions of songs, whether free or at a cost, legally or illegally. Major record labels are being forced to re-evaluate their business models because they are making less profit on a fewer number of musicians and face mergers and other moves to salvage the remnants of this once thriving industry (Sen, 2010).

Record labels point out that the main reason for their loss in sales of the past decade was brought on by music piracy. Illegal music downloading became prominent

with the help of the Internet. This piracy is seen as the first wave of declining profits and critics believe that streaming music available over the Internet will seal the fate of major record labels (Sen, 2010).

CD sales decreased since the beginning of the decade and has forced record labels to focus on digital downloads and other content pertinent to the Internet revolution.

Although they have attempted to keep up with the technology, the major players in the music industry have not found a successful business model for digital distribution. Their subscription services have fallen short because of the number of free downloading services that consumers can choose from (Hughes & Lang, 2003).

In order to combat the shift towards digital production and distribution, major record labels have pushed for new copyright laws to address music as an information product. The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DCMA), for example, was mainly a music industry-sponsored bill that focused on what the industry wanted, generally ignoring consumer concerns and preventing any attempt of the re-evaluation of the term copyright in the digital age (Hughes & Lang, 2003).

Despite the attempts to stop illegal, free music downloading, media downloading companies and new digital industries continue to grow and expand. Hundreds of new industries have evolved to support personal digital production and distribution (Hughes and Lang, 2003). However, record labels are not dying out in the near future. Revenues in the music industry consistently increased from 2000 to 2004, where revenues were higher than in 1997 before the digital age began (Sen, 2010).

## *Music 2.0*

The digital age of the music industry is more commonly known as Music 2.0. The term spawned from the idea of Web 2.0, which began at the end of the dot com boom. The term Web 2.0 includes an umbrella of programs and ideas pertaining to the Internet, including AJAX, Google, Flickr, Reddit, Digg and other Web sites. To summarize Web 2.0 in the words of Tim Berners-Lee, it revolves around the idea of intercreativity. In a simpler sense, it means that building together is being creative together (Collins & Young, 2010).

The music industry has been especially susceptible to the ideas of Web 2.0, thus spinning off the term Music 2.0. New technologies shifted the industry and how the players within interact among each other. Consumers have become accustomed to the accessibility and on-demand delivery of music. Musicians are now able to reach their audiences more effectively and personally. Through Music 2.0, musicians are able to by-pass the middleman, mainly the record labels, by harnessing the power of non-traditional communication channels. These shifts present a reinvention of how musicians create and distribute their music while also affecting the possibility of generating money solely through their music (Collins & Young, 2010).

The musical revolution in the digital age emerged with the introduction of the mp3. The mp3 is a music file that is easily condensed and transferred over the Internet. This convenient format for music sharing spawned a number of programs that relied on sharing between users. This was referred to as peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing. The introduction of Napster made peer-to-peer sharing a prominent way of accessing and enjoying music.

Since the advent of Napster, primary methods of accessing music have become completely digital, through both legal services and illegal programs (Collins & Young, 2010, pp. 343). At the peak of internet downloads in 2000, Napster was subject to lawsuits pursued by five major music companies and forced the program to change its methods of download to subscription-based rather than peer-to-peer (Sen, 2010, pp.14). The music industry has since attempted to transform its former business model to adapt to digital technologies by providing legal, paid downloading services. Although more popular than the earlier CD format, services such as Apple's iTunes have fallen short, thus resulting in the acceptance of casual file-sharers by record labels.

Some critics see the idea of piracy as a beneficial subset of the music industry. Through peer-to-peer file sharing, consumers are able to discover new artists. If a positive outlook is formed, this discovery could result in consumption through the live music aspect of the artist's market. This could balance out the loss of profits from CD sales by focusing sales in another area (Curien & Moreau, 2009, pp. 111).

The negative impact of peer-to-peer file sharing on the music industry is, however, undetermined based on the lack of consensus in prior research. Some studies attribute the decline in music sales solely to piracy while others find its impact to be too small to be considered a factor. Despite a contradiction in research, the music industry has lobbied for stricter laws, created encryption software and prosecuted Internet providers. Record companies have persecuted those who support the industry that see this as a futile effort by labels to resist change, stifle creativity and prolong the use of their obsolete business model (Chandra, Goel & Miesing, 2010, pp.7)

Although downloading services, both legal and illegal, are the most prominent, new methods of accessing music are breaking into the foreground. An IDC study in 2008 reported that the most preferred sources were paid online music services (34.5%) and peer-to-peer file sharing services (28.1%). However, streaming music from social media networks (26.7%), online radio station sites (26.6%) and artists' Web sites (21.2%) were catching up in popularity (Sen, 2010, pp.15).

Music-directed social media Web sites have become an important way for musicians to distribute their music legally. Since its rise to popularity, Myspace has found a niche in music promotion and has become synonymous with online music (Collins & Young, 2010, pp. 346). Myspace has spawned a form of social media networking Web sites that completely devote themselves to the marketing of independent musicians. Pulse2.com released the top 20 music social networks in February of 2010, which included Myspace Music, ReverbNation, iLike, InternetDJ, QuarterLife and ShareTheMusic. These Web sites allow artists to share their music and obtain fan feedback through forums. While also used by musicians with record contracts, these Web sites are mainly used by independent musicians who wish to expand their fan base.

Google has also joined the Music 2.0 wave by creating a new music search capability designed to facilitate music discovery, streams and sales. It will also drive users to digital music services that serve as content providers. These content providers include Myspace Music and Lala. This addition to Music 2.0 will add to the ease of new music and discovery while promoting independent musicians (Bruno, 2009, pp.27).

Music is also getting more interactive to cater to current consumers' needs and habits. The iPhone has forged this path by introducing Romplr, developed by Bell Rock



& Moderati. The inexpensive application allows music fans to mute or solo eight aspects of offered songs and play them back with any of the seven offered samples. This makes it possible for the user to hear the selected song a number of different ways. Versions can also be recorded and shared via email, Facebook or the artists' Web sites using music streaming (Sen, 2010, pp.15).

Music 2.0, however, goes beyond the new distribution methods. It highlights an environment in which artists are compelled to create and distribute their music with ease. In essence, it promises that musicians and audiences do not need the same level a technological knowledge to take advantage of what is offered through the Internet. The ease of the Internet comes into play when musicians can easily access social networks directed towards music promotion, upload music, generate a presence and audiences can interact directly with musicians (Collins & Young, 2010, pp.344).

An idealized Music 2.0 suggests that new media technologies are exploited to allow building together and enables the traditional intermediaries or gatekeepers to be bypassed. This sense of Music 2.0 focuses on talent alone regardless of music trends at the time. It promotes the loss of genre restrictions and the heavily reliance on creating an image. It allows music to speak for itself rather than taking the backseat in traditional forms of music marketing. Music social media has been a large contributor to this idea and have used a likeness recommendation system to create new genres and niche markets (Collins & Young, 2010, pp.345).

## *Social Media Networking*

The early days of computers made it possible for people to connect to each other by joining networks where members shared a common interest. The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign developed the PLATO system in the 1960s and 1970s to offer some of the first opportunities to experiment with computer networks where individuals become a social network despite their spatial proximity, (Mitra, 2010, pp. 1).

Since then, the transformation from communities centered around text-heavy discussion to social network Web sites was made possible by two major technological developments- the availability of more powerful machines and the wide-spread usage of high-speed connections. However, this did not change the way in which people would want to interact with each other. The individuals that might have been members of virtual communities can now use social network sites to connect more efficiently with people, (Mitra, 2010, pp. 2).

There were a number of social networking sites (SNS) during the late 1990s and the early 2000s that provided various types of functionality and attracted different levels of following from users. The shift to these new technologies became apparent in 2005 with the emergence of sites such as Myspace and Facebook, (Mitra, 2010, pp. 3).

Myspace.com was an open site that became popular among a variety of users because it presented unrestricted access to social networking sites and the creators remained in touch with users to create features users demanded, (Mitra, 2010, pp. 3). It operated on a different model as other social network sites. Here, a person could set up a digital presence and wait for other users to stumble upon it to make a connection. Myspace offered users the opportunity to extend real-life networks to digital connections.

Its openness offered an open-ended type of connection where users may never interact outside of the digital realm, (Mitra, 2010, pp. 5).

As a free Web site, Myspace approached 80 million members within the first three years of its 2003 launch, with a sign-up rate of two million per week. It has become one of the most popular sites for teenagers and young adults to communicate, socialize and express themselves, (Kuntaraporn, Sun, Wu & Youn, 2006, pp. 1105).

Today, Myspace is one of the biggest platforms for artistic promotion through social media sites. The ranking systems used within this Web site helped determine and display a profile's popularity. This popularity is not only generated by the number of friends in a user's profile, but also by the number of comments displayed. Through this, artists could gain legitimacy through networking channels, (Suhr, 2008, pp. 260).

Unlike more traditional forms of artistic promotion, regarding music and art, the audience loses its role as a spectator or listener and is encouraged to do more than just observe. Artistic promotion through social media sites allows the audience to participate in the creative process, thus altering their relationship with the artist, (Suhr, 2008, pp. 260).

However, their participation does not mean to use their feedback to fix or create art or music through collaboration. Instead, Myspace invites users to validate or embrace the art presented by acknowledging the quality through feedback and aiding in network expansion, (Suhr, 2008, pp. 261).

Myspace also allows the artist to bypass the intermediary by using participatory media to reach audiences. This is particularly useful in the music industry. The majority of music provided in mainstream media was due to the marketing of major record labels.

Myspace uses participatory media to represent music marketed by record labels, but also gives marketing opportunities to musicians who do not have access to the marketing prowess of record labels. With ‘Top Artists,’ users can view artists under three categories: Major label, Indie and Unsigned. The artists are ranked within their own categories the same way popularity is ranked on personal Myspace pages. These rankings provide an even level of exposure to both well-known and unknown musicians. This gives audiences equal access to all types of music, regardless of their record contract or lack thereof, (Suhr, 2008, pp. 259).

Another social media contender is Facebook. Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook in 2004 during his sophomore year at Harvard University. It first began as a social network site exclusively for college students, but has since branched out to all age groups and lifestyles. Since its inception, the social networking site became a basic tool for and a mirror of social interaction, personal identity and networking building among students. Despite its immense popularity, Facebook has been scrutinized for its privacy issues, (Debatin et al., 2009, pp. 83).

In a report on 23 Internet service companies, Privacy International alerted Facebook of sever privacy flaws and placed it in the second lowest category for “substantial and comprehensive privacy threats,” tied with six other companies. Their rating was based on issues with data matching, data mining, transfers to other companies and others, (Debatin et al., 2009, pp. 84).

Issues with features have also come into play since Facebook’s rise to popularity. In September 2006, Facebook introduced its “News Feed,” a feature that displays the site activities of the user’s friends, such as posted pictures, befriending users, writing of a

friend's wall, etc. None of the actions displayed were private but the public display on each user's home page outraged users. Account holders felt exposed and deprived of control over their information. Protest groups quickly sprang up across the Facebook network to voice the opinions of disgruntled users. The feature still remains as an important part of each user's home page, (Debatin et al., 2009, pp. 85).

Despite the controversy presented over privacy issues, Facebook has become a daily routine for many users and an almost invisible part of students' everyday lives. Its important place in society stems from its ability to maintain superficial social relationships with large numbers of people. The conveniences and gratifications of Facebook as a social tool seem to void privacy discrepancies, (Debatin et al., 2009, pp. 100-101).

The entity of social media sites can be seen as a vehicle for word-of-mouth (WOM) in the online sense. Online WOM involves personal experiences and opinions transmitted through the written word. This way, people can seek information at their own pace. New media technology, especially social media sites, tend to be more influential due to their speed, convenience, one-to-many reach and absence of face-to-face human pressure, (Kuntaraporn et al., 2006, pp. 1106). The use of online WOM can be translated to the public relations practice of fan relations, both sports and music targeted.

## *Fan Relations*

Fan relations is an important aspect of public relations when relating to the entertainment industry, especially sports and music. Without a good relationship with the fans, athletes, artists, record labels and sports franchises are unable to maintain a brand identity.

Raymond Boyle researched the effect mobile communication has on the sport industry and focuses directly on soccer (referred to as football internationally) clubs in Europe. More specifically, he focuses on the experiences between sport and new media in digital economy and what they tell us about the developing relationship between sports content and 3G networks, (Boyle, 2004, pp. 73-74).

In 1999, new media emerged and created a frenzy between sports and media platforms. All media companies, both old and new, invest millions in soccer clubs in order to create business in sports content. Converging technologies and a level of interactivity are creating a new media sports industry that will change sports experiences as fans see it today, (Boyle, 2004, pp. 74-75).

Pertaining to the transition from 2.5 to 3G, mobile penetration levels are reaching about 80 percent in European markets and it is seen as an important aspect of the long-term growth of telephone revenues across the continent. The first 3G phone was launched by Japan's NNT DoCoMo in October 2001 but have since reached popularity worldwide, (Boyle, 2004, pp. 76).

Sports have been identified as core content that is used to attract subscribers to 3G services as they are available across Europe. Since then, the Olympics, FIFA World Cup,

Manchester United, Real Madrid, and Juventus have capitalized on its popularity and appeal, (Boyle, 2004, pp. 78).

Mobile media has been important to the sports fan; specifically those who attend live events. The use of the radio has declined since the introduction of the mobile phone because many of its functions of keeping in touch with the games can be done with greater ease. SMS is also an important part of the live sporting event, not only for receiving information about the game, but also as an organizational aid for supporters to engage socially before and after matches, (Boyle, 2004, pp. 79).

According to Boyle, much will change over the following years as mobile devices and communication become even more embedded in fans' everyday lives. However, there will also be aspects of continuity in how sports fans use this type of media. This means that both athletes and sports franchises worldwide must learn to capitalize on the popularity of mobile communication. By providing more mobile features and keeping fans in touch with their favorite teams, the sport industry can integrate the success of mobile communication into its business model and reap the benefits, (2004).

The music industry is even more greatly affected by fan relations because without the support of their fans, musicians cannot reach the level of popularity they desire.

Paul Theberge studied the effects of the Internet on fan clubs, specifically focusing on music-based clubs. He states that fan clubs have been an ongoing feature of the movie and recording industries, but neither industry uses them as an avenue for profit. With the rise of the Internet, fans have engaged themselves in online discussions devoted to specific music genres or artists, (2005).

Online fan clubs have taken on a new way of interaction, where artists have more direct contact with their fans and the fans have more interaction with each other. They can now be regarded as a new type of community or a new source of revenue, depending on the intentions of the individual observing them. Internet fan club have become an important mediating factor in relationships between fans and artists and the fans themselves, thus deserving of greater attention, (Theberge, 2005, pp.486).

Fan clubs are a medium that serves specific functions for fans and the music industry as a whole; they act as channel in which fans can contact the desired artist and at the same time serve as a medium to promote tours and commercial releases. These clubs can be used to create a sense of identity for its members and can be used as a form of direct marketing. The music industry must learn to exploit the changing aspects of relationships made within the club in order to develop a new source of revenue to ensure the long-term survival of the industry itself, (Theberge, 2005, pp. 486-487).

Overall, Theberge found that the music industry must not only promote tours and commercial releases through the everyday lives of Internet fan clubs, but also involve fans in an ongoing way with artists' projects and with the marketing needs of the industry. For both musicians and fans, Internet fan clubs offer a certain type of access that has not been found in the history of fan culture. It allows one to perform their identities and relationships on a daily basis and this factor can be used as a source of profit making and identity formation, (2005, pp. 500).

In an effort to understand the use of fan labor, Nancy K. Baym and Robert Burnett studied the complexities of voluntary fan involvement in the Swedish music scene. According to Baym and Burnett, Swedish popular music has attained an



international profile as a vibrant music scene. Despite how small Sweden is, its musicians find audiences from the US, Europe, the UK, most of Asia and parts of South America ready to adopt their music, (2009).

The Swedish music scene, however, is very different in structure. Its fans work diligently as publicists, promoters, archivists and curators to spread the music worldwide. These fans work for free, promoting bands and labels on news sites, archives, blogs and in offline activities. Together, these fans serve as a filter of cultural materials for international consumption. This can be seen throughout the music industry and it is just one sector that is seeing its business model drastically changing by increasing interconnectivity and voice that were once seen as consumers, (Baym & Burnett, 2009, pp. 433-434).

However, fan labor is not only viewed in positive light. These fan practices are also viewed as exploitation through fan labor that has been an aspect of the Web 2.0 economy. Some critics believe that the Internet makes people easier to use and makes it possible to out-source many tasks to these users. The Internet validates a kind of promotional entrepreneurial capitalism that binds users to profit making service providers through the exploitation of users' labor, (Baym & Burnett, 2009, pp. 435).

Swedish independent music fans tend to be very organized over the Internet, building connections among themselves and their sites. They harness the power of many Internet communication platforms, including blogs, social networks, comments, discussion forums, private messages, shoutboxes, mp3 files and videos. In order to reach all potential fans, bands should maintain a presence on sites such as Myspace, Last.fm, Facebook, YouTube, Web sites, blogs, Twitter and others. Fans reduce the effort of

musicians to obtain to new fans by serving as publicists and filters, steering audience members towards or away from bands and labels. Martin Thornkvist coined this action as The Swedish Model, (Baym & Burnett, 2009, pp. 436).

After conducting a series of in-depth interviews with fans, musicians and members of independent Swedish record labels, Baym and Burnett came to the conclusion that exploitation and just reward are matters of perception. The real issue at hand is to identify the circumstances in which individuals experience their contributions as exploitation and those who do not, and to understand ways to manage these tensions. They also admit that musicians and record labels must assume the rewards that fan attain are not to equal as the ones they deserve and that fans can perceive their actions as a seduction by the power dynamic that exploits them. They then offer a positive strategy for adapting to changes in the music industry and present one path entertainment industries may take in the future, (2009, pp. 446-447).

### *The Use of Social Media and Fan Relations*

As the rise of the independent musicians ensues and the music industry continues to suffer the blows of lost revenues, one must harness the power of fan relations through social media in order to effectively reach audiences and increase popularity.

There is a common understanding among musicians that times are changing. New technologies, especially social media networks, allow artists to directly engage with their audiences, leaving the record industry with a feeling of redundancy. This presents a tremendous appeal to Music 2.0. Its existing fan base suggests music's traditional distribution infrastructure is not necessary. This is causing younger musicians to use

Music 2.0 as a way to bypass the decision-making process of major record labels, (Collins & Young, 2010, pp. 340 & 345).

Social networking sites enhance social capital, allowing musicians to cultivate and maintain close ties among their fans, which was not easy when record labels were the only resource to effectively reach audiences. However, the needs of local-level musicians have not created these changes, which are instead guided by the redefinition of intellectual property and attempts to re-engage fans through the Internet, (Sargent, 2009, pp. 470 & 475).

Musicians in the digital age have a less reverential attitude towards major record labels and hope that Music 2.0 technologies will allow them to bypass what they see as controlling overindulgences of the past. Some musicians have a poor viewpoint on record labels and radio stations and are enthusiastic about Music 2.0 because it offers the potential more a more rewarding way for making and selling music, (Collins & Young, 2010, pp. 348).

Independent artists hope for an extreme version of Music 2.0, which suggests a world without major record labels. Here, individual musicians are independently able to build a fan base and publish their music using new digital distribution tools. With this extreme version in mind, it is not uncommon for musicians to make their music independently and avoid relationships with major record labels, (Collins & Young, 2010, pp. 349).

In order to keep the independent spirit alive, musicians have turned to social media sites directly focused on music. Musicians see these sites as having significant impacts and offering a certain type of social wealth that is difficult to quantify. It presents

the opportunity to be heard, one that unsigned and amateur bands see as having premium value, (Collins & Young, 2010, pp. 350).

This also presents the idea that musicians are using the economy of Music 2.0 because it is built around the value of information manifested in social and professional networking rather than a financial economy derived from sales. Overall, social networking sites are seen as a good marketing tool, allowing musicians to build a community and to draw upon resources from the community with ease, (Collins & Young, 2010, pp. 351).

Touring musicians can also reap the benefits of fan relations through social media. This maintained form of social capital allows users to keep up with loose and fleeting ties developed in a highly mobile lifestyle. Internet communication and digital media exchange allows musicians to more effectively draw upon social relationships they had in other cities in order to get gigs and create audiences, (Sargent, 2009, pp. 478).

Overall, some record labels and artists have started to see the positive aspects of the use of music-directed social media. They realize that they are getting honest feedback from people who are passionate about music, buy records and talk to their friends about what they like, (O'Donnell & McClung, 2008, pp. 76). The main issue with the use of social media in the music industry is how to monetize creativity at a time when the value of recorded music is at an all-time low.

However, one aspect remains true; social media allows musicians to communicate more easily with fans and to forge relationships that are reinforced in real life engagements, such as music sales and attendance at live performances, (Collins & Young, 2010, pp. 354).

The use of social media for fan relations can be seen as more beneficial form of a promotion as compared to a marketing one, (O'Donnell & McClung, 2008, pp. 84). Despite the positive outlook on social media by independent musicians, the record industry has yet to integrate its use into a business model to keep the industry alive.

By merging the social media expertise of independent musicians and the profit making potential of the music industry based on its history, the use of music-directed social media networks can be used to create a new future for the music industry as a whole. This future can be mutually beneficial for the artists, fans and record industry. However, this calls for a large shift in the perceptions of all parties involved.

### *Summary*

While research has been done to gauge the perceptions of artists, fans and record labels on emerging social media networks, two issues still remain. Social media has yet to be monetized to supply profit to independent musicians. Record labels still face extinction because of the development of Music 2.0 and its impact on CD sales. An effort to incorporate ideas and skill from musicians and record labels could be mutually beneficial to both parties.

Despite the wide usage of social networking sites, record labels have yet to use their power to sustain their industry. By looking more in-depth at the components of major social networking sites and the knowledge of independent musicians, a new business model can emerge to keep the music industry afloat. Both the positive and negative aspects of the music-directed social media phenomena must be evaluated in order to properly use them to keep the attention of primary audiences. The fans are the

most important aspect of the music industry, thus perpetuating the necessity for a business model centered around them.

Chapter three outlines the specific research design in which the author will engage to assess the knowledge independent musicians hold on social media and the components of these Web sites. The chapter describes specific research techniques and how the researcher will execute them.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

How can the music industry as a whole use social media to redefine strategies to keep it alive? (In this instance, “social media” is defined as an Internet site that facilitates direct interaction between musicians and fans. It also refers to any form of social media used, despite its popularity nationally or internationally.)

#### *Research Design*

This study will determine the positive and negative aspects of music-directed social media as it pertains to independent musicians, or musicians who do not have a record contract with a major or indie label. Indie labels are defined as record labels that are not considered major record labels. Instead they are perceived as “underground” labels, where musicians with less popularity might acquire a contract but do not typically obtain the same amount of public visibility as major labels.

Many musicians and critics see music-directed social media as the way of the future. Brought on by Music 2.0, these social networking sites have created a way for independent musicians to market themselves without the aid of record labels. Before the rise of self-marketing, record labels were the only intermediary between the artist and its fans. Although looked down upon by the record industry, musicians’ use of social media cannot be denied nor will it vanish.

The record industry faces the possible dismantling of its business structure if it does not incorporate social media into a new business model. Their traditional methods of

promotion and sales have been failing since the beginning of the decade. Musicians also face the dilemma of finding a way to monetize their new form of marketing. Social media may have many positive effects on social capital, but it is very rare for musicians to make a profit.

The subjects of this study include independent musicians throughout New Jersey that utilize social media to promote their music. These musicians must have an online presence on at least two social networking sites, mainly those directed toward music promotion, and have used these sites for a minimum of six months. The study will examine the experience of these musicians with social media as their major marketing tool, to find the positive and negative impacts of these sites on their fan bases.

Findings will identify knowledge of music-directed social media and sentiments about how it has benefited or negatively impacted independent musicians. It will provide insights on how certain components can be utilized and how musicians view the record industry's role in the future.

#### *Source of Data*

The researcher will use a convenient sample in order to select eight musicians. The researcher intends to have a representation of a various genres and a number of counties throughout New Jersey. The musicians will be independent and will use social networking sites to marketing themselves.



### *Method of Acquiring Data*

The analysis will be conducted through a *content analysis* and *in-depth interviews*. The content analysis will be conducted before the in-depth interviews in order to provide the researcher with an in-depth knowledge of music-directed social media sites. This preliminary knowledge is important to the researcher based on the nature of the interviews. The in-depth interviews will be conducted from January through March 2011.

The researcher will find three bands that have a presence on Myspace, Purevolume and ReverbNation, giving the researcher nine social networking profiles to analyze. Their presence must be for at least six month in order to collect a satisfactory amount of information. The researcher will then collect 25 comments from each site. These comments will be categorized by their tone, whether positive, neutral or negative.

By looking at the tone of comments, the researcher will be able to determine the components of the sites and how fans use them. The researcher will also categorize the feedback musicians acquire through the three social networking sites in order to facilitate further discussion during in-depth interviews. Common key words will also be collected to determine any similarities or differences between the three social networking sites.

The researcher will also draft in-depth interview questions for independent musicians in New Jersey. The questions will identify the types of social networking sites interviewees use and how they use them. They will also identify the positive and negative impacts of these sites and how interviewees perceive their value. The questions will also address the interviewees' thoughts on the record industry's role in music promotion in the years to come.

The interviews will be conducted in-person and over the telephone to no fewer than eight independent musicians.

#### *Method of Analyzing Data*

The researcher will codify the content analysis, then use the quantitative data to identify social networking site components and comment tone.

The researcher will also codify interview answers.

The researcher will use information obtained through the content analysis to develop questions for the interviews, to keep a common theme between the two methods.

Codification and analysis will provide insight into how music-directed social media is used and how record labels and incorporate it into a new business model.

#### *Summary*

Research reveals that CD sales dropped with the advent of Music 2.0. Some critics believe that peer-to-peer file sharing was the initial cause of the record industry's decline and social media sites that stream music may be the form that seals its fate. The research also reveals that social networking sites have developed as a way for musicians without record contracts to effectively market themselves to current and new fan bases.

The record industry has made numerous attempts to fight against or join the Music 2.0 wave. These attempts first began with actively prosecuting peer-to-peer file sharing programs and their users. Its attempts have been futile, as free music downloading services are still widely used today. After their attempts to thwart Music 2.0 failed, it presented paid for downloading services. Although they have been more

successful than law suits, they still have yet to reach the popularity of peer-to-peer file sharing and streaming music.

Although Music 2.0 has seemed to replace the traditional methods of acquiring music, the record industry has yet to effectively adopt these techniques into a business model. Without a new mindset and an interest in building social capital among fans, the record industry will face its demise in the years to come.

However, the record industry is not the only member of the music industry that needs to capitalize on the use of music-directed social media. Independent musicians must find a way to monetize their presence on social networking sites in order to make a substantial profit, something that has only been possible with the aid of record labels.

This researcher's primary research seeks to identify the positive negative impacts of social networking sites on musicians and it can be utilized in the future.

Chapter four provides primary research results, which range from the tone and components of specific social networking sites to attitudes towards social networking sites as marketing tools. The chapter contains charts and graphs to provide quick data references. Although it contains strict data, the chapter provides insight into the make-up and sentiments of music-directed social networking sites, with regards to marketing and promotion.

## *Chapter 4*

### Research Data

The following research examines the predominate use of social media sites by independent musicians. The researcher first conducts a content analysis to catalog comments made by friends. The data is then analyzed and incorporated into in-depth interview questions.

The in-depth interviews collect opinions from New Jersey independent musicians from various genres. The data is then examined to find positive and negative use of music-directed social media. Interview participants also provide subjective views of the current situation of the recording industry.

### *General Findings*

As previously stated, the content analysis conduct provides in-depth knowledge about music-directed social media prior to the interviews. The tone and keywords present the general nature of analyzed Web sites.

The content analysis is not meant to support any of the hypotheses. Its purpose is providing an understanding of primary music-directed social media sites to the researcher in order to properly identify topics and draft interview questions.

When analyzing Myspace, the researcher finds that a majority of comments are neutral in nature. Common keywords also follow the tone, as they are very neutral in nature.

Table 1: Keyword Analysis for Band #1's Myspace

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Add	4	10	0
Friend	2	7	0
Thanks	5	18	0
Request	1	1	0
Music	3	3	0
Show	2	0	0

Each keyword is counted by number of appearances. Multiple keywords can be present in each comment. Multiple tones can also be present in each comment. The coder chooses keywords and each comment is properly analyzed and cataloged.

A pattern occurs early on, as there is a lack in negative comments. Positive comments make an appearance, but with a low number of occurrences. Neutral comments outweigh all other categories.

The following table presents generally the same type of data. Comments tend to stay neutral with a small lean toward positive connotations. The same keywords are analyzed for tone and counted by their number of appearances throughout the pre-selected comments.

Table 2: Keyword Analysis for Band #2's Myspace

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Add	1	9	0
Friend	1	5	0
Thanks	4	20	0
Request	0	6	0
Music	0	3	0
Show	0	0	0

Table two provides a definite neutral stance. No negative comments appear, while very few positive keywords are found.

The neutral pattern continues through the two analyses. It results from a consistent comment source from other bands who “friend” the analyzed bands. These bands comment on fellow bands’ profiles to promote their own music, live events and recording sessions. These comments are status updates in the form of comments and are self-serving. These bands do not aim to provide feedback, rather than reach a larger audience than their friend list can foster.

Based on its high occurrence on analyzed profiles, it is commonplace for bands to write self-promoting comments. This technique thus lack negative stigma among independent bands. Instead, it creates a way to facilitate a new fan base that is unable to reach through other methods. The following table confirms this analysis.

*Table 3: Keyword Analysis for Band #3’s Myspace*

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	
Add	1		4	0
Friend	0		2	0
Thanks	1		4	0
Request	0		0	0
Music	4		4	0
Show	10		6	0

Table three’s data varies from the previous tables. Instead of creating a very neutral stance, this band collects ample feedback; however, this feedback is only positive. The lack of negative comments occurs throughout all analyses.

The main reason for the lack of negative comments stems from the natures of music-directed social media sites. Those commenting on band profiles are referred to as

“friends.” These friends already enjoy the band’s music, support them and wish to see them succeed. This creates a bias among comments. These friendships mean that any negative opinions will not be shared.

The analyzed bands confirm a bias from self-promotion comments. Previous figures show that a majority of keyword appearances relate to the words thanks, add, friend and request. These are usually in the same sentence and refer to the friend thanking the band for accepting their friend request. This sentence holds a neutral connotation, as it does not provide the band with feedback.

Another reason for a lack in negative tone can also rely on the band. Myspace gives bands the ability to delete any posted comments on their profile. In order to reduce negative exposure on the Internet, bands can be inclined to delete negative feedback. Deleting comments shows a bias created by the band. Rather than embrace criticism and using it to improve, bands aim to eliminate it.

Myspace faces a decline of users based on its increased use of spam. Generalized comments prevail over feedback, as displayed in the previous figures. This deters users and forces them to find other sources.

Following Myspace, Facebook continues to evolve into a music-directed social media vehicle. Its current renovation added space dedicated to music, whether independent or represented.

Based on its expanding usage over Myspace, Facebook profiles provide a larger number of keywords. Its lack of generalized, self-promoting comments also facilitates more keywords.

Table 4: Keyword Analysis for Band #1's Facebook

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Listen	1	1	0
CD/Album	3	1	0
Songs	0	0	0
Friend	1	1	0
Thanks	3	0	0
Gig	2	0	0
Band	1	7	0
Request	0	1	0
Support	2	2	0
Show	6	2	0

Much like Myspace, table four lacks negative comments; however unlike previous tables, tone is evenly spread out between positive and neutral columns. This table also shows a heavily concentrated number of keyword appearances dealing with live performances. These include show, support and gig.

The following table shows a very low usage of any keywords or tone. This results from a large display of graphic design in comments, rather than actual comments. If the analysis includes graphic, the overall tone would remain neutral.

Table 5: Keyword Analysis for Band #2's Facebook

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Listen	0	0	0
CD/Album	0	0	0
Songs	3	0	0
Friend	0	0	0
Thanks	0	1	0
Gig	1	0	0
Band	1	3	0
Request	0	0	0
Support	0	0	0
Show	0	1	0



As a result from this reliance on graphic design in comments, Table five shows an even number of positive and neutral keyword appearances. Much like the rest of the analysis, band two does not receive negative comments. Keyword appearances also range from those referring to live performances and those about listening to the band's music.

The final portion of the content analysis also lacks sufficient comments. Band three's Facebook also relies heavily on graphic design. Because graphic design is not analyzed, overall tone of the profile is not represented. Only written word is analyzed and thus considered to determine tone and widely used keywords.

*Table 6: Keyword Analysis for Band #3's Facebook*

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Listen	2	2	0
CD/Album	1	0	0
Songs	0	0	0
Friend	0	0	0
Thanks	0	0	0
Gig	0	0	0
Band	0	2	0
Request	0	0	0
Support	1	3	0
Show	9	16	0

Table six shows a large use of keywords pertaining to live performances. A few keywords appear regarding listening to the band's music. As an overall determinant of bands' Facebook content, the analysis shows that profiles mainly discuss live performances. A live show schedule is provided and fans or other bands comment about the performance after it has occurred.

Based on findings from the content analysis, in-depth interviewees answer questions to add the understanding. This includes types of social media, perceptions on

their effectiveness, their benefits and downfalls and similarities between band profiles and personal profiles.

Despite the differences in answers for general usage, all participants agree that music-directed social media is an important aspect of their marketing efforts. Some site it as a way to gain new fans while others discuss the importance of creating a digital image for the band. The following quotes regard general usage of social media sites:

“We utilize it by gaining fans and creating a digital image for ourselves, such as pictures and promo pictures. We also get a chance to provide songs, sneak peaks of videos, upcoming events and good news, such as recording,” says participant one.

“Social media is very important to everything that we do. It is the best way to get our stuff out there. Everyone is on the Internet so you have the biggest crowd to hear your stuff,” says participant two.

One hundred percent of participants agree that social media is a vast medium that allows a large audience to interact with bands. More and more people are turning to the Internet to find music, and music-directed social media makes it simple to find it.

Although social media is important to independent musicians, 80 percent of participants cite downfalls to its usage. These downfalls include a drop in CD sales, a lack in live performance attendance and an outside perception of inexperience among independent bands.

All participants cite using Myspace and Facebook as primary social media vehicles. Participants also cite Purevolume, Youtube, Twitter, Stereo Killer and ReverNation as useful tools.

Sixty percent of participants claim to incorporate Youtube into their online presences. One interviewee comments, “it not only gives the audience an audible representation of what we’re doing, but also a visual one. We’ll put live show videos up and also music videos we shoot. With the decline of Myspace, Youtube is becoming the new prominent way to promote your music.”

Participants also explain that it is still difficult to reach audiences through Youtube because they do not create accounts. They see the best way to direct them to Youtube is by posting a link on their Myspace or Facebook profiles.

A surprisingly useful tool for musicians is Twitter. Participants aim to create Twitter accounts in order to provide the most up-to-date information about performances, recording and other band happenings; however, interviewees find it difficult to keep up with. The main issue is how much time is committed to updating a Twitter and having enough news to post tweets everyday.

Twenty percent of participants cite the use of Stereo Killer as a social media platform. This Website is comparable to Myspace but allows for more customization. Its purpose is to share music with other bands. This is evident because one cannot own an account unless he or she is a band member.

One hundred percent of participants place importance on face-to-face interaction. This can occur at a live performance or in general. They claim that social media use must be fostered by some type of face-to-face interaction. Bands need to foster relationships with their fans. One interviewee also explains the importance of creating an image. This means a band must “create an image and play it up at a venue. You can be an intellectual,

a partier, etc. You need to get to know your fans on more of a personal level. That's what gets them to look for you.”

Among participants with recorded music, 100 percent sell their songs on iTunes. This paid-for downloading service is widely used but does not generate substantial profit for independent bands. Participants do not care about the profit and try to supplement it with CD sales. They only aim to get their music out to audiences in any way they can, whether fans pay for it or not.

Among emerging tools for independent bands, Purevolume Critics' Picks creates a platform to interact with record labels. This list of accomplished independent artists is where record executives turn from time to time in order to acquire new talent. The only issue interviewees find is that labels might not look at a band if they do not have a certain number of fans, friends or plays. A less talented band can create an advantage over other bands by finding ways to increase their friend list or number of plays.

### *Hypothesis #1*

**It is expected that musicians see social media as a new way to influence their existing fan base.**

According to research findings, 80 percent of participants believe existing fans are inclined to find their bands on social media sites. In terms of this research, an existing fan is an individual who listened to and supported the band before any social media presence began.

“They are pretty inclined to find us because the fans we do have are very dedicated so they want the most up-to-date information on us,” says interviewee one.

“They are more inclined if we don’t have anything physical to give them like a CD. The Internet is an incredible way to promote your music. Existing fans will keep going back to it,” says interviewee two.

“They need to come into your world. If you create a world but don’t stick to it or don’t give them something to listen to, they will be lazy. They might not even delete you so you don’t know if they are still fans. They are still around and will read but you won’t get a reaction,” says interviewee four.

Twenty percent of participants do not have an existing fan base. This is due to their short-term status as a band. Also, some bands tend to begin creating a fan base through social media, thus eliminating any fan base existing before a social media presence.

Only 40 percent of participants include anything on their profiles specifically for existing fans. These components include exclusive downloads, show postings, live performance footage and others.

Participants also include up-to-date information for existing fans. They claim this is to keep them interested. Rather than forcing them to listen to the same songs and grow bored, more features and links are posted to keep profiles fresh.

The idea of a street team emerged during 60 percent of interviews. Each cites some interest of use of a street team, whether face-to-face or virtual. Street teams usually include family members, friends and devoted fans that want to see a band succeed. Activities come in the form of missions or a simple mailing list. Although street teams have their benefits, 40 percent of participants only see them as a tool during a tour.

## *Hypothesis #2*

**It is expected that if musicians engage directly with their audience, it will cause them to grow a new fan base.**

According to research results, a number of primary ways new or emerging fans hear of bands. 40 percent of participants cite word-of-mouth as the most popular way to reach audiences. In this instance, word-of-mouth is any general audiences pass along information to other individuals. Fans pass along the name of a band to a potential fan. This is repeated a number of times, creating a snowball effect for acquiring fans. This interaction between a fan and a potential fan can occur face-to-face or digitally.

Forty percent of participants cite live performances as their primary way of reaching new fans. Most shows include three to five bands, giving audiences opportunities to hear new music. Depending on how often a band plays, this can happen often.

Only 20 percent of participants cite social media as the best way to reach new or emerging fans. In this instance, Facebook overpowered Myspace and other social media sites as a primary source for new fans.

Regardless of how they are reached, 60 percent of participants believe new fans are inclined to add their band as a friend or bookmark them. This gives the band the ability to constantly reach the new fan, as information will show up on news feeds. Bands do not have to wait for fans to return to their profile to promote themselves.

Twenty percent of participants believe new fans are inclined to add them depending on their interaction in-person. This brings up the idea of creating an image. A professional and friendly relationship is fostered through this image; however, the band

members must stay consistent with their image. Inconsistencies will deter the new fan from reaching out through social media sites.

Face-to-face interaction is an idea that reoccurs throughout all interviews. One hundred percent of participants direct fans to social media sites in order to build awareness. This is usually done through face-to-face interaction, especially at live performances. Participants do this by handing out business cards, creating flyers or simply mentioning sites while on-stage.

All participants also cite social media as an important way to increase fan bases. The most common reason relies on the Internet's reach. Social media profiles are able to reach a vast number of individuals, creating a simple way to acquire fans. Participants also emphasize the importance of emersion and frequency. By posting information a few times, an individual could gain interest once. All a band needs is for an individual to click through to their profile once. This can cause long-term fandom.

### *Hypothesis #3*

**It is expected that record labels will no longer be needed as an intermediary between musicians and fans.**

The following data is the compilation of subjective views. The researcher understands that interviewees cannot represent the opinions of all band members, thus providing only personal opinions.

According to research results, 80 percent of participants believe record labels are still necessary in today's music industry. Major reasons for their support include financial backing, distribution purposes and wider promotion reach.

“I think it is very necessary for the sole reason of financial backing. Basically it is hundreds to thousands of dollars to record now and being an unsigned band, it is extremely difficult to raise the money. The music industry isn’t really thriving in Bergen County, making it even more difficult to raise money,” says interviewee one.

“They are necessary if you want to succeed in a mainstream market but there are also people who can completely avoid them and still be successful. Bands with record labels dominate the market at such a high rate that its hard for independent bands to compete,” says interviewee three.

“I think that record labels, to an extent, are necessary for advertising and publishing purposes. They are capable of mass-producing while we cannot. It is too expensive. They can help you get a large following,” says interviewee four.

Only 20 percent of participants do not believe record labels are necessary in today’s music industry. They feel that social media can fulfill a majority of record label functions and that a band can be successful without a record contract. According to interviewee two, “People are able to do it themselves now and it is also very hard to get onto a label. The idea of the seven-record deal is dead these days. No one is doing that anymore. More and more people are building studios in their basements. You won’t owe a record company any more. The economy makes it hard to do a huge studio album and pay a label back.”

Despite a percentage of participants stating the rise of social media as the primary promotional tool, 100 percent of interviewees still desire a record contract as social media evolves. They believe that record labels still control the market and will help bands reach more fans. With a record label, bands can play better venues and reach fans



internationally. Each participant plans to continue promotion through social media, but aims to sign a record contract in the future.

## *Chapter 5*

### *Evaluation*

#### *Interpretation of data*

Preliminary research in the form of a content analysis showed a large bias among social media profile comments. Two categories of comments prevail: Bands promoting themselves on other profiles or generic comments thanking the band for their friend request. These types of comments form a neutral tone among Myspace and Facebook.

Along with generally neutral comments, a small number of positive comments were found. These comments stem from fostered relationships among fans, friends and family. These posts come from people who want to see a band succeed. Because these people already have some type of relationship with the band, negative comments are rare.

Facebook presents a larger following, as Myspace faces a large quantity of spammers. If genuine feedback is what a band desires, the primary source through social media is Facebook. Myspace seems to be falling behind and many bands are moving away from it.

Overall, the research shows an overwhelming need for independent musicians to promote on social media Websites. Social media provides bands with vast audiences and ways to disseminate up-to-date information. Both new fans and long-term fans are inclined to search for bands on social media platforms.

Long-term fans tend to reach out more frequently and with less motivation than new fans. These existing fans already have some type of relationship with the band and wish to see them succeed. They are also more interested in other profile components

other than streamed music. These components include live footage clips, music videos and live performance schedules.

Independent bands are using social media to reach out to new or potential fans, but a face-to-face relationship must be fostered to motivate fans. These interactions usually occur at live performances and fans are directed to social media through business cards, fliers or word-of-mouth. Independent musicians also rely on word-of-mouth between fans to generate a larger fan base.

Despite social media's evolution into a music promotion vehicle, record labels are still necessary. They provide financial backing, enhanced touring opportunities, wider distribution areas and extensive advertising. Independent musicians will continue to use social media but aim to sign a record contract in the future.

### *Conclusions*

**H1: It is expected that musicians see social media as a new way to influence their existing fan base.**

Based on the data, hypothesis one is supported. Existing fans are inclined to reach bands through social media because musicians offer up-to-date information and additional features. These features generate interest and continue to foster the relationship. These fans also try to support musicians in any way, including providing possible live performance opportunities. Support can also come in the simple form of criticism and genuine feedback.

**H2: It is expected that if musicians engage directly with their audience, it will cause them to grow a new fan base.**

Hypothesis two is supported because Independent musicians are using social media to create a relationship with new fans; however a face-to-face interaction must precede it. In order to generate enough interest in social media profiles, interaction during shows or meetings must be friendly and professional. Previously built images must remain consistent through interactions and social media profiles. Independent musicians also rely on digital word-of-mouth between fans and potential fans to increase their fan base.

**H3: It is expected that record labels will no longer be needed as an intermediary between musicians and fans.**

Hypothesis three is not supported because independent musicians still see record labels as necessary. Although the record industry faces a slow and steady decline, labels still dominate the market. In order to gain mainstream success, musicians must acquire a record contract. In terms of being an intermediary, record labels are still necessary in order to reach fans beyond the musicians geographic area, whether nationally or internationally.

#### *Contribution to the Field*

The use of social media is an upcoming tool within a number of fields. Other fields, such as consumer products, have presented a vast amount of research on the topic and have been working diligently to harness its power.

On the other hand, the music industry seems to lack the research it needs to understand how social media will change its field and how it can utilize it. To provide the knowledge necessary to adapt to the shift in musical power, the author conducted both

qualitative and quantitative research. The researcher aimed to further the understanding of social media networks and the independent musicians who use them. This will provide the music industry, whether record labels, musicians or fans, with knowledge that will aid in using these websites to their fullest extent.

### *Further Research*

In order to generalize any data pertaining to this research, a larger geographic location must be examined. Other regions in the United States stand out as “hubs” for the music industry. These regions should be examined in order to highlight opinion differences according to geography.

Along with an expansion of regions, other music genres must be considered. The current research only represents different genres of rock. Other musicians use social media as a promotional tool and these include hip-hop, country, pop, rap, etc. In order to examine opinions of all musicians, different genres must be analyzed.

The researcher used a convenient sample to obtain participants for in-depth interviews. In order to generalize data, future research should include a random sample.

Music-directed social media exists beyond Myspace and Facebook. Other comment-based platforms with likeness rating scales should be considered, whether they are heavily used or just emerging.

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## Appendix A: Content Analysis

Band #1	Myspace		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Add	4	10	0
Friend	2	7	0
Thanks	5	18	0
Request	1	1	0
Music	3	3	0
Show	2	0	0

Band #1	Facebook		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative
listen	1	1	0
CD/album	3	1	0
songs	0	0	0
friend	1	1	0
thanks	3	0	0
gig	2	0	0
band	1	7	0
request	0	1	0
support	2	2	0
show	6	2	0

Band #2	Myspace		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Add	1	9	0
Friend	1	5	0
Thanks	4	20	0
Request	0	6	0
Music	0	3	0
Show	0	0	0

Band #2	Facebook		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative
listen	0	0	0
CD/album	0	0	0
songs	3	0	0
friend	0	0	0
thanks	0	1	0
gig	1	0	0
band	1	3	0
request	0	0	0



support	0	0	0
show	0	1	0

Band #3	Myspace		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Add	1	4	0
Friend	0	2	0
Thanks	1	4	0
Request	0	0	0
Music	4	4	0
Show	10	6	0

Band #3	Facebook		
	Positive	Neutral	Negative
listen	2	2	0
CD/album	1	0	0
songs	0	0	0
friend	0	0	0
thanks	0	0	0
gig	0	0	0
band	0	2	0
request	0	0	0
support	1	3	0
show	9	16	0

## Appendix B: Interviews

### Interviewee #1

**County:** Bergen

**Genre:** Metalcore

**# of Social Media Profiles:** 4

**Online Presence:** Over one year

#### GF Genre of Music

1. How does your band and other bands in your genre utilize social media?

- We utilize it by gaining fans and creating a digital image for ourselves, such as pictures and promo pictures. We also get a chance to provide songs, sneak peaks of videos, upcoming events and good news, such as recording.

2. How do you see it benefiting musicians such as yourself?

- I see it benefiting because just about everyone is on the computer these days and we can not only get people to listen to our music, but also let them know about upcoming shows, which is great because they come out, and have the ability to meet people, just get to know the fans.

3. How do you see it hurting musicians such as yourself?

I see it hurting too because fans can download our music off of the Internet instead of buying a CD. It kind of defeats the purpose of us recording our music and trying to make money because it is expensive to record.

#### GF Social Media Types

4. What types of social media do you use for your music?

We use Myspace, the first one we began using, ReverbNation, Purevolume, Facebook, LastFM, Youtube, Twitter (do not tweet that often). We also have our own website.

5. Do you use your personal social media sites to promote your music social media sites? How?

Absolutely. ReverbNation is kind of the mother of all of our sites because it collects information from the rest and catalogs it. There are also links to the rest of our sites on it, like a link to our Myspace page.

We try to link our other profiles on each other to forward fans to all sources of information.

Any account that I own is geared toward the band so there is a lot of information on my personal accounts as well. I use it to get more fans to the band profiles.

6. What social media sites do you find to be more efficient? How?

Facebook is one of the biggest but not for music, so I would say ReverbNation just because it syncs with all of your other profiles. It also shows opportunities for gigs and possible fans in your area. Any posts made on ReverbNation are posted on all the other profiles, including my personal accounts.

## **H2 New Fan Base**

7. How do new fans or emerging fans reach you/hear of you?

Normally I think it's more of word-of-mouth now. That starts with one person going to one of our sites and telling a friend about it so they are on the site too. Its also shows as well and that comes back to our Websites because they see a show posted so they'll come out and bring a friend. It helps us potentially gain more fans.

8. How inclined are they to add you as a favorite/add as a friend/bookmark you on your social media sites?

I think they are pretty inclined to because a lot of these sites don't make you create a profile to hear us or leave any kind of feedback for our band. If they do stumble upon one of our sites, they spend at least a few minutes on it listening to a song or reading a bio.

I think we have an advantage because myself and another band member into graphic design so we look good digitally. Our Website is spicy because it cool images on it, it is well done and well organized so people have no trouble navigating through our sites to find any information they need.

9. Do you promote your social media sites to direct new fans to them?

Yes, we recently had business cards made with our main Website on it. Through that, you can get to any of our other sites. We always try to tell them to look us up on any of our sites or to even Google us.

10. How do you think you can increase your fan base by using social media?

Well as of now, we can't play a show in let's say Australia. Someone out there might like the genre and can still hear us through our sites.

11. As an estimate, how many fans of your music do you think don't create profile on these sites or add you as a friend, but still frequent your page?

I'd say out of the visits we get to your page, probably a good ¼ of them don't have a profile or account, but they'll still spend time on our sites to listen to our songs and read about the band.

- Does them not having a profile hinder you from reaching them again?

Yes because it's easy for them because they don't need to create a profile so it's easy for them to check us out and be play us anywhere. They don't need to hear our news when we post it. They can come and go as they please, if they even return at all.

## **H1 Existing Fan Base**

12. How inclined are long-term fans to find you through social media?

They are pretty inclined to find us because the fans we do have are very dedicated so they want the most up-to-date information on us. They can also join a mailing list so they get updates constantly and can send us feedback.

13. What do you include on your pages for existing fans?

Yes, if you are a member, you can sign onto ReverbNation to get exclusive downloads, such as a clip to a new song or a video. They get treated well because they treat us well.

14. Why do existing fans access your social media sites?

These fans are usually close friends of the band so it's a good way to communicate and it makes it really easy for them to enjoy our music. They can also provide us with ideas and suggestions.

H2 - What about the idea of street teams to push people toward social media?

We did a little bit with the mailing list but we haven't sent any missions to the street team members due to a lack of shows because of recording. We plan to use it more in the near future to put out fliers and other promotional materials.

15. How can you utilize existing fans to direct potential/new fans to your social media sites?

We want them to make sure new fans know they can also get our stuff, like to get a CD or get the information on what's happening next with us.

16. Do existing fans contact you for live performance opportunities? How can you make your social media sites into a platform for performance inquiries?

They do use sites to contacts us about shows. Some fans will request us to play in areas we wouldn't normally travel to and we love playing shows, so we are open to do it. These sites definitely form a common ground for us to stand on with our fans because they know we actually respond to what they send us.

### **H3 Record Labels**

17. How necessary are record labels in today's music?

I think it is very necessary for the sole reason of financial backing. Basically it is hundreds to thousands of dollars to record now and being an unsigned band, it is extremely difficult to raise the money. The music industry isn't really thriving in Bergen County, making it even more difficult to raise money.

18. How can social media sites substitute record labels?

They get our name out and doing most of the promotion that a label would do. It ultimately helps us gain fans and find new places to play shows.

19. How are record labels adapting to musicians' sense of independence because of social media?

They will contact an independent band and offer touring options as a probation period for any kind of record deal. They want to see how you handle the stress and carry yourselves.

20. Will you still desire a record contract as social media continues to evolve?

Absolutely. I feel that a contract can offer a band a better chance to expand their sound in America and around the world. It can help us travel, play at the best venues and have the best fans.

Other comments:

I believe that social media is more good than it is bad at this point because everyone is using a computer now. It also helps us see how many people actually look at us, by tracking views on our pages. We can also see where these viewers are from to know what states have more fans than others. It really has given us a head start if we ever hit the road and do a tour.

## **Interviewee #2**

**County: Bergen**

**Genre: Alternative Rock**

**# of Social Media Sites: 2**

**Online Presence: One and half years**

### **Genre of Music**

GF 1. How does your band and other bands in your genre utilize social media?

Social media is very important to everything that we do. It is the best way to get our stuff out there. Everyone is on the Internet so you have the biggest crowd to hear your stuff.

GF 2. How do you see it benefiting musicians such as yourself?

I see it benefiting everyone because that's where people are starting to look. People are going to shows less and less. People are lazy and want to stay home to use their fingers to find music and discover new bands.

GF 3. How do you see it hurting musicians such as yourself?

Everyone is staying in one place to find music. If you have a promotional event or a show, less people are inclined to come because they can find your music online.

### **Social Media Types**

GF 4. What types of social media do you use for your music?

Youtube, Facebook, Myspace, ReverbNation and Twitter.

GF - How do you see twitter being used for unsigned musicians?

It just gives them a little update on what we've been working on and what they can expect to come in the near future.

GF 5. Do you use your personal social media sites to promote your music social media sites? How?

Yes, we have pages for our band but if we are just hanging out at home and feel like promoting the band, we'll probably use our own accounts to do that. We can post a portion of a video or a link to one of our songs. We want people to be able to access our stuff as easily as possible so we use links.

GF 6. What social media sites do you find to be more efficient? How?

Youtube because it not only gives the audience an audible representation of what we're doing, but also a visual one. We'll put live show videos up and also music videos we shoot. With the decline of Myspace, Youtube is becoming the new prominent way to promote your music.

GF - How do you see Facebook being used?

Facebook is the best primary source to reach people because you direct people to your other sites.



## H2 New Fan Base

7. How do new fans or emerging fans reach you/hear of you?

I think the best way to do it is through word-of-mouth on the Internet. It is a lot of work for the band to keep badgering people so you have to be patient and keep posting. Some people may view it as spam but for every person that hears it three times, a new person will hear it once.

8. How inclined are they to add you as a favorite/add as a friend/bookmark you on your social media sites?

I think people are pretty inclined to do this. People like having sources at their disposal so when there is a new band; they are willing to give them a chance.

9. Do you promote your social media sites to direct new fans to them?

Yes. If we are playing a show and there are a lot of new faces, we ask them to check out our sites. That's something we do at every show we play or anytime we meet people. Rather than giving them a CD that they can lose, they can always find our music on the Internet.

We also hand out fliers and CDs but we include our sites on them.

10. How do you think you can increase your fan base by using social media?

It increases so much more than just at shows because it's available to more people on the Internet. People are always surfing the Internet so one link can reach twice as many people as a show can.

11. As an estimate, how many fans of your music do you think don't create profile on these sites or add you as a friend, but still frequent your page?

A lot of people because we'll put something up and a family member will show it to friends. They can show it to their kids or other friends. People we don't know or people who we don't know have an account will eventually be reached.

- Do you see them as an actual part of your fan base?

They are a big potential part of your fan base. It may not start out that way but if you continue to use these sites the way you are supposed to, they can definitely become a part of your fan base.

- What do you see as the best way to get them as a core part of your fan base?

Just being determined to have them hear your stuff. You need to repost and have other people repost for you. They serve as a street team. We can only do so much at a time so people helping you out to get your name out on these sites really helps. It's an important thing that most bands aren't using right now.

H1- Who makes up your street team?

It starts out as just friends and family, and then turns into core fans. It's a mix of people who want to see you succeed.

H1- How big should an effective street team be?

It could start out small and increase in size over time. It works out the same way as if you were to do it yourself, just on a bigger scale.

## **H1 Existing Fan Base**

12. How inclined are long-term fans to find you through social media?

They are more inclined if we don't have anything physical to give them like a CD. The Internet is an incredible way to promote your music. Existing fans will keep going back to it.

13. What do you include on your pages for existing fans?

We let them know everything we are doing. We give them show updates, studio updates and as much of our media as we can. We post all of our songs and links to iTunes. We want people to stay interested and see new things once in a while instead hearing the same songs. We try to keep it fresh and updated.

- Is iTunes a good platform for new bands?

We use it just as another outlet but we understand people aren't really buying CDs anymore. For right now, I don't see it as a bad thing because the more people that can access our music, the better for us. It doesn't matter if they pay for it, as long as they can get it.

14. Why do existing fans access your social media sites?

15. How can you utilize existing fans to direct potential/new fans to your social media sites?

Through a street team or through the Website itself. Fans can post links as well. That's the great thing about these sites. There are no restrictions. Existing fans that want to help can find new people that are willing to hear us.

16. Do existing fans contact you for live performance opportunities? How can you make your social media sites into a platform for performance inquiries?

A lot of fans contact us but usually more in person. We always list our shows online and post about it a few days before the actual performance. We want to make it as easy as possible to come see us play.

### **H3 Record Labels**

17. How necessary are record labels in today's music?

I don't see it as a necessity. People are able to do it themselves now and it is also very hard to get onto a label. The idea of the seven-record deal is dead these days. No one is doing that anymore. More and more people are building studios in their basements. You won't owe a record company any more. The economy makes it hard to do a huge studio album and pay a label back.

18. How can social media sites substitute record labels?

I see a record label as a form of distribution. I think having your music on the Internet today is better than having it in a store. Its just they way technology is changing everything. People are buying everything online. Whether they are buying or downloading your music, they are still getting it o the Internet. Record stores are closing everywhere so there aren't many places to have your CD sold.

19. How are record labels adapting to musicians' sense of independence because of social media?

I think they understand they way things are going. A lot of labels are closing because people are doing it themselves. They are trying to find a way to let people do things to a certain extent and then come in to help. Record labels keep track of social media use and will try to use it as much as they can.

20. Will you still desire a record contract as social media continues to evolve?

Once we've done our part using social media, a record label would be helpful to get our names out in a way that we can't. A record company can help with radio and TV to reach different people who don't use the Internet as much.

Having your music in TV show is helping out a lot today. It will reach a lot of people you wouldn't think could be into your music. They are more of a financial means and a way to access different media you can't.

Other comments:

You need to use it as much as you can in whatever way you can. Possibilities are becoming endless and it can help your band in ways you didn't think were possible on the Internet. You can reach more people.

### **Interviewee #3**

**County: Morris**  
**Genre: Pop Punk**

#### **GF Genre of Music**

1. How does your band and other bands in your genre utilize social media?

Myspace is becoming outdated and Facebook helps you gather more fans.

Purevolume works to reach other bands.

2. How do you see it benefiting musicians such as yourself?

You can get your name out through this open medium. Everyone has access to the Internet so it's easier to reach people.

3. How do you see it hurting musicians such as yourself?

It puts everyone in the same pool and there is a lot of inexperience. It dilutes the bands that put forth a real effort.

#### **GF Social Media Types**

4. What types of social media do you use for your music?

Myspace, Facebook Purevolume, Twitter, Youtube

5. Do you use your personal social media sites to promote your music social media sites?

How?

Yes. We supplement the band's page with our own pages. We repost the band's events to reach more friends.

6. What social media sites do you find to be more efficient? How?

Facebook encompasses everything you need to successfully market yourself.

- Not at the point of their experience where the band can use street teams. They see it helping when they begin to tour.

## **H2 New Fan Base**

7. How do new fans or emerging fans reach you/hear of you?

They reach us primarily on Facebook.

8. How inclined are they to add you as a favorite/add as a friend/bookmark you on your social media sites?

They also share the page with their friends. The grapevine is a great way to multiply our fan base.

9. Do you promote your social media sites to direct new fans to them?

It is hard to find a band that does not mention their social media sites when on stage at a show.

10. How do you think you can increase your fan base by using social media?

We do it through emersion. We put ourselves out there at such a high rate that its difficult to ignore.

11. As an estimate, how many fans of your music do you think don't create profile on these sites or add you as a friend, but still frequent your page?

I believe it is 10-15 a week and they are a main part of our fan base because we don't really have a physical object to give them, like a CD.

We also use iTunes and is a good way to sell music. It is not a good way to reach new people because it is much easier to find music for free. Our CD sales are still higher for us and other emerging bands.

### **H1 Existing Fan Base**

12. How inclined are long-term fans to find you through social media?

It is really the only choice they have.

13. What do you include on your pages for existing fans?

Everything we put out is pretty generalized.

14. Why do existing fans access your social media sites?

They use it to keep in contact and to listen to our music because they don't purchase it.

15. How can you utilize existing fans to direct potential/new fans to your social media sites?

16. Do existing fans contact you for live performance opportunities? How can you make your social media sites into a platform for performance inquiries?

They definitely do and it can play a role to branch us out to other areas. It isn't the main way we branch out, but it helps.

### **H3 Record Labels**

17. How necessary are record labels in today's music?

They are necessary if you want to succeed in a mainstream market but there are also people who can completely avoid them and still be successful. Bands with record labels dominate the market at such a high rate that its hard for independent bands to compete.

18. How can social media sites substitute record labels?

You can circumvent promotional tools record labels have through social media. It's a free way of promotion. Record labels provide a lot of money so social media can only substitute so much.

19. How are record labels adapting to musicians' sense of independence because of social media?

I think they branch out further down the scale by seeking out unsigned bands. They are found because they get so popular through social media. They can search through Purevolume's top unsigned artists and critics' picks. Once bands can rise up through the independent scene, record labels will come and scoop them up. Record executives don't have to do a lot of work finding bands.

20. Will you still desire a record contract as social media continues to evolve?

With the way they control the market, record labels will monopolize the industry for a long time coming regardless of how social media evolves.

Other comments:

It's an effective way to market yourself but it shouldn't be overestimated. It can only go so far.



## Interviewee #4

**Genre: Union**  
**County: Rock/Pop**

### GF Genre of Music

1. How does your band and other bands in your genre utilize social media?

Depending on the type, we try to get our name out to as many people as possible. Unfortunately for things like Facebook, you can only reach friends or friends of friends, making it difficult to go outside of those groups. Myspace is now a lot of bands trying to promote to people that are just trying to sell themselves as well. It has become pointless because no one really cares about you or your music. ReverbNation makes you pay for your usage. It sends out press kits so you can get fans from all over the place to hear us. It helps you get gigs as well.

2. How do you see it benefiting musicians such as yourself?

It helps you reach as many people as possible and hopefully one of those people will sponsor you.

3. How do you see it hurting musicians such as yourself?

To an extent, many venues will only check you out if you have a certain number of fans on your social media profiles, which is not a good gauge of talent. No one is really finding the real music this way. They are just selling something that has already been sold.

### GF Social Media Types

4. What types of social media do you use for your music?

Facebook, Myspace, ReverbNation, Twitter (not really used because you need to be on everyday and don't have enough time)

5. Do you use your personal social media sites to promote your music social media sites? How?

Usually because every member of the band will use statuses to direct friends to the band's profile. We also try to branch out by asking friends if they know people who would like to hear our music. It definitely matters how many friends you have though.

- does this snowball effect of gaining friends help on social media?

It gives people a chance to hear us. A street team has difficulty getting people to listen.

6. What social media sites do you find to be more efficient? How?

ReverbNation is really good because it has a lot of stuff. It keeps track of all of your other social media sites if you set it up the right way. In order to get a good virtual press kit, it cost about \$100 and this gives you one for less.

## **H2 New Fan Base**

7. How do new fans or emerging fans reach you/hear of you?

They mostly hear of us through shows. There are always people posting about a show. These people will look for you on sites and if you don't have anything on there, they'll forget about you. You have to play shows.

8. How inclined are they to add you as a favorite/add as a friend/bookmark you on your social media sites?

It depends on how you act with them at the show. You need to be professional and friendly. You have to create an image and play it up at a venue. You can be an

intellectual, a partier, etc. You need to get to know your fans on more of a personal level. That's what gets them to look for you.

9. Do you promote your social media sites to direct new fans to them?

10. How do you think you can increase your fan base by using social media?

If you have time and money, you can advertise a lot. It gives you a way to interact with your fans. Right now we get a lot of close friends, but that's how it is on Facebook.

11. As an estimate, how many fans of your music do you think don't create profile on these sites or add you as a friend, but still frequent your page?

There is a way to see how much traffic you have on your sites, but it always depends on what we've done publicly.

## **H1 Existing Fan Base**

12. How inclined are long-term fans to find you through social media?

On occasion, but you have to keep their interest. They need to come into your world. If you create a world but don't stick to it or don't give them something to listen to, they will be lazy. They might not even delete you so you don't know if they are still fans. They are still around and will read but you won't get a reaction.

13. What do you include on your pages for existing fans?

14. Why do existing fans access your social media sites?

It is mostly a personal friendship right now. It also depends on what we do. If we give them something new, we get feedback.

15. How can you utilize existing fans to direct potential/new fans to your social media sites?

16. Do existing fans contact you for live performance opportunities? How can you make your social media sites into a platform for performance inquiries?

Yes they do. We need to get contacts to do this. We can then call them up from time to time in order to get shows. This also goes for other bands you build friendships with. It is always better to do this over the phone or in person if you want more of an immediate response. It really matters what you do outside of social media than just the social media itself.

### **H3 Record Labels**

17. How necessary are record labels in today's music?

I think that record labels, to an extent, are necessary for advertising and publishing purposes. They are capable of mass-producing while we can not. It is too expensive. They can help you get a large following.

18. How can social media sites substitute record labels?

You don't need to produce CDs. You can use your social media sites and iTunes. This also depends on who you know and how many people you know. If you don't know a lot of people, social media is ineffective.

19. How are record labels adapting to musicians' sense of independence because of social media?

They are not. Underground labels are more open to musicians' preferences because they trust more. Larger labels are more unwilling to compromise. They care more about a profit than your music.

20. Will you still desire a record contract as social media continues to evolve?

Yes I would like one because it's a good thing for advertisement. You also need to remember to watch your back. For now I still want a contract, but I'd like to see how social media evolves.

### **Interviewee #5**

**County: Atlantic**

**Genre: Pop Punk/Hardcore**

#### **GF Genre of Music**

1. How does your band and other bands in your genre utilize social media?

We just try to get people to like our page so they can see what we post on a daily basis. They see everything.

2. How do you see it benefiting musicians such as yourself?

Everyone will see what you post and will eventually click on it. We post a lot of stuff so people will get interested in something once in while.

3. How do you see it hurting musicians such as yourself?

I don't see it hurting in any way. I wouldn't have a Facebook if I didn't have a band and you can reach so many people quickly.

#### **GF Social Media Types**

4. What types of social media do you use for your music?

Myspace, Facebook, Stereo Killer

- What is stereo killer?

It is like Myspace but more customizable. You use it to share your music with other bands. You can't have an account unless you're in a band.

5. Do you use your personal social media sites to promote your music social media sites?

How?

I try to repost what the band posts to have it reach more people.

6. What social media sites do you find to be more efficient? How?

Facebook is the most efficient because you can reach so many people and because they are my friends, they are into a lot of the same music. We also have friends who are in bands so we repost stuff for each other to reach even more people.

## **H2 New Fan Base**

7. How do new fans or emerging fans reach you/hear of you?

Shows are a great way to reach people. You go to see one band and see four other bands. We also posted our new CD and friends reposted.

- We still get copies pressed along with digital downloads. It is nice to have CDs and vinyl. You can sell them on tour.

8. How inclined are they to add you as a favorite/add as a friend/bookmark you on your social media sites?

9. Do you promote your social media sites to direct new fans to them?

We always bring up our sites at shows so they can find us again if they want to.

10. How do you think you can increase your fan base by using social media?

We can with all of the above. You can reach so many people just by posting one thing. It pops up on your news feed. People are connected to you just by clicking “like.” If you post something seven times, it will show up seven times on news feeds. It is hard to ignore.

11. As an estimate, how many fans of your music do you think don't create profile on these sites or add you as a friend, but still frequent your page?

I know I do that a lot if I don't want updates so I can imagine others do that as well.

### **H1 Existing Fan Base (too new to examine existing fans)**

12. How inclined are long-term fans to find you through social media?
13. What do you include on your pages for existing fans?
14. Why do existing fans access your social media sites?
15. How can you utilize existing fans to direct potential/new fans to your social media sites?
16. Do existing fans contact you for live performance opportunities? How can you make your social media sites into a platform for performance inquiries?

### **H3 Record Labels**

17. How necessary are record labels in today's music?

We put a lot of money into our band and with a record label you don't have to invest as much. Record labels are necessary for financial reasons. We just put out a CD to get label recognition.

18. How can social media sites substitute record labels?

Not really because labels deal more with everything instead of just promotion. They help you get to another level with your music. Record labels wouldn't still exist if they weren't helping. Musicians would not continue to sign deals.

19. How are record labels adapting to musicians' sense of independence because of social media?

When you have a deal, you represent the label so you don't just promote yourself. For independent musicians, you only focus on yourself.

20. Will you still desire a record contract as social media continues to evolve?

I don't labels will ever go away. People always aspire to be on a label because it really helps you branch out. They book your tours and help you tour internationally.

Other comments:

I think social media is a wild fire for music. It helps fans come together over common music and interests.