

The Possibilities of Digital Promotion in Music Industry

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Abstract <p>Digital promotion is a substantial part of marketing in music business. The digitalization forced the business to re-evaluate and reform its operations and it affects all aspects of creating and sustaining a successful business that will stand the test of time. The topic is current because it keeps constantly evolving.</p> <p>The thesis was assigned by Inverse Records. The thesis studied various aspects of digital promotion and aimed to find the most effective factors that can help to enhance the promotional tools in general. There was little to none academic research implemented on the topic and thus further studying could only benefit the professionals.</p> <p>The research was carried out by conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews. The target group of the interviews included media contacts that were provided by the consignor of the thesis, Inverse Records. These media contact representatives worked in music business either in online music journalism or in online radio station. Altogether eight candidates were listed for the interview, but only six representatives participated via electronic mail. The results were analysed by using qualitative content analysis in order to review the results in a thorough manner.</p> <p>The results revealed that the use of digital format in mostly seen as positive, especially from the business point of view. Multiple parties mentioned various favourable features, such as the speed, reliability, low costs in production process, and the resulting product's dexterity. However, the underlying opinion revealed that when comparing digital and physical format, the preferred option was traditional product as a promotional tool. The general opinion is supporting the increasing amount of digital promotion but its format should be developed so that the reviewers can achieve the same level of experience as they would get from traditional format.</p>		
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Tiivistelmä <p>Digitaalinen promootio on tärkeä osa markkinointia musiikkiteollisuudessa, jonka digitaalinen aikakausi pakotti uudistamaan bisnestoimistonsa. Tämä aihe on ajankohtainen, koska uutta kehitystä tapahtuu koko ajan, ja digitaalisen promootion ymmärtäminen käy yhä tärkeämmäksi.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantaja oli Inverse Records. Tavoitteena oli tutkia digitaalista promootiota useasta eri näkökulmasta ja pyrkiä selvittämään niitä tekijöitä, jotka tekevät promootioprosessista tehokkaan. Aikaisempaa tutkimusta aiheesta ei ole tehty, joten sen lähempi tarkastelu hyödyttää kaikkia osapuolia, joiden työnkuva liittyy aiheeseen.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyössä käytettiin kvalitatiivista teemahaastattelututkimusta. Haastatellut henkilöt työskentelivät musiikkiteollisuudessa joko verkkojournalismin tai nettiradioasemien parissa, ja työnkuvansa puolesta olivat tehneet yhteistyötä toimeksiantajan kanssa. Kaikkiaan haastatteluihin ilmoittautui kahdeksan henkilöä, joista kuutta lopulta haastateltiin sähköpostitse. Aineiston analyysimenetelmänä käytettiin sisällönanalyysia, mikä mahdollisti vastausten perusteellisemmän tarkastelun.</p> <p>Vastauksista ilmeni, että haastateltavien mielestä digitaalisen promootion käyttö näyttäytyy positiivisena ja hyödyllisenä vaihtoehtona liiketoiminnan kannalta. Useissa haastatteluisa mainittiin nopeus, luotettavuus, kustannustehokkuus ja yleinen pätevyys digitaalisen promootion parhaimpina piirteinä. Vastauksista pystyi kuitenkin havaitsemaan viitteitä siitä, ettei kyseisen promootiomuodon formaatti ollut vielä päihittänyt perinteisen promootion tarjoamia fyysisiä kopioita. Yleisen mielipiteen mukaan digitaalisen promootion lisääntyvä käyttö on hyvä asia, mutta itse digitaalista formaattia tulisi kehittää, jotta käyttäjät saisivat yhtä voimakkaan elämyksen kuin perinteisen promootion tarjoamista fyysisistä kopioista.</p>		
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Muut tiedot		

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1 INTRODUCTION

Digital elements were introduced to the everyday business operations over a decade ago and it could be said that modern economic environments have not been the same ever since. The digital age introduced not only a completely new set of tools but also changed the core concepts of how business is made. Especially the elements of marketing were forced to adapt and evolve along with the radical changes that shaped the business. But until this day there is still not a sufficient amount of academic research executed on the matter.

The marketing element in any form of business is particularly substantial because it studies the relations between customers and producers in order to create a lucrative long-term relationship and maintain it by using various communicational tools. Promotion, which has a special emphasis on delivering the message of the goods or services, is a part of the means that marketers use. These two terms are permanent elements in a successful business, so understanding how to continue using them productively and simultaneously take advantage of the digital format is important for the continuity for any business operations.

The research focuses on digital promotion that takes place in the music industry. The consignor of the research is Inverse Records, an independent publishing company that wished to find a way to intensify their digital promotional activities. The research targets to determine the effective factors in the digital promotion in order to clarify the best possible aspects.

The studying of any digital elements is topical today. Without a basic understanding of how the business operations work, the possibility of realistically assessing one's position and planning a profitable strategy is not plausible. Determining an effective set of promotional tools for digital distribution profit the entire branch of marketing. This also suits the researcher's personal objectives by strengthening the previous acquired experience and knowledge in the field of marketing and adds value to the researcher's professional development.

The research was implemented with a set of qualitative semi-structured interviews that were carried out via electronic mail (e-mail). The target audience for the interviews was extracted from a list of media contacts that the consignor has been cooperating with on a regular basis. These media contacts are located all around the world and have all been working in the field for a while, so their experience is guaranteed.

The first chapter of the research introduces the theoretical background, which covers the required knowledge about the marketing activities, starting with a general level of information about marketing and promotion in music business and then specifying in digital promotion. The theoretical background also includes an interview conducted with the consignor, which provided the research with valuable data that could have not been obtained otherwise. The second chapter focuses on the methodology of the research, disclosing the research questions and explaining the methods that were found most suitable in order to conduct interviews and result in reliable research. The third chapter presents the results of the conducted interviews by dividing them into four main themes that are also defined at the end of the previous chapter, which makes the interpretation of the data easier. The fourth chapter discusses the findings in the light of the previous information provided by the theoretical background and other observations that the researcher has made along the process and the final chapter encloses the results and findings in a conclusive statement. References and appendices can be found at the very end of the research.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The research views whether modern promotional activities have become more popular than the traditional ones. The research specifically focuses on discovering how the desired effect of these tools used in digital promotion could be increased and therefore further the means of the entire branch in marketing process could be enhanced. The research is assigned by Inverse Records.

In order to understand the nature of marketing and promotional activities, which are used in business and specifically in the music industry, the basic theories and methods must be studied and clarified. The thorough investigation gives the researcher the ability view the process in a critical and true way. Also the historical aspects of digital revolution must be taken into account to be able to view and understand the whole phenomena in an objective way.

2.1 Marketing in music business

Marketing is a term that gets referenced constantly in all variety of business. Oxford Learner's Dictionary (www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com) explains that it is "-- the activity of presenting, advertising and selling --" a certain product. In simple terms marketing is communication that occurs with customers and other parties. By marketing business professionals are referring to the process that defines the needs of individuals and groups and aims to find the most effective way that these needs can be fulfilled through an exchange of information. Marketers should remember that it is not only product being sold but also the experience the consumer gets out of it. Marketing is all about telling a story (www.theguardian.com). There is also a psychological aspect to the art of marketing as marketers have the capacity to understand the basics of consumer behaviour.

Music industry as a business environment

Even if the name of the business environment seems self-explanatory it is always important to clarify and analyse the environment that the business operations take place in. The term 'business' refers to an economical environment, which operates in trade by exchanging goods and services to money or other equivalent and economics is the studying of how different parties satisfy their needs by choosing certain goods and services (O'Sullivan & Sheffrin 2007, 3).

The music industry comprises of companies and individual factors that aim to achieve financial profit by producing and selling music. Depending on the size of the organization, tasks of different operations are carried out either by individuals or departments employing multiple professionals. Jones (2012, 3) determines the challenges that follow from the industrialisation of music. Jones uses a clarifying metaphor where music business is compared to a Russian doll that has to be unpacked a layer by layer to be able to understand all of the functioning levels.

When turning creativeness into a form of profitable industry a clear structure in the business organization is recommended. Definite infrastructure benefits all parties who are working under the same company and can share a mutual goal, as every employee's task is clearly defined. For example, this clear definition of workload guarantees that artists who have signed an agreement with a company are able to focus solely on the creative process instead of having to bother about planning marketing or considering the legal aspects. (www.thembj.org) The structure charts all of the duties that are involved in the process, from individual Artist Director's input in a print design to the managerial level supervising all departments and dispensing assignments correspondingly.

Any form of business is in a constant movement and one has to be equipped for a change. Passman (2012, 11-12) lists a few factors based on his experience that one must be prepared for in music business. For example, one may have to come across the fact that some artists do not take business point of view too fondly or that even if one would hit a successful streak, hiring your best mates might not be the best option to guarantee the future of the business. One of the most important factors to remember is that every career has a limited run.

Core marketing concepts

In marketing there are core marketing concepts, which are active forces that are connected to each other. The core marketing concepts aim to explain these forces that keep marketing process in a steady movement and offer possibilities to manipulate the process towards a favourable outcome. The core marketing concepts are needs, wants, and demands; marketing offers; value and satisfaction; exchanges, transactions and relationships; and markets. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 5)

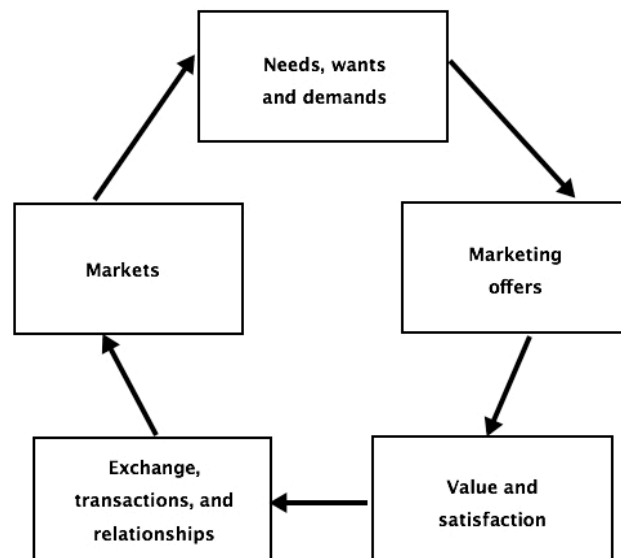


FIGURE 1: The core marketing concepts (Based on Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 6, Figure 1.1)

Kotler and Armstrong explain that *needs, wants, and demands* refer to the consumer's need to fulfill a basic satisfaction (for example, food), customer's want for a specific product (for example, wanting to have a Wimpy burger) and actual demand (for example, wanting a Wimpy burger but only being able to afford a McDonalds burger). As needs are already existing primal instincts, only wants and demands can be affected for example through marketing.

Marketing offers refer to any form of goods or services that can satisfy either consumer's need or want. These things can be either physical products, services or merely ideas. As Kotler and Armstrong state, value can be defined by the expected satisfaction that the consumer will receive once purchasing a marketing offer in

relation to the price in order to obtain it. Consumer's satisfaction can be measured by how well products or services fulfill the expectations created by marketing. The latter is essential for any form of business as it reflects the possible future consumption of producer's products.

In order to obtain a desired object, consumer must use the act of *exchange* in which one receives the desired object and in change offers something in return. This is the fundamental description for any sort of trade and must be taken into consideration also in the marketing process. In order to measure the unit of marketing, *transaction* is used to define the value of trade between the participants. The term transaction can be either barter or monetary (www.businessdictionary.com). Every action in the marketing process aims to build and preserve satisfying *relationships* with the target audience in order to secure the longevity of the business.

Kotler and Armstrong determine that *markets* are the environments where the potential customers, who share similar needs and wants, exist and operate. Finding the right market is crucial for a successful exchange of product, service, idea or other object (www.entrepreneur.com).

As a conclusion, it can be said that the act of marketing is understanding and managing all of the steps of core marketing concepts. This requires thorough planning and understanding of needed strategies in order to guarantee a successful process.

Marketing mix

The common tools used to create a successful business plans and for marketing purposes are commonly known amongst marketers as marketing mix. These tools can be used to achieve a desirable outcome in the target market. It is a combination of the product marketing offers, place to distribute the product, price and promotion, which are generally abbreviated as the *four P's* (McCarthy 1960, 45). It is also used to define the offer of the product, service, idea or other object. All of the components are influenced by each other and even though the basic idea seems simple, this tool is very versatile as it can form multiple variations even if only one variable was utilized (Bradley 2013, 35).

Product is the factor that the entire marketing process is based on. It is important that the consumer will find the goods or services fulfilling the needs so therefore understanding of the product is extremely important. In a record label Artist and Repertoire (A&R) department is usually responsible for determining which marketplace serves certain artist the best. (Hutchinson, Macy & Allen 2006, 2-3)

Price means not only the amount of money that the product can be purchased for but also the entire profit it is bringing to producers. There are multiple factors that can determine the profitable price, such as the consumer's willingness to obtain the product and competition within the market. Prices are a combination of demand and supply (O'Sullivan & Sheffrin 2007, 125). When setting the price all components in marketing mix should be taken under scrutiny. Hutchinson et al (2006, 8-10) state that there are three general methods to determine a justified and favourable retail price: cost-based pricing, competition-based pricing and consumer-based pricing. These options give companies various options to rely on.

Promotion includes various means of communication that will be harnessed to distribute information and cause awareness for the product. It is not only informing where to get the product in question but also to introduce the product so that target audience's attention will be aroused on right markets (Kotler & Armstrong, 58). Further information can be found in section 2.2 Promotion in music business.

Place focuses more on the marketing environment and determines the best ways of delivering the product to the right audience. The target is to make the product available whenever consumer happens to require it. Numerous methods in shipment are known as the distribution channels (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004, 56, 58). Music business has been going through struggle to find the most effortless distribution channel because of the rapid emergence of the digital distribution. The effects of digital revolution are further discussed in section 2.3 Digital promotion.

Marketing strategy

Every company needs to have three basic statements: the mission, the vision and the strategy. Mission states the current state of the business, the target group and the

reason why the business exists and the vision statement narrates the future objectives and therefore offers a general direction where to seek (Haverila 2004, 44-49). After these two have been determined, a reliable strategy must be chosen to find the means to achieve these objectives.

The best strategy is to have one that no other business yet follows. This ensures that the company will offer a unique experience to its customers. (Haverila 2004, 38-40) However one cannot rely on a random selection when it comes to selecting the right strategy. Companies must be able to recognize its measures to reach its goals and whether it possesses the capabilities to realistically reach it. Recently founded record label cannot expect to be beating the financial results of Universal Music Group, which is one of the three major labels that control about 70 – 80% of the world's music market (www.universalmusic.com). That is why it is of primary importance to analyse realistically the company's factors.

One trustworthy method to assess the company's situation is to use an analysis known as *SWOT analysis* (name stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). It not only offers a view of company's present state but also provides predictions of company's future by analysing both internal and external aspects. According to Panagiotou (2003, 8-10), SWOT analysis aims to “-- identifying internal strengths in order to take advantage of its external opportunities and avoid external (and possible internal) threats, while addressing its weaknesses”. The company's capabilities are pointed out which can enhance its possibilities in finding the right market and increase the likelihood of success. It used for assessments but can also be developed into a strategic tool.

In short, SWOT analysis makes the company view and assess multiple traits that the business in question has. It aims to understand the factors inside the company that make it stronger or possibly weaker and also determines the opportunities and threats that company faces from outside factors. Deeper understanding of one's business is required in order to make the right decisions and choose right directions to ensure the wanted outcome. (www.businessnewsdaily.com)

2.2 Promotion in music business

Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com) defines the term promotion as the following: “-- activities done in order to increase the sales of a product or service; a set of advertisements for a particular product or service.”

Promotion is one factor in a set of marketing tools, also known as the marketing mix, and it targets to reach the marketing objectives. The main purpose for promotional activities is to deliver information and spread awareness of the wanted product in the right environment (Groucutt, Leadley & Forsyth 2004, 17, 19). It also aims to create favourable relations with public parties that the organization deals with. Its main means is communication, which can be either personal or non-personal.

Personal communication means interaction that takes place between two or more individuals, for example face to face with an audience, whereas non-personal communication refers to bigger concepts such as media or events (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 476-479). Various media channels can be utilized and marketers can choose for example between print media, display media or electronic media (Belch 2003, 16). However, the phrase 'promotion' is usually used within the company and its marketing department but is not used in the external activities — for example the public might only hear talk about 'special offers' when a promotional campaign is implemented.

Marketing communication mix

Promotion can be divided in more detailed sections, which are known as marketing communication mix or promotion mix. Much alike in the marketing mix, the factors in marketing communications are used as convenient tools in promotion.

These factors are advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, and direct marketing. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 482-483) Belch states that a modern promotion mix should also include interactive marketing that takes place online (2003, 26).

Advertising is creating messages that can be seen and received even by a larger audience at once. Advertising is considered as a very versatile option because it can take place in multiple media channels. However the target group isn't as specific as in personal communication and because it cannot have a dialogue with the audience, the message must be made appealing enough in order to guarantee the maximum interest within an extensive amount of people. Because of the visibility that it offers advertising is also the best known form of promotion (Belch 2003, 16-17). This tool of communication is considered relatively low in cost as the same message can be applied to geographically dispersed public. One of the main goals in advertising is to create a way that the marketer could positively affect the consumer behaviour (Chandy, Tellis, MacInnis & Thaivanich 2001).

Personal selling can be identified as one of the most effective tools in promotion as its effects are imminent and involve interactive relationships between the two or more parties. The salesperson must be able to adapt the skills in communication according to the needs of the consumer in order to keep the receiver of sales speech interested in the topic even if the eventual response would be negative. A good salesperson is able to make the customer leave with a "thank you". Even as sufficient as personal selling is seen, it also comes with high costs as setting up the means to reach the potential consumers can require a lot of resources. The means of personal selling are on a changing phase as the new electronic technology, such as the Internet and database management, are causing major adjustments in the communication between the organization and customer (Piercy & Lane 2003).

Sales promotion is, like advertising, a form of personal communication. Consumer's interest can be attracted with previously mentioned 'special offers', such as discount coupons, premiums, contests and so on. While advertising aims for a long-term relationship, sales promotion focuses on immediate results. Even if the result would be profitable, the effects of sales promotion are usually only momentary. This can cause a friction between the manufacturer and retailers as Ailawadi, Neslin and Gedenk (2001) process in their article. The article brings forth the issue of competition between retailers of certain brands and the manufacturers of the brands, which have hold of the markets of 20-45%, depending on the country. This phenomenon explains the two orientations that occur, *consumer-oriented* and *trade-oriented sales*

promotion. Consumer-oriented strategy aims for immediate sale and the trade-oriented option is for manipulating the intermediaries in the distribution channel, including manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers (Belch 2003, 21-22).

Public relations are a marketing communication tool that is the most used for consumers and other external parties and still it usually does not get as easily detected as advertising. Its ultimate aim is to create and maintain a positive and attractive image of the product that is promoted, so its initial mission goes beyond obtaining publicity (Belch 2003, 23). This is crucial in order to establish a product that will survive the test of time. Public relations is also able to reach parties that would otherwise be left out as it can deliver the message in the form of news or an article instead of an advertisement or sales pitch. Competent public relations campaigns can be implemented with low costs. The company does not have to hire external parties to create advertisements for the media and is able to invest the money to inspire its workers to create an interesting story that will gain the attention of the public. Major tools used in public relations are news, specifically arranged events, speeches, corporate identity materials, mobile marketing tools, and written and audio-visual materials. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 515-518)

Direct marketing can vary in multiple formats, which are telemarketing, e-mail and direct mail. Contrary to the common belief, direct marketing consists of much more than mail-order catalogues. It consists of various tasks that enable the process, which are for example database management, direct selling and direct response ads through the Internet, mail, and print media (Belch 2003, 18, 20). The delivered message is usually directed to the very individual that it being approached, and therefore messages get tailored. Letters can be compiled quickly so its effects are immediate and it allows the receiver to interact with the sender, which means that communication can be altered depending on the consumer's reaction. The digital revolution that has occurred in marketing communications can be best seen in direct marketing. Rapp and Collins' (1990) article presents the entire evolution that turned direct marketing from a mail format to direct response marketing.

As a conclusion, Kitchen (2005, 236-237) states that a successful marketing communication program can consist of one or more of presented elements above. In

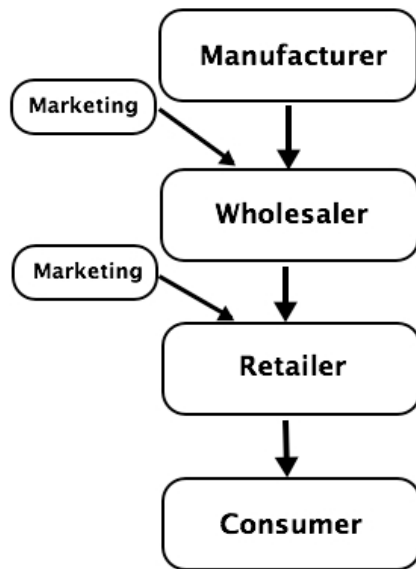
order to achieve in a satisfactory result, the usage of multiple tools is recommended. The author also reminds that even though process can be planned well through a thorough investigation of the tools, the actual practice can turn out completely different from the studying phase. The above-mentioned tools get listed (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing) in Kitchen's writing but also other factors are included which were not mentioned in the Kotler and Armstrong marketing communication mix.

The need of sponsorship as strategic marketing communications tool is addressed as an investment. There is a possibility that a sponsorship deal that gets implemented in a certain country can open markets to directions that previously were precluded (Verity, 2002).

One additional and important feature that gets referred is the Internet and the World Wide Web, especially because of the rapid growth in its use and versatility. The important point of delivering the message must be remembered — the marketer must be able to keep the marketing in enough of a simple form so the actual content does not get lost in the flow of information (Lohtia, Donthu & Hershberg, 2003). Belch refers to *Interactive and Internet marketing* as a relatively new format in marketing compared to the more traditional tools. It covers the marketing duties that take place in a different and interactive environment called the Internet. In fact, the Internet can be employed for all elements in marketing communication mix (2003, 20-21). For further discussion of the use of the Internet activities in marketing, see 2.3 Digital Promotion.

Promotion strategies

Push and pull strategies are acknowledged as the two main promotion strategies that are used in modern day business. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 483, 485)



According to Kotler and Armstrong, *the push strategy* includes aiming the marketing actions to the distribution channel members such as wholesalers, distributors and retailers. In other words all the channel members are motivated to order and sell the product and “push” the product all the way to the final member in the channel that is the consumer.

FIGURE 2: The push strategy
(Based on Hutchinson, Macy & Allen 2006, 11, Figure 1.2)

Kotler and Armstrong state that *the pull strategy* approaches a completely different end of the marketing channel. It focuses on communicating with the final member, the consumer, and creates a want for the product, for example by handing out coupons. Consumer will create demand that will cause wholesalers, distributors and retailers to answer.

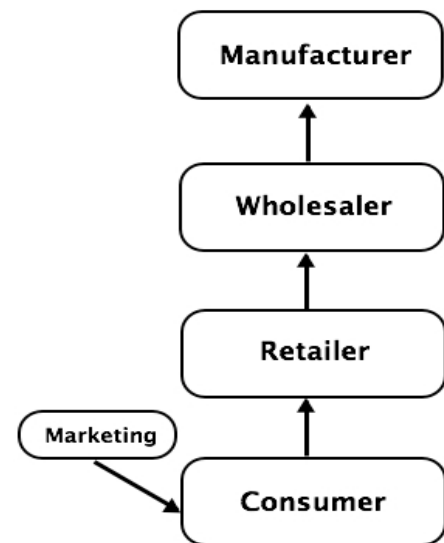


FIGURE 3: The pull strategy
(Based on Hutchinson, Macy & Allen 2006, 11, Figure 1.2)

Neither of these strategies exceeds each other so it is common that companies use a combination of both.

Music business as an environment in promotion

Traditionally the methods in promotional activities in recording industry can be divided in to four sections: radio promotion, advertising, sales promotion and public relations (Hutchinson, Macy & Allen 2006, 10).

Radio promotion aims solely to get airplay time for the song in question. Hutchinson et al explain that usually there is a separate division in a record label that obtains relationships with radio station's program directors. Sometimes a third party known as the independent promoter can be contacted and appointed to use the financial contacts with either a radio station or its owners for a monetary compensation (getinmedia.com). Priest (2010, 37) says that radio, which was one of the first mass communication channels, is still affective today. Levinson and Lautenslager state that a studious strategy is required because the variety of operating radio channels is wide and finding the right target audience can require some investigation. However Levinson and Lautenslager also remind that the radio's sales personnel wish the radio marketing operations to be successful, so the marketer's and radio station's goals are mutual (2009, 170-172).

Advertising is used to inform usually a larger audience about the product in question. Hutchinson et al explain that the objectives of advertisement can vary, depending on whether the intent is to persuade (for example, changing customer's opinion on certain product), inform (for example, about a new product) or remind (for example, where to get the product). It is of great importance to maintain creativity when planning advertising, as the aim is not only to sell the product but also the story and emotional value that is included (Belch 2003, 237-239).

Hutchinson, Macy & Allen say that *sales promotion* works in close cooperation with the retailers. It includes various means to stimulate consumers to purchase a product. This can include contests where the winner will get a meet and greet with the artist whose release is in question or promoting discount code for a certain albums in pre-agreed record stores. However, it is also very important to find a right type of sales promotion that will support the image that the artist wants to maintain (www.hypebot.com).

Public relations in music business does not differ much when compared to its operations in other branches of business. As Hutchinson et al say, it works to create and maintain an appealing image concerning a specific company and/or its product. Spice Girls and their slogan "Girl Power" is an excellent example of a successful

campaign, which got a positive reception from its target audience and also provided effective experience by empowering the female generation in the 90's (www.academia.edu).

Hutchinson et al also mentions that the aforementioned four traditional methods are making room for various other procedures. The records labels have been able to widen their range of tools by utilizing the effect of the World Wide Web and its global reach. See further discussion in 2.3 Digital promotion.

2.3 Digital promotion

Digital promotion is promotional activity that takes place online. Kotler and Armstrong (2004, 71) define the Internet as “a vast public web of computer networks, which connects users of all types all around the world to each other and to an amazingly large 'information repository.’” This means that the Internet enables marketing activities that are not bound to a certain place, time or office hours.

The 24/7 nature of the Internet also allows the target audience, whether it would be clients, partners or other parties, to be reached on a global scale. This means that the environment of promotional functions becomes considerably more versatile and therefore can also intensify of possible effect. The coming of Web 2.0 did not only help the marketers to deliver their message, but gave the audience ability to share their opinions with equal efficiency (www.oreilly.com). Belch (2003, 20) also agrees with this statement and claims that one of the biggest effects the digital revolution has given the marketing activities are the interactivity between the marketer and consumer.

So it can be said that the main practice of the Internet and the digital elements is to exchange information effortlessly and without limitations of time. It could be assumed that due to this fact the online settings are extremely advantageous for enhanced promotion.

Brief history of the digital age and its effects

As with many innovations, the first steps towards the digital revolution were taken during Cold War in order to create a better warfare. As the threat of nuclear war lingered over the United States of America, the army realized the need of communication form that would be nuclear proof. A researcher named Paul Baran came up with the idea of renewing the model of the communication technology. This solution concentrated on the thought that information could be divided in smaller parts called bits that could be transmitted one bit by one through a modern network. Mr Baran's idea was revolutionary as its approach “...is to flatten established hierarchies and put power and responsibility at the nodal level so that each node is equal” (Ryan 2010, 16). It was an enormous change compared to the analogue technology used before as the innovation also changed the balance of the power. Whereas communication was previously very controlled and operated between dominant centres, the modern system offered the change that the communication could be focused between users — the very same nature that can be seen in today’s Internet. (Ryan 2010, 16)

However, the military parties and communications monopoly found this concept more rebellious than saw its potential. Due to this reaction the project struggled to gain financial support, which delayed the implementation for years. In late 60's the U.S. Department of Defence appointed the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) to fund the project and the world's first packet switching network was established in 1969. Packet switching network gathers all form of required data to a suitable size so it can be transmitted through the network. This was the very opposite of the analogue circuit switching which was used for example in old telephone network. The network created in 1969 was known as ARPANET and was the progenitor of the global scale of the Internet. (www.bbn.com)

As the success of this new technology was understood, the development slowly increased. In 1973 a networking technology called Ethernet was invented (www.theregister.co.uk). This method connected the computers to each other on a local area network (LAN) and is still used today. In 1975 the digital revolution took

another leap forward as X.25, an international network for networks such as ARPANET, was created (www.sangoma.com). This new form of network offered a public data network for international providers. As the network solutions evolved in speed and towards global scale, computer manufacturers saw the potential increase in the markets. The production of faster and cheaper computers amplified the users of the prototype of the Internet, which culminated in the invention of the World Wide Web (WWW), a global information medium, in 1990 (web.archive.org).

The digital revolution has not only changed the society's way of communication, but it has also had a profound effect on the society itself. The civilization that was run by industrialism has slowly shifted its focal point towards informationalism as the main emphasis nowadays is on the service sector. Haverila (2004, 8-9) expresses the vast effect of this development as it has changed not only the technology but also markets, working life, consumption behaviour, and even personal values. However, this adjustment is not an unfavourable factor, on the contrary — no business can stay still and the evolution is a natural occurrence that creates healthy competition and keeps the business operations on the move.

Major forces of the digital age

As the Internet expanded the highways of information and communication, the world economy was forced to cope and study the forces that were actively guiding and reshaping the digital age. Four major forces were determined: digitalization and connectivity, the Internet explosion, new types of intermediaries, and customization and customerization (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004, 71-73).

According to Kotler and Armstrong *digitalization and connectivity* explain how the Internet age converted devices and systems from analogue to digital form.

Components that devices and systems are built on nowadays consist of streams of zeros and ones, also known as bits, whereas previously tangible parts formed them. These bits need connectivity with other bits to operate as required so the creation of a reliable telecommunications network is unconditional. These networks are the main environments where the majority of business operations take place in. The networks can vary from ones that operate within the company (intranet), between the company and its affiliates like suppliers and distributors (extranet) and operations in the

Internet, where recipient can be reached anywhere.

The Internet explosion defines the transition of the Internet from a mere communication tool to a innovative technology and its effect is still seen on the increasing numbers of active users of online services. As a reference, in 2006 the estimation of active websites was more than 92 million. (<http://www.infoplease.com>) The Internet explosion has also affected the consumer behaviour, as consumers are able to access information about the products or services they are after and by comparing can find the company who can deliver the most satisfactory offer. As Kotler and Armstrong say, this has challenged the companies' ability to keep up with the trend in order to remain in the competition.

The digital revolution does not challenge companies only from the direction of consumers. New technologies provide a new business model that can be operated solely online and this causes strain for companies who rely on more traditional method. *New types of intermediaries* cause the transition from brick-and-mortar (operations that occurs outside online world in physical factories) and click-only (business that performs online) corporations to click-and-mortar businesses, which are combination of both. As an example, today customer can order a product online and collect it next day from the company's store (www.economist.com).

Kotler and Armstrong (2004 72-73) explain that where as "the Old Economy revolved around manufacturing companies - - the New Economy revolves around information businesses." This means that the companies are able to adapt their goods or services and marketing to suit the consumer's needs and wants by gathering information. When a company takes the action to customize the market offering, it is using *customization*. When a company gives its consumers the option to affect the design of the market offer, it uses *customerization*. By letting the customers in the production process, consumers have evolved to prosumers. (www.acrwebsite.org)

Diversity of digital promotion

As mentioned in 2.3.2 Major forces in digital age marketing (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 71), information is a major contributor that keeps modern businesses afloat. The

diversity of digital platform can also be exploited in promotion. A viable example to prove this can be the basic principles required to use artist' website as a diverse promotion tool. Below is a rough estimation of actions that should take place to turn one's website to a successful promotion tool.

Marketing and promotion that occurs online is a very profitable method for cost-effective marketing campaigns for artists and their publications. One of the easiest tools in such a campaign is to use a website as the home base. (Hutchinson, Macy & Allen 2006, 243-262)

The first impression is important in all form of marketing. One must be able to focus the message for the right audience, design it so that it attracts the right sort of attention and implement all of the above whilst maintaining credibility (Levinson & Lautenslager 2009, 87). The same principle applies with the actions that take place online. The domain name and layout of the website must be clear and easy to remember. The layout must also be simple enough for the user to be able to browse successfully. Website provides a database of the artist for the consumers containing necessary information about for example the publications, tour information, promotional material, link to the e-store, contact details and so forth.

E-commerce is a sub-model in e-business that performs on electronic platforms to conduct business. E-commerce specifies in selling and buying products by transactions that take place online. (Strauss & Frost 2012, 58) This gives the company, who executes the marketing process for the artist, possibility to guide the consumers to the right location to purchase merchandise as soon as they enter the website. This branch of marketing is also known as *e-marketing*.

In order to get attention of the online users, promoting the promotional website is required. For example to guarantee that the website can be found via a search engine such as Google, the webmaster must submit the site to the directory list. Interaction between other websites is a profitable idea as these websites presumably already have a steady base of visitors and this will give both parties promotional exposure. However, activities occurring on a grass-root level must not be overlooked as most of the active web users communicate and operate on for example discussion forums. (Hutchinson et al 2006, 252-261)

The power of *social media* must be taken into account in any promotional actions that are implemented. As its name suggests, social media is an interactive form of media that is based on interaction between two or more users online. It thrives to educate and entertain the audience. The types of social media can be roughly divided in six categories which are communication and networking (for example blogs); entertainment (for example virtual worlds); sharing multimedia (for example sharing music via ReverbNation); reviews and opinions (for example product reviews); events (for example sharing artist's concerts via Bandsintown); and collaboration (for example tagging by attaching keywords to the content so other users are able to find desired material easier). (Strauss & Frost 2012, 328-329)

Whatever actions online marketer decides to rely on it should be made sure that these actions do not cross the line of spamming, which can be compared to junk mailing. The overflow of information is enough to chase away anyone, even the users who are genuinely interested in the artist. (Levinson & Lautenslager 2009, 229)

No matter how functional the website is made, it cannot be called effective if it does not get visited by consumers. Hutchinson et al (2006, 249-252) advises that the best way to guarantee the return of the users is to offer something of value. This can mean something as simple as exclusive information that cannot be obtained anywhere else or engaging visitors in interactive activities such as contests that can be renewed on a monthly basis. Such experiences will create relationships with consumers and increase the possibility that consumers will distribute the information about the website in question forward. Encouraging the active visitors to sign up for informative newsletters will maintain the active nature of the relationship between business and consumer.

As a conclusion, the website offers means to control both online and offline promotion. It should not be forgotten from the traditional forms of marketing. Easy way to ensure the visibility of the website is to include numerous references of the site in print products, press kits and retail products.

2.4 Interview with Inverse Records

The research was implemented in cooperation with the host company Inverse Records. As there is only little academic literature available reviewing promotional activities from a digital perspective, an interview with a representative of the host company was used as a data collection method. The researcher and representative reside on different locations so as a result the interview was implemented via e-mail.

Inverse Records (IR) is a publishing company that concentrates on production of releasing of an album and the resulting marketing and distribution process. IR is part of Inverse Music Group and the headquarter is in Jyväskylä, Central Finland but it has offices in Seinäjoki, Finland and Tartu, Estonia. On the company's website it is stated that their main emphasis for published material is on heavier music. (www.inverse.fi) The representative interviewed is Mr Joni Kantoniemi, who acts as a producer and in the Artist and Repertoire department. He specializes on the company's digital promotional activities, and maintains a list of media contacts that will be approached.

The interview

The interview consisted of six questions. All of these questions were customized to help the researcher get a clear view of the company's approach and characteristics in digital promotion excluding, the first question that asked the interviewee to shortly describe IR and its operations. The rest of the questions examined the company's general marketing objectives and strategies; promotion objectives and strategies; the content of a standard digital promotion package; the company's aspects on traditional or digital marketing tools; and overall experiences and impressions of the differences of domestic and international markets as an environment for digital promotion. Mr Kantoniemi was also given the chance to share his own opinions concerning the topic at the end of the interview.

In the beginning the interviewee points out that IR is not a traditional record label: in fact it operates more like a publishing agency. The company does not wish to possess the Intellectual Property Rights over the recorded material. The fact that bands maintain all rights to their releases also effects on the income they get from royalties,

which are monetary assets gathered from the sales of the product, and it results in the opposite financial outcome that the band would usually collect from a traditional recording deal.

Due to the company's unorthodox approach towards the “traditional deals” made with bands, it can be said that there is no standard marketing strategy that all the publications would follow. The marketing objectives vary as they are mapped out separately with each band and the strategies are compiled subsequently in order to fulfill every client's individual needs.

In order to clarify the wide range of differing requirements Mr Kantoniemi stated two examples of services the company's clients wish to acquire to reach their goal. Artist A wishes to implement just a digital release of an album and artist B wants an international marketing campaign implemented, including distribution, promotion, print advertising, banners and so forth. Due to the fluctuation of clients' needs, the variable nature of marketing strategies and objectives is of great importance.

Since the unconventional nature of IR's principles in its operations was clear from the beginning, in the question regarding the promotional objectives and strategies the researcher decided to offer an example of the traditional promotion tools in recording industry and ask the company's opinion on it. These tools in question are radio promotion, advertising, sales promotion and public relations (Hutchinson, Macy & Allen 2006, 10). Mr Kantoniemi states that these traditional tools are a natural part of their promotional activities. Traditional advertising is still carried out in print form in cooperation with various magazines. Public relations also hold an undeniable part in promotion. However, other factors have an influential impact on IR's activities. Mr Kantoniemi emphasizes that the digital era has made certain promotional tasks more effortless and has even enhanced them. Digital means of communication have facilitated the implementation of different promotional campaign, for example a campaign aimed at radio stations can be planned and put into motion even on a tight schedule. The list of media contacts is easier to keep updated and also the response to the press releases has less of a delay: some press releases get published on the very same day they are sent out. The digital revolution has made the accessibility of international contacts less difficult.

The contents of a standard digital promotion package vary depending on the campaign. The main components, however, stay the same in order to provide all the necessary information for example for a review. The media contacts will receive the material on the publication in question in streamable form and/or downloadable MP3 files and the package also includes a written introduction of the band or album. In addition the package can include supplementary elements, such as promotional pictures, logo of the band, and artwork of the publication, which all are also in downloadable form. If provided, a music video can be added to the package to increase its added value. Mr Kantoniemi stresses the convenience of a digital package from the company's point of view and says that it allows all required information and data to be delivered in one go.

The second to last question focused further on the company's use of traditional and modern tools of promotion. The interviewee says that in IR's case digital promotion tools are used more without a doubt. One of the assets in digital communication is the speed that it reaches the recipient and therefore is far more effective in getting a response compared to for example publicity carried out via mail. Also the costs between the two options are in opposite categories. Nevertheless, IR's actions do not exclude the use of shipping physical promotional copies because "there are still many influential media contacts that accept only physical copies".

Mr Kantoniemi states that there is an apparent difference in the reactions that digital promotion has received in domestic and international markets. According to the interviewee whereas digital promotion has clearly a positive reception when sent to a foreign media contact, only a handful of promotion packages sent within Finland get any sort of response. The interviewee sees it unfortunate that the domestic contacts do not share the enthusiasm for the modern form of promotion that eases the work of both promoter and receiver. Mr Kantoniemi also points out that a significant amount of foreign music magazines principally accept promotional packages in a digital form. Nonetheless a change in domestic media is expected as the use of digital media is growing continuously. This can be seen on the increasing amount of bands that publish their albums straight to digital form.

As a conclusion the interviewee expresses his personal contentment on the growth of digital promotion compared to traditional means as it is considerably more cost-effective and user-friendly and makes the content be more easily reached by desired media contacts.

Summary of the theoretical background

The previous sections have covered the basics of marketing, the changes in its history and especially helped to understand the rise of digital age and its effects in various marketing operations.

Section 2.4 Interview with Inverse Records establishes smaller independent production company's stance on the digital revolution. It has rearmend the smaller participants in the music industry whereas major titans have lost some of the dominance over the markets. The digital age caused a change in balance of power: power has shifted from the record label's reach and more towards the consumers. This can be explained by the effect of the World Wide Web which gathered the entire world in a set of massive networks where the world are only one click away.

These deductions give the researcher a reason to believe that the outcome is somewhat predictable. The parties that are affected by promotional duties have accepted and adapted to the superiority of digital means compared to the traditional ones. Even if all of the desired media contacts still prefer traditional promotion to digital, it can be expected that both techniques will be accepted and utilized.

3 METHOD

3.1 Research purpose, research problem and research questions

Every reliable research consists of certain elements, which define the structure and the reliability of the outcome. Davies (2007, 17) claims that the definition of research can be roughly divided into three different purposes: research is either a method of collecting data in an organized manner, a process of testing an idea or hypothesis in order to see if evidence supports the expectations, or a method of implementing either planned or unplanned action in order to see the general outcome. In order to guarantee trustworthy and accurate research, the process must be implemented within standards.

A research starts with a purpose. The purpose of the research states overall direction of the research. The reason why the research in question is conducted is to find out the balance of power between traditional and digital promotion by clarifying the media representatives' general opinions on digital promotional tools. It measures digital promotion's attractiveness and utility through qualitative semi-structured interviews. (Creswell 2005, 110)

The research questions are based on the matters in an area defined by a research problem, which in this thesis is how little academic knowledge about digital promotion in music business exists. The research questions aim to narrow and specify the core of the research and ensure that the research will progress to a desired direction (Creswell 2005, 60). Priest (2010, 57) states that extensive questions become researchable only after changing them to a more specific and defined form. However, the nature of the research was to move from general knowledge towards a personal view so qualitative approach was seen as the best method. It offers open-ended and rather general questions, which suit the nature of the research.

The research questions of the thesis, which are also included and further examined through the data collected from the interviews, are the following:

- 1) When choosing between traditional promotion and digital promotion, which is found better?
- 2) How could digital promotion be enhanced?

3.2 Overview of the method

When choosing the research method, a qualitative method was considered the most suitable. Qualitative research method emphasizes more on the social and intangible experience and aims to explain “how” certain phenomena are experienced. (Denzin & Lincoln 2008, 14) At an early stage the researcher understood that implementing satisfactory work that answers the questions set by the topic, the collected data would be found by examining the informants’ emotions, ideas and values. In fact, the subjectivity of the answer was important to achieve a desired result and these concepts could be best assessed through a qualitative method. As Priest (2010, 05) states, compared to quantitative means, qualitative method can seem less organized as it targets to find unique material but it also offers a much more sensitive and receptive environment to obtain more diverse answers.

The researcher also discovered that the amount of previous academic material on the topic was scarce so qualitative method offered a suitable framework for the questions without narrowing the answers.

The reliability of using e-mail as a research tool

The qualitative approach was carried out throughout the entire research process. The interview used in the research was *semi-structured* and the answers submitted were analysed using content analysis. Traditionally qualitative interviews are conducted on a face-to-face basis as it enables an immediate interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. This allows for choosing the best method, which in this case was semi-

structured approach (also known as depth interview) that concentrates more on personal views and therefore involves only one interviewee at a time (Priest 2010, 100-101).

However, Poynter (2010, 110-111) introduces updated qualitative research technologies that can be used when implementing a research that is carried out through online communications. One of these techniques is called *parallel in-depth interviews* (IDI), which is similar to a traditional semi-structured interview but is conducted online. Poynter explains that even though the principles of the offline and online methods are similar, the implementation differs. Parallel IDI's are held side by side as the researcher communicates with all participants simultaneously and in a manner so the participants are not aware of each other. Parallel IDI's are conducted over a long period of time, usually over weeks, whereas a traditional in-depth interview can last from 30 minutes up to two hours. It is concluded that the online option can benefit the researcher as the answers can be expected to be conducted after "-- consideration, reflection, and maturation" (Poynter 2010, 145-146). Even though face-to-face method in data collection has been the most used format, the use of Internet related services have been increasing ever since the late 1990s (Bradley 2013, 139). It could be said that this progress is set to continue.

Some may question the reliability of using e-mail as a research tool and especially in depth interviews. Selwyn and Robson (sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk) claim that even though the assets of online communication have been stated, the preconception towards using e-mail as a research tool still lingers, the lack of humane elements being one of the biggest negative factors. Meho (eprints.rclis.org) conducted an article that appoints both positive and negative aspects of using e-mail in qualitative research purposes. The article in question results in a valid set of guidelines to follow in order to maintain the authenticity of the research. The conclusion includes for example individual invitations, effective use of subject line and interview request, clarity in interview questions and in general communication in order to avoid misunderstandings, control of data quality, using reminders of deadlines if required, remaining timely on possible follow-up questions, and following the survey method. These points were also followed in the research process to maintain the reliability despite the fact that online communications are a relatively new form to use in a research.

3.3 Informants

The informants were gathered from the host company Inverse Records' media contact list. Altogether 13 inquiries were sent and eight answers came back expressing interest to participate in the research. Eventually six participants returned the answers on time to be taken into account in the research. One of these was a representative of an online radio station and the remaining five worked for online music magazines or websites that focused on reviewing publications.

BraveWords is a heavy rock and metal webzine that was founded in the year 2000 and is based in Canada. Currently the website welcomes about 15 000 visitors on a daily basis. The contact person, Tim Henderson, who also is the CEO of BraveWords, describes the website more as a community for anyone who takes interest in “all things heavy”. The webzine offers news, features, reviews, and audio and video material. The BraveWords platform also includes an advertising space for interested affiliates and a discussion forum called BraveBoard for the community members.

Metal Temple is a multinational webzine that was found in 1999 in Greece. The webzine has however evolved into an international community that currently occupies a crew of over 60 workers. Contact person Lior Stein says that Metal Temple serves as “a platform for promotion for everything concerning Rock and Metal, from the softer edges right into the belly of the utmost darkness and brutality. “ The webzine provides reviews, live reports, interviews, news and articles of both signed and unsigned musical acts.

Dagheisha is a “subculture alternative webzine” which was established in Italy. The contact person, who operates under the pseudonym “Divine”, states that Dagheisha is the first metal and hardcore online reference in Italy. Even though the main focus of the webzine is on music, it also publishes articles about art, photography and movies. The researcher requested for further identification, but the contact person invoked their right to anonymity and participated with the pseudonym.

Mundo Rock & Heavy Magazine is an online-based magazine that was founded in Chile. The contact person and the founder of the website Miguel Ramirez G. states that he has been working as a music journalist from the year 2000 onwards and actually used to host two radio shows, “La Fuerza de Acero” and “Mundo Rock”. Currently his main emphasis is on the webzine, which focuses on reviewing different metal and rock publications.

Metal-Rules is a heavy metal webzine that was established in Canada in 1995, which also makes it one of the longest running webzines. As a reference the contact person, Managing Director Josh Wood, mentions that the webzine has “-- over 10 000 CD reviews in our database”. The contact person also has a regular radio show “Megawatt Mayhem”. Metal-Rules has a staff of 20 people from all around the world, which contributes book and DVD reviews, interviews and concert reviews.

Radio Metal On is an independent online radio station run by Manuel Joaquim, who resides in Portugal. The radio station plays music around the clock and it consists of five channels, which are Heavy, Brutal, Trasher, Crushing!, and Toxic. These five channels emphasize in different sub-genres of metal and rock music. The contact person states that Radio Metal On used to offer only one channel but started changing its form in late 2009.

Even though the informants were scattered around the world, the language of communication was English. This caused a minor issue as one candidate informed with a regret that he could not participate because he felt that his language skills were not matching the required level to conduct a satisfactory result.

3.4 Content of interviews

As Denzin and Lincoln (2008, 47) say: “Interview is a conversation — the art of asking questions and listening.”

The content of the interviews were based on the research questions. The questions were divided into more specific categories to obtain as precise answers as possible. To see the basis for the interview, see Appendix 1.

The first question was to determine the current trend in promotion. The informants were asked to determine whether they receive more traditional promotion packages (meaning physical copies) or digital promotion packages.

The second question dealt with the differentiation of traditional and digital promotion by asking the informants to present their experiences and preferences about the two options. It was designed to get the informants to express their personal opinion based on their experiences and opinions that have formed throughout their career.

The third question follows on from the theme of the second question. Keeping the focus on the subjective view, the informant is asked what aspects in digital promotion can be seen as the best. This question establishes the fact that informants have been working with digital form of promotion on a long-term basis which gives them a longer timeline to evaluate its effects. This guarantees the reliability of informant's assessment.

The fourth question encourages the informants to consider what could be done to enhance the effectiveness of digital form of promotion. This theme is tightly bound and based to the third question, as it challenges the responders to explore their experiences on the matter and make suggestions that are based on these factors. The fourth question is also of great relevance to the desired outcome of the research as it aims to find out whether digital promotional activities could be intensified.

The interview also included two casual paragraphs that were not direct questions; one in the beginning where each informant was asked to describe their business in their own words and the other at the end of interview inviting the informants to express any thoughts or opinions provoked by the questions but did not relate the topic in a direct way.

3.5 Conduction of interviews

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted via e-mail. This approach was found most suiting because the informants reside all around the world and the trouble of trying to find time for an appointment that would be suitable for both parties wanted to be avoided. The flexibility offered by the e-mail was found as the best way to implement the interviews. The interviews were carried out in the form of small sample interviewing, which refers to conducting an interview within a selected group, because it enables one “to arrive at conclusions that are specific to the sample, but which give reflective or explanatory depth to the subject being explored” (Davies 2007, 152).

When the informants were first contacted with an individually tailored e-mail, they were briefly introduced to the topic of the research. When a positive response was expressed, the informants were then sent the basis for the interview and the data was collected through the answers gathered from their response. Four of the informants were approached additionally with a friendly reminder message in order to secure their participation to the research on time. The communication usually did not end after the interview. A majority of the informants expressed their interest on the topic by further querying, for example about the future publication of the research and especially emphasized their interest to obtain the results.

The interviews were qualitative and semi-structured, and because they were conducted online, they followed the principles of parallel IDIs. The nature of the interviews was rather informal. By using this approach in communication, the informants were guaranteed to have freedom to express their opinions. In fact, the informants were encouraged to share their experiences and opinions without much restraint.

The researcher also discovered that the amount of previous academic material on the topic was scarce so qualitative approach provided the general guidelines in the form of questions without narrowing the answers too much.

Initially the interviews were planned to be conducted face to face but due to decentralized location of the informants this approach had to be abandoned at an early

stage of the planning process. However the researcher experiences that the same objectives were reached with an e-mail interview as what could have been expected from an interview process with physical presence of the researcher and interviewee.

3.6 Analysis of data

The data collected was analyzed by using the method of qualitative content analysis. The purpose of this method is to transform the data in to an easily approachable content that even a third party member who does not necessarily have further expertise on the matter can understand. This approach also guaranteed that the data could be transformed from communicative form to a reliable academic conclusion (Mayring 2004, 266). Qualitative content analysis also aims to detect the valuable information lying within the data and clarify the message of the results. In case of the research in the question, it is important to take advantage of discourse analysis, which examines the characteristics that occur in communication that is carried out either in spoken or written messages (Priest 2010, 108-109). The interviewer's keen observation skills are needed in order to decipher both verbal and latent messages.

In general terms, content analysis is quite self-explanatory. It analyses the data which can be presented in various forms — in fact Neuendorf (2002, 1) lists that data can exist in a naturally occurring language, in moving pictures on TV, on the front page of a magazine or even in the strategies used in advertising. In the research in question the analyzed data consisted of interviews. The qualitative approach was kept also when analysing the results.

To assist the detection of the valuable information, objectives of the interview must be defined before actually conducting it. As the research did not have an assertion about the expected outcome, following the defined guidelines is even more important. These objectives also offer guidance in the phases of the data collection, for example in forming the questions used in the interview. These themes are used further in the phase of analysis to maintain the consistency throughout the data collection process. The objectives determining the interviews were to find out the answers to the

following themes, which were divided into four categories:

- A) Which method of promotion is more popular: traditional promotion (usage of physical promotional copies and shipping via mail) or digital promotion?
- B) Which of the previously mentioned methods is better?
- C) What are the best features in digital promotion packages?
- D) What could be improved in digital promotion packages?

The usage of these four categories not only offers a guideline for the analysis process but also makes the results more structured and understandable for the viewer of the research. Therefore the results are presented in the four categories familiarized above.

4 RESULTS

The use of the promotion methods

Five out of six informants say that most of the promotional material they receive is in digital format. However, not one of the previously mentioned group mentions that they would be receiving only digital material, so it can be assumed that traditional promotion is also used in today's marketing.

Some additional information about the timeline of the events appeared via the answers. Half of the informants determine that the phenomenon of digital promotion's popularity becoming greater than traditional promotion became more apparent in 2010's, so this shift in the balance can be considered to be recent. In fact, one of the respondents pointed out that the decline of physical promotion material took place soon after the Financial Crisis of 2008. Based on the experiences of the informants, it can be presumed that before the 2010's majority of promotional material was in traditional form.

One of the informants informs that they review only physical copies and therefore the given answer does not provide any valuable data.

The popularity between the promotion methods

The theme of the second question clearly caused more complexity in the responses as the question persuades the interviewees to compare and assess the experiences and opinions between the two options. The majority of informants express simultaneously personal and professional preferences and motives in the answers.

When describing the traditional form of promotion, it is clear that all respondents share a personal affection towards physical copies of albums or other artistic material. The reasons for this vary. It seems that the interviewees can feel the connectivity to the artist better through the physical copy and that the physical copy nourishes all aspects of the artist's creativity and artistic innovation. The informants feel that an individualistic experience is better received from the products offered by the traditional form of promotion. The term "added value" arises in several of the

interviews when it comes to describing the favourable factors in traditional promotion. It can be presumed that all of the previously mentioned factors (more artistic sense, individual experience) create the added value in this case. One of the informants admits that he personally feels that the traditional promotion packages feel more objective and less produced by the PR department than the digital promotion packages. Two informants admit directly that the products in physical format are their personal preference.

Despite the fact that informants seem to have a strong personal bond with the traditional form of promotional copies, the general benefits of digital format for the business are acknowledged by five out of six respondents. The answers indicate that the digital form has irrevocably changed the tempo of the business. The means of delivering and packaging the material is easy and quick. Digital material can also be accessed more efficiently as it can be shared via a network to multiple parties.

One of the answers points out that compiling of the promotion package is a lot faster and significantly friendlier for the environment when it is done in digital form. The digital format is also convenient in storage purposes, as it does not require a lot physical space and can be transported effortlessly. When choosing between traditional and digital form, three out of six informants state the digital format as their personal preference.

One of the informants informed that they prefer only physical copies so the answer did not offer any data to be analyzed.

Best features in digital promotion

Five out of six respondents declare that the speed is one of the best features of digital form of promotion. As the promotional material gets delivered online, it reaches the destination in a fast and effective way. The fast delivery enhances the easy nature of digital promotion, as it does not need to be ripped from an album to for example MP3 form. Also the risk of the package getting lost in transportation process, for example in mail, is non-existent. Digital form guarantees an instant access for a large coverage of reviewers simultaneously.

In addition the interviewees, who listed the above-mentioned positive features in digital promotion packages, mention the cost-effective nature of the format. The production of the package can be implemented within the record label or production company without having to direct part of the budget for external services such as print services.

Other features that get mentioned are the lack of required storage space compared to physical copies that are used in traditional promotion and the fact that the reviewer can easily have the material with them even if they would change their location. One respondent points out that the poor quality of the digital promos, which was a big disappointment when first introducing the digital form in promotional activities, does not occur any more — on the contrary, the quality of digital material is nowadays superb.

One of the informants states plainly that there is nothing good about the digital form, as it does not come even close to offering the same experience as the physical format.

Features that could be improved in digital promotion

Whereas the third question resulted in a couple of reoccurring themes in the answers that a majority stated, the fourth question did not conclude in similar coherence.

Four out of six informants had not discovered any major complications that would have required any further analysing. Nonetheless, some minor aspects were introduced. There were some remarks considering the technical features that could be improved, such as taking advantage of the difference in variable bits in order to make different elements available to be downloaded in the best quality available. An interviewee, who presented an online magazine, pointed out that instead of offering a link for streaming for all media contacts, the marketer should consider offering downloadable content for the magazines as that option would suit the needs of the reviewers better.

From a promotional point of view, another informant called out for more preciseness in promotional activities. It was stated that marketing and especially promotional duties department must maintain accuracy and pay attention to detail even if their schedule of implementing a successful campaign is tight.

One of the respondents, who has been working in the music industry for 15 years, had a very critical conception of the modern method used in marketing and promotional activities. The speed, which was listed as one of the assets of digital promotion, also has a more negative impact on the reviewers' workload. Because sending the promotional packages is so effortless via global networks, the risk of overflowing reviewers with the material is a big problem. This issue was mentioned briefly also in two other interviews so altogether half of the interviewees have faced the same problem. The same interviewee also pointed out that compared to the physical copies, the digital format seems like "disposable commodity", which means that is not tangible enough to create a sense of attachment to the artist. In addition, the informant feels that digital format enables piracy and illegal bootlegging, which should be addressed accordingly as it has created a negative effect on the entire music industry.

One of the informants stated that there are no suggestions that could make the digital promotion better. This was consistent with the informant's previous answers and did not provide any valuable data.

Additional information

In addition the conducted interviews included a section at the end where the informants were encouraged to express their thoughts that had been evoked during the interview but which were not directly related to the questions.

Concerns of how the current business model is affecting the bands were declared on multiple occasions. As one of the interviewees said, it is worrying how the bands are under pressure to release new material so they can go on a tour in order to earn money. It was speculated that this can even cause a situation where bands are questioning whether to release new material as the costs often would exceed the financial outcome. One solution for the situation is that bands need to resort to ingenuity: for example, if they are able to release a specialty packaging which includes material that cannot be turned into digital form, consumers need to acquire the physical copy in order to obtain the whole experience. This can be seen for example in the vinyl sales that are currently the highest in last 20 years. As the interviewee says, it seems that "the entire business has flipped."

5 DISCUSSION

Inverse Records subscribed the research topic in autumn 2014. It was clear that both parties, the host company and the researcher, would benefit of implementing the research.

After thoroughly studying the company's operations and its principles, it was obvious that an independent production company will benefit from further studying the methods used in marketing and communications. The research can help the company to understand and enhance the use of aforementioned tools and therefore help to reach the objectives more efficiently and without the risk of overusing the resources.

The researcher has worked with marketing management on previous projects throughout the past four years so the interest in the research topic was genuine. Also conducting the research in question increases the researcher's competency and skills in the field of marketing in the music industry.

As the results were presented in apparent sections, it is consistent to discuss the results in the same manner. Even though some of the answers overlapped with other questions, they can still be addressed simultaneously and more distinctively. To see contents of the entire interviews, see Appendix 2.

Comparing the use of traditional and digital promotion

The first theme in the questions was rather easy because it required the interviewees to assess the amount of promotional packages, both traditional and digital ones, and then determine which option is used more. These answers to the questions were therefore based on tangible matters, not solely on personal opinions.

The results state that the amount of sent digital material clearly overcomes the traditional and physical ones. However, no answer clearly suggested that the received material would only be either or, so it is safe to presume that both formats are still applied.

It turns out that the situation has not always been the same. The increasing amount of digital format has transpired within the last decade. It was also interesting to come across a suggestion that the decline of traditional methods started accelerating soon after the crisis in 2008 when the entire global economy took a huge plunge

(www.economist.com). This was of course a natural reaction because the music industry felt the effect the same way as other businesses, but this perspective had not been brought up in any previously collected data. Whilst studying the causes why digital format emerged so apparently during the specific period, one must remember that the simple reason could also be that the technology might have not simply been effective enough until the traditional methods started decreasing in affectivity.

Comparing traditional and digital promotional activities

The second theme raised clearly more reflective answers than the first one because the theme focused more on informants' personal views. Even though the answers were most often subjective, it was clear to the researcher that initially the responses were derived from experiences and not only on the personal judgment of the informants.

There was a clear defensive stance for music in physical format. The added value and experience that physical copies offer was disclosed on multiple occasions. It seemed that the experience did not involve only the physical product but the general atmosphere and knowledge that reviewer got — in fact, it was referred to more as a ritual than just listening to an audio tape. It became clear that even though the informants review music as their profession, their needs are extremely similar to the needs of consumers and that music is very often a matter of passion and devotion. One of the informants actually said that physical copies literally provide more content to be reviewed. The lack of having the previously mentioned experience and difficulties in forming an emotional bond was seen as the biggest downfall of digital format when contemplated from personal point of view.

Even though many informants admit their personal preference to the experience and added value provided by physical copies of traditional promotion packages, the perks of digital form are acknowledged to be somewhat superior from a business point of view. It is seen evidently more effective in costs and distribution issues. It is apparent that the informants share the same views as the consignor concluded (see 2.4 Interview with Inverse Records).

Some of the interviewees had previous experiences that made them question the reliability of digital form. When the digital promotion was first utilized as a marketing

tool, the promotional material had not always been compiled with required precision. As one of the interviewees pointed out, it is not the reviewer's duty to double check an artist's basic information in order to conduct a truthful review. Overall the experiences of the digital promotion had improved and the general opinion was positive.

Comparing of these two options displayed the on-going battle within the consumers. Certain rigid preference for supporting only the other option appeared even within the informants. Even though the majority of the informants were able to view both of the phenomena in a somewhat objective manner, one respondent announced that they do not review any other material than CD's and vinyls and therefore did not offer much of useful data in the answers.

Best features in digital promotion

Various aspects of digital promotion were mentioned in the answers for this question. The benefits of the speed in digital promotion were mentioned on multiple occasions and based on the amount of its praise it can be assumed that speed is definitely the main advantage of the digital format both from the sender's and receiver's point of view. It came apparent that the digital format also has a sense of reliability in its current form because there's no threat of getting lost in the shipping process and a larger audience can access it with one dispatch. This provides the reviewers a certain sense of freedom, as working in a mobile environment is possible because the material does not need an excessive physical storage. Also the problems with the material quality of digital content, which got mentioned in the previous answers, seem to be part of the past because most respondents consider digital promotion as a trustworthy tool.

The low cost in production process was listed on numerous occasions. Low costs in production gives the artists and production parties means to generate creative material and publish it without risking major financial losses. This can lead to the assumption that the industry is slowly showing signs of recovery and regaining its competence as the productivity increases.

What could be improved in digital promotion

When reflecting the possible outcome for the research, the fourth question is considered as the most important because it can provide answers to make the tools used in digital promotion more effective.

When the informants were asked to compare the merits of traditional and digital format a relative amount of criticism arose. However, the answers to the final question were surprisingly fragmented. Most of the responses did not suggest a need for any major change or then the informants had not even considered this perspective. A few replies mentioned some technical aspects that should be taken into consideration, but this is understandable as the digital tools have not been in use for a long period of time at this point and the technology is still in constant development.

The answers indicated that although the speed of digital technology is seen as a definite strength, it also has an alternative impact. The reviewers have noticed that as the means of communication have become more effective it also causes the amount of reviewable material to multiply and sometimes this leads to a flood of promotional material. This results in a problem, because the reviewers do not have enough resources to examine all of the material on time. The speed of the business manifested difficulties with the senders — as the production has sped up, the marketing department is expected to produce satisfactory promotional material in the same time. It was stated that even though it is understandable that as the entire pace of the business has accelerated due to digital networks, the marketing department is expected to keep up to the same speed, but maintaining accuracy and paying attention to even minor details is a must in order to maintain reliability and professionalism.

From personal preferences it seemed to be clear that even though digital material is considered effective and very useful from a business point of view, it seems that the promotional copies in digital format are still lacking the same attraction as physical releases. As one of the informants expressed, whereas even the receiving of a CD or a vinyl in mail tingles the CD collector's fancy, the digital version has no such effect.

Additional information

Some of the questions resulted in information that did not directly relate to the themes in the questions. The researcher nonetheless felt that these opinions offered a valid point for the research so they are included in the discussion of the results.

A couple of the informants expressed their concern of the current state of the music industry and how it is affecting the business. One interviewee, who has been working in music business for over a decade, declares that even the idea of promotion seems to have changed. Previously a release of an album included a massive promotional package, which had all sorts of marketing material, such as T-shirts, physical copies to be handed out, posters, stickers, and so forth. Nowadays one will receive one copy of the release in a digital form and a written press release. From this point of view one could say that marketing has turned from a creative and positive process to a mediocre and forced mean.

The grave concern for the bands was mentioned on a few occasions. The current atmosphere in the music business is not encouraging new artists to blossom, in fact the effect can be quite the opposite: previously bands had to work hard to be recognized and today it is even more difficult. The possibility of becoming a full time musician is a rare luxury because only a handful of musicians will be able to support themselves just by making music and even that will most likely involve touring and performing to a live audience around the year. The most cynical of people could say that this is natural and the survival of the fittest occurs in all forms of business, but it also could have an irreversible effect on the creativity and especially on the diversity of the music business.

It seems that the accelerated tempo of the music industry has not only affected the digital releases. One of the informants says that he has noticed how physical releases are still trying to stay in the competition. It seems that all included particles have to be moving with haste in order to maintain their competence. Unfortunately this can be seen in the quality of the product — current physical releases seem to be struggling to live up to the standard as they are trying get released on the same schedule with the digital releases.

At the beginning of the methodology section, two research questions were determined: 1) whether the target group prefers traditional or digital methods in promotion and 2) could digital promotion be enhanced. After inspecting the results of the interviews the answers to the research questions seem to be rather clear. Even though the traditional form has its supporters, the digital option in promotional methods seems to overwhelm the traditional means. Many of the answers emphasized that especially from a business point of view digital promotion is far more effective compared to the other option. As for enhancing the effect of digital promotion, the results were not as apparent. Judging from the answers, the biggest flaw in digital format is the lack of experience that the informants seem to get from physical copies.

Assembling the data

After discussing the results of the conducted interviews, all of the data must be reflected with the previous information detained from the theoretical background.

The representative of Inverse Records, Mr Kantoniemi, mentioned that the response of digital promotion in the domestic and international field are quite opposing (see 2.4 Interview with Inverse Records). The difference in the reactions was also detected when inquiring potential representatives for the interviews about the topic. The parties that were approached were listed as active media contacts by Inverse Records. As it is apparent, the response from the international contacts was positive, even enthusiastic, and it resulted in getting valuable data for the research. When a couple of the domestic candidates were contacted, the response was rather lukewarm. The replies were either blatant refusals or silence. The researcher was not able to conduct further investigation and therefore focused only on the experiences and attitudes of the international media contacts. A possibility of considering further research to discover the reason for the lack of interest towards digital promotion in the domestic markets could be conducted. It most likely would result in valuable information for the host company about the topic and possibilities to enhance its competence.

5.1 Limitations

As mentioned previously, there was not enough of reliable academic literature on the topic of digital promotion in music business, so the researcher was forced to use other options. One of these practices was to interview the representative of the host company and use this approach as a method to collect data. Even though the researcher feels that this approach provided very valuable information that could have not been obtained otherwise and resulted in deficient research, its reliability may be questioned.

As mentioned above, the researcher interviewed the representative of the host company, Inverse Records. The interview was intended as a data collection method for the theoretical background and was conducted in Finnish. This language was chosen because it is the native tongue of both participants.

The informants interviewed for the actual research consisted of various nationalities but the interviews were conducted in English, as that was in most cases the only language that both parties could understand satisfactorily. In fact, only two of the informants spoke English as their mother tongue. English was a reasonable solution because the researcher knew that the research would be implemented in the language in question. In both cases, doing the data collection interview and interviewing the informants, there is a risk that some of the information may have gotten lost in translation by either the interviewer or the respondent.

The group of informants that eventually participated in the interviews was short of two candidates from the original chosen list. Also the distribution between the professions of the informants was uneven—all of the consulted online magazine reporters participated in the research whereas only one of the online radio reporters returned his contribution on time. This may result in a more unilateral conclusion than anticipated.

6 CONCLUSION

The effects of digital revolution in the music industry are various and clearly visible. Even the core operations of music business had to be re-evaluated and adjusted to the new form of environment. This naturally affected all of the fields included in the business, including the marketing operations. The digital format has shown to be a valuable asset in promotional duties and it may be that its final function has not even been revealed yet as the technology keeps evolving. The global digital networks might have made the world seem smaller but it also has provided the smaller and independent participants a set of tools that have allowed the smaller companies to enhance their business operations significantly. It is profitable to find ways to increase the positive effect that the use of digital promotion can provide for the business.

As for the results, the outcome for the research questions was evident. The first research question was whether the target group prefers traditional or digital methods in promotion. The potential of digital promotion has definitely been noticed. When asked to list the best features of the digital format, multiple positive merits were mentioned, including its speed, the general convenience, and lack of physical restraints. The majority of the informants preferred digital form promotion instead of the traditional method. However, the researcher felt that the underlying opinion in the answers indicated that despite of its various virtues digital format has not yet entirely exceeded the physical promotional means. The second research question asked if digital promotion be enhanced. Excluding some minor technical details, there were not any direct suggestions that would considerably improve digital promotion in general. The features in digital promotion packages are still in a developing stage, so the technical factors mentioned in section 5. Discussion are understandable. As a conclusion it seems that the features that could be enhanced in digital promotion are the emotional experiences. The researcher took the freedom to assume that if digital format would be able to convey a similar experience as the traditional equivalent, the final obstacles of rejection it faces at the moment will eventually subside.

It became very clear that music is a matter of heart and passion, so the product has to be able to cause a favourable reaction in order to lead to an emotional bond between

the consumer/reviewer and the product. This is extremely important to remember when operating in a business that aims to sell emotions and experiences. If this feeling could be communicated through digital means, the digital material would be able to rid itself from the feeling of being merely disposable matter.

The research was intended to focus on the entire field of the music industry. Because of this the researcher did not have enough resources to concentrate on specific markets that are bound on geographical locations and this results in a general level of data on the means of using digital promotional tools and presenting a way to maximize their effect. The knowledge gathered was based on professional experiences and personal opinions of media parties who are at the receiving end of the promotional channels. The researcher would recommend an implementation of further research on a definitive environment in order to receive more specific data instead of general knowledge. This would benefit the host company greatly as they operate on both domestic and international markets.

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8 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: The basis for the interviews

This interview is a semi-structured interview, which in simple terms means that even though the questions set the main direction of the interview, the person interviewed is given some freedom in answering and expressing personal opinions. In short, this isn't anything too formal.

1. Tell something about (name of the company) in your own words
2. Based on your clientele, which of the following do you receive more of: the “traditional” (= physical promotion copies) or digital promotion packages?
3. What are your experiences and personal opinions on a) traditional and b) digital promotion? And which one do you prefer?
4. Based on your experiences and opinions, what are the best aspects of digital promotion?
5. Do you feel that the format of digital promotion could be changed in any way? (Feel free to list your own suggestions)
6. Please feel free to share any comments or opinions you've got on this matter

Thank you for participating in this interview!

APPENDIX 2: The interviews

Brave Words

Metal Tim

October 21, 2014 5:11 PM

To: Mia Hartikainen <mia.hel.hartikainen@gmail.com>

Re: Inquiry for an interview

How's this Mia:

1. Tell something about Brave Words in your own words.

Well, BraveWords is my little baby that grew out of Brave Words & Bloody Knuckles/BW&BK Magazine which launched in 1994. The BraveWords website was born in 2000 and today we cater to about 15,000 unique visitors daily. Metal fans built BraveWords and fans run it! So we pride ourselves in being one of the most popular places on the Internet for fans to find HR/HM news, features, reviews, audio/video, our Metal Market and popular BraveBoard. For me personally, it's a playground for all things "heavy" and I literally live on the site virtually every waking moment, feeding it with content, tweaking and striving to make it better each and every day!

2. Based on your clientele, which of the following do you receive more of: the "traditional" (= physical promotion copies) or digital promotion packages?

We are seeing 95% of our servicing digitally! Those numbers are pretty crazy given the fact that only a few short years ago, people were forced to mail their CDs into BraveWords for us to cover them. Ah, the wonders of technology!

3. What are your experiences and personal opinions on a) traditional and b) digital promotion? And which one do you prefer?

Well, given my age, I'm a BIG CD lover and am a bit saddened that most promotional packages are now tiny little files that you can't see. But it's now easier than ever for a band to create and "service" their materials throughout the world. And now there's no shipping, so transportation and packaging costs are history, and it's better for the environment. And not too complain, that means were flooded with submissions each day. Literally dozens upon dozens, to the point that it nearly takes a full-time job to cover! And of course there is a purpose here - bands want us to listen to their wares, but there's not enough hours in the day to plow through the music. That's why it's nice to have a team with ears, so collectively we are listening to EVERYTHING!

4. Based on your experiences and opinions, what are the best aspects of digital promotion?

Speed and coverage. In the past one CD appeared and I had to delegate for review/interview purposes. Now, my entire team gets the music - maybe not at the same time. But we ALL get it. And of course space is an issue ... saving shelf space! I have writers that are refusing hard copy servicing 'cause they have no where to put the music!

5. Do you feel that the format of digital promotion could be changed in any way? (Feel free to list your own suggestions)

Not really. As long as we see the entire package in terms of audio files, photos, bio info appropriate links. As an editor, you don't want to have to search for this stuff. My biggest issue is that of duplication. Send it to me once and your (Haulix?) system should be keeping a record of that servicing and I shouldn't see the same invite again. But I do ... sometimes two, three times! So I'm always looking to see if I already have the music, 'cause there's no sense in doubling up variable memory on your computer!

6. Please feel free to share any comments or opinions you've got on this matter!

It's all debatable. Has the MP3 killed the music business or allowed bands to share their music with a larger audience? The fact that bands are questioning whether or not to create/release an entire album is troubling. But we've also seen more output from our fave bands more than ever as they are forced to release music so they can hit the road to make money. The entire business model has flipped. But why are vinyl sales the highest in 20 years! It's crazy. Bands are now forced to offer specialty packaging - things people can't easily download. I'm embracing digital, but I'm still buying physical!

Mundo Rock & Heavy Webzine

☆ Miguel Ramirez

To: Mia Hartikainen <rivinreuna@gmail.com>

Re: Inquiry for an interview

October 14, 2014 5:01 PM



hello Mia:

here our answers:

1. Tell something about Mundo Rock & Heavy Webzine in your own words.

Well, this project was born as an alternative to write about metal music since always I've loved listening and writing my feelings about it. Also as an extra support way to all bands or labels that sent us their stuff for airplay between 2002 and 2011 when for those day still was alive my ex radio shows La Fuerza de Acero and Mundo Rock. But since May 2011 there is no more chance to work in radio, so I've spent all my time just writing reviews then. For my is true freedom to express myself concerning something that I love it.

2. Based on your clientele, which of the following do you receive more of: the "traditional" (= physical promotion copies) or digital promotion packages?

between 2001 until 2008 app, the most of the promos were in physical copies. But nowadays, since 2010, the most of the indie and signed bands just are sending digital promos, so for me is not a big problem since is a most fast and secure way to get their stuff. Enough I just missed to get the physical CDs (I'm a big collector, personally I have almost 3000 titles in my collection), but anyway I understand that the business rules, and actually with the running times is not possible to keep sending CDs considering the costs and the low sales in the metal music industry.

3. What are your experiences and personal opinions on a) traditional and b) digital promotion? And which one do you prefer?

I prefer the b) way cause the time to get the music, you don't need much time to wait the promo arrives to you. Before you need to wait the post services worked fine, but sometimes unfortunately the promos was missed on the way (cost for the sender, not for us). With this also you can get a lot more music than before, but the only problem is the time you need to cover so much music (in my case I work alone on the site, so I try to do my best to write so much as I can).

4. Based on your experiences and opinions, what are the best aspects of digital promotion?

Basically the quickness to get the music (for me) and the low costs for the promoters and the bands.

5. Do you feel that the format of digital promotion could be changed in any way? (Feel free to list your own suggestions)

maybe there could be added a way to get the stuff in different vbr to get best quality downloads.

6. Please feel free to share any comments or opinions you've got on this matter!

Thank you for your time. It would be nice to can know when you get the results of your work Mia. Let me know.

Cheers from Chile,

Miguel Ramirez G.

Reviews en <http://www.mundorockheavy.blogspot.com/?view=magazine>

Myspace: <http://www.myspace.com/mundorockzine>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/mundo.rockwebzine>

Metal-Rules

JOSHUA WOOD

To: Mia Hartikainen <rivinreuna@gmail.com>
 Re: Inquiry for an interview

October 14, 2014 11:47 PM

Thank you!

My answers are below. Sorry about my spelling! lol.

JP

----- Original Message -----

From: "Mia Hartikainen" <rivinreuna@gmail.com>
 To: "JOSHUA WOOD" <oshuawood@shaw.ca>
 Sent: Tuesday, October 14, 2014 7:23:12 AM
 Subject: Re: Inquiry for an interview

First off, thank you for answering the inquiry!

This interview is a semi-structured interview, which in simple terms means that even though the questions set the main direction, the person interviewed is given some freedom in answering and expressing personal opinions. In short, this isn't anything too formal.

1. Tell something about Metal-Rules in your own words.

Metal-Rules.com is one of the world's largest and longest Running Heavy Metal webzines. Started in Newfoundland, Canada 1995 we have more book reviews, DVD reviews, interviews and concert reviews than any other metal webzine. We also have over 10,000 CD reviews in our database, second to only one other Metal webzine. We have a staff of over 20 people from around the world.

I also use digital promos to play on my long-running Heavy Metal radio show, (28 years) Megawatt Mayhem heard every Saturday on CJSW 90.9FM.

2. Based on your clientele, which of the following do you receive more of: the "traditional" (= physical promotion copies) or digital promotion packages?

Digital by far. A 10:1 ratio easily. I have just received my 1000th digital promo this year and I have maybe got 100 physical promos.

3. What are your experiences and personal opinions on a) traditional and b) digital promotion? And which one do you prefer?

a) PHYSICAL

I'm older and I do prefer physical promos. When you have a physical CD in your hand you can look at lyrics, liner notes, product details, art work and add more content to the review. There are marketing value-added things that a physical product can have that a digital promo CD can't. (Sticker, pins, patches, packaging etc.) all those items that show creativity and artistic innovation to create a total experience, rather than some digital/binary 'ones and zeros'. lol. I do like physical better but I am not at all anti-digital either.

b) DIGITAL

-With digital promos they are almost like a non-existent, nebulous disposable commodity that have no real value in my mind. To me owning the CD with package/booklet is almost as important as the music.

-It is inconvenient to have to open multiple different computer program to listen to the music, look at art, read the bio etc. With a physical CD the reviewer can make their own determination about factual info. With digital promos often the reviewer is reliant on info from the publicist or label which may be biased or inaccurate. I can't count how many hundreds of times I've found mistakes on digital promos; incorrect dates, track listing, track sequence, line-up info, spelling mistakes etc. It seems that digital promo are rushed out before the physicals are manufactured and have had someone from the band (or label) sign-off on the final product. It is very time consuming to go and edit virtually every digital promo I get for errors before I put it into iTunes or on my iPod to be able to play for radio.

-Often the publicist is some young person (often interns, which is fine) and they have little to no experience about the band they are being paid (or not) to promote and mistakes happen. I often see ludicrous RIYL suggestions indicating the person writing the one-sheets has no clue about the band or the music...but that is not a problem exclusive to digital promos. Sometimes the publicist write long flowery descriptive passages (practically poems!) about the band but very little concrete info for a reviewer to use. I think I'll scream if I see one more digital bio that says the 'long-awaited debut'. If it is the debut album it can't be long awaited! lol.

-Digital promote makes it easier to illegally bootleg/pirate music these days.

-Digital promos take up lots of space on my computer. I get so many I have to clear my hard drive and bought an external hard drive to save them and have my OS run faster.

-On the positive aspect, digital promos are fast, inexpensive, easy to transport, and have many advantages for the label/publicist. I understand these cost savings can be transferred into support for the bands with better record contracts and/or tour support rather than paying for envelopes, stamps and giving away expensive hard copies. From a business aspect, the digital are far superior in most ways.

4. Based on your experiences and opinions, what are the best aspects of digital promotion?

- Speed, instant access
- They don't get lost or damaged in the mail
- Easy to store
- cheaper for labels/publicists to spread music to reviewers.
- easy to transport. I could not carry 1000 CD's each week to the radio station for requests, on my iPods I can!

5. Do you feel that the format of digital promotion could be changed in any way? (Feel free to list your own suggestions)

Despite my preference for physical media, I feel the digital system is well developed and easy to use. A few clicks and you have the music to listen to and a EPK. Back around 2010 when digital prom orally got going with Haulix etc... I used to actually print out each EPK and keep them in a binder! After two years as more and more companies went to digital promo, it got to see so much time and work (and ink!) to do it that I gave up.

In 2010 I got about maybe 300 digital. In 2011, it was about 500 digital. By 2012 I was getting 1000 per year and now when I hit the 1000 new albums threshold it is earlier and earlier each year. I can maybe listen to about three albums a day times almost 365 days but soon it will be almost impossible to hear it all, let alone adequately process so much incoming information.

I know a few journalist colleagues who stopped downloading and just stream. To them it is faster and easier. One journalist I know for years only listens to the first 15 seconds of a few songs. If it doesn't 'grab him' (his words), he passes on it, which I think is a horrible! He automatically discounts potentially fantastic Metal bands who need the support because he is too lazy to take the time to listen to the album at least once. Of course, he will then claim in public he has 'heard the album', which is not true at all. We still argue about his lack of commitment to this day.

My above examples are to illustrate that there so much stuff coming in digitally, it is getting hard even for the most dedicated, die-hard guys like me to keep up. I can wrap my head around getting a new physical CD in the mail every day. It is harder to appreciate getting 3-4 digital files every single day. It less tangible and harder to latch onto to support.

6. Please feel free to share any comments or opinions you've got on this matter!

I've been in the industry a long time (15 + years) and I've told this story many times to demonstrate how the digital revolution has changed the music industry.

When I started as a DJ in radio in 1999, I used to meet with Record company people, publicists etc.. and get a box of CD's, posters, a shirt, stuff to give-away, tickets to show etc. It is not all about getting free stuff, yes a nice perk, but people were paid to meet with media and actually promote support bands and we had the tools to market and promote bands. We would put up posters in the station and plaster the place in tickers to help sell that band or bands in their release/tour cycle. I used to take stickers of a band and put their stickers up in the bathroom at bars!

Then a few later I would only get three hard copies. One for me, one to give-away for an on-air contest, and one for the radio station library. All the other stuff dried up. No budget meant less support for the band.

Then a few years later we would only get those little cardboard wallet promos and a one-sheet.

Then the record company offices started closing down, people would get laid off and we would get maybe one burned CD-R, sometimes printed, (sometimes just with the bands name written in black felt-marker on the disc) and a one-sheet usually mailed from another city, probably Toronto (here in Canada)

Then finally, it was where we are today...'Click here to get a digital copy of the album'. Some (not all but most) record companies have shifted the responsibility of paying to promote short their own artists (i.e.. pay for advertising, marketing) and shifted that onto journalists and media as the new marketing arm.

I am not saying that is good or bad, just an evolution on how companies do business and my experiences.

Much of my comments may have sounded negative and I hope that is not the case. I feel VERY privileged to be given access to free music for the radio and webzine. It is a huge perk and I love it and spends hours every day doing my metal hobbies, which pisses off my wife. lol. I do my very best to champion as much as I can.

Receiving promo albums is a responsibility I take seriously, I never bootleg or download CD's, in fact I think Lars Ulrich was right suing Napster! Theft is theft. I've seen the digital revolution destroy the music industry with first hand experience seeing people I know and worked with losing their jobs and record companies close down and leave town. Accordingly, I am very anti-digital theft and piracy and individually tag all my incoming authorized promos to help ID what ones are still technically property of the record company that sent them to me. I want to thank all the companies that have put their trust in me to try my best to support Metal.

Thanks for reading all this!

Sincerely,

JP
 Managing Editor
www.Metal-Rules.com
 DJ, Megawatt Mayhem, CJSW 90.9FM.

Dagheisha

divine@dagheisha.com

To: Mia Hartikainen <rivinreuna@gmail.com>

Re: Inquiry for an interview

October 15, 2014 12:27 AM

1. Tell something about Dagheisha in your own words.

We like to call ourselves "subculture alternative webzine". We're the first metal and hardcore reference in Italy but you can find articles about other genres of music, art, photography and movies too. We only talks about what we like with tons of specials, reviews and interviews.

2. Based on your clientele, which of the following do you receive more of: the "traditional" (= physical promotion copies) or digital promotion packages?

We only review phsyical stuff (cds or vinyls).

3. What are your experiences and personal opinions on a) traditional and b) digital promotion? And which one do you prefer?

As answered before we don't listen to digital promos.

4. Based on your experiences and opinions, what are the best aspects of digital promotion?

None. Quality of music is terrible and we like to open the album, read the lyrics and admire the artwork while the stereo is playing at max volume..

5. Do you feel that the format of digital promotion could be changed in any way? (Feel free to list your own suggestions)

I don't think so. It's a matter of culture.

6. Please feel free to share any comments or opinions you've got on this matter!

Come to Italy!

Metal Temple

★ Steinmetal
 To: Mia Hartikainen <rivinreuna@gmail.com>
 Reply-To: Steinmetal
 Re: Metal-Temple contact

October 15, 2014 11:29 AM
[Hide Details](#)



Good morning :)

Here are my answers.

Where will this be published?

1. Tell something about Metal Temple in your own words.

Metal Temple Online Magazine is as multinational run magazine that serves as a platform for promotion for everything concerning Metal and Rock, from the softer edges right into the belly of the utmost darkness and brutality. The mag started in the end of 1999 as a Greek effort, and partially still is today thanks to our amazing webmaster, and gradually developed into an international groundwork with a crew of over 60. Metal Temple attempts to provide promotion for every signed and unsigned band out there with reviews / live reports / news / interviews / articles.

2. Based on your clientele, which of the following do you receive more of: the “traditional” (= physical promotion copies) or digital promotion packages?

Since joining Metal Temple in the end of 2009, the large sum of promos / albums received from bands and labels were in digital form. The physical promotion declined rapidly after the 2008 economic crisis that struck the world. Near the end of 2008 I started in Metal Express Radio as a writer and I used to receive plenty of physical copies from labels, yet a few months after the crisis, most labels and PRs turned to digital promotion. So I guess it was, and still is, a financial issue.

3. What are your experiences and personal opinions on a) traditional and b) digital promotion? And which one do you prefer?

A. Traditional promotion, meaning receiving physical copies, is always a treat, especially if you are a CDs collector, like myself. There is nothing better than the actual copy of a band's album, in a sort of sense, you can actually feel the band's work as you hold the booklet while listening to the CD. I had my fair share of listens to bands' albums in that fashion, and at first it was hard to shake, but one has to adjust to where the world is headed. I still receive physicals from time to time, but most aren't sent in jewel cases like in the past, yet the guiding element is the music thus making the jewel case + extras as a supplement leisure.

B. Digital Promotion, meaning working with files or stream, has been much more accessible. I can actually receive a promo a month or more ahead and enjoy an album, while feeling as if it was exclusive for me, way before I would get the actual CD, which on more than several occasions, wasn't even printed yet. When the music files are in good quality, it is like listening to the CD, yet that is not always the case. On the other hand, most labels / PRs / bands tend to send in high quality nowadays so the situation improved. When it comes to streaming, I like it less. When travelling, even with the possibilities of 4G Internet or WIFI that can allow streaming almost everywhere, I like to hold on to the files themselves other than rely on links for the albums.

As for preference, since I have been working with digital promotion for almost five years, I prefer it than physicals. It is not that the magic behind the actual release faded away, yet it is better to receive a promo of a release faster through Haulix / iPool or other of the various special file sharing systems that labels / PRs use, than sometimes waiting for the print.

4. Based on your experiences and opinions, what are the best aspects of digital promotion?

I believe the best aspects are accessibility, distribution throughout vast connections and contacts and quality (especially in the last couple of years).

5. Do you feel that the format of digital promotion could be changed in any way? (Feel free to list your own suggestions)

Well, that is a tough one. I noticed that the format has been perfected in various ways throughout the years and it came to the point where a band is almost 100% covered when it comes to the promotion of their release. I would have cancelled stream as a main mean to provide magazines with. Streaming is working great when promoting band's new singles or full streamed releases for the public to chew on. However, for magazines, always provide a downloadable copy to work with.

6. Please feel free to share any comments or opinions you've got on this matter!

I think I got everything covered :)

Thank you very much :)

Regards,

Lior "Steinmetal" Stein
General Manager / Marketing Director / PR
E-Mail: lior@metal-temple.com
Facebook: [Steinmetal](#)
Facebook: [Metal Temple](#)
[METAL TEMPLE MAGAZINE](#)

Radio Metal On

RADIO METAL ON

To: Mia Hartikainen <rivinreuna@gmail.com>

Re: Inquiry for an interview

October 21, 2014 5:40 PM

2

Hi Mia,
 Sorry for the delay answering (and my bad english). Here it goes my answers.
 Good luck with your studies,
 Manuel

1. Tell something about Radio Metal On in your own words.

Radio Metal ON is a small and independent internet radio that plays 24 hours / day only music. It consists of 5 channels each one playing a different Hard Rock / Heavy Metal sub genders. Example: Radio Metal ON: The Heavy (that plays only Hard Rock, Heavy Metal and Power Metal) or Radio Metal ON: The Thrasher (that plays only Thrash Metal), etc.

Radio Metal ON was created because of my love for Metal Music and radio, since my teenager's years and is my hobby that takes me all my free time. But I love to do it.

2. Based on your clientele, which of the following do you receive more of: the "traditional"(= physical promotion copies) or digital promotion packages?

Nowadays almost only digital promotion.

3. What are your experiences and personal opinions on a) traditional and b) digital promotion? And which one do you prefer?

I understand that is easier and cheaper to the labels / bands / promoters send digital promo packages than the physical copies and is easier for me to use it as I only can use mp3 files in the station. So this way, I don't need reap it myself. On the other side, if you have the physical copy of the record and there's any problem in the server, you always have the physical record to reap it again. And there's another thing that you don't get with digital, that is the pleasure of you get a mail package, open it and have in your hands a physical record, listen it, discover it, smell it... so my preference goes to the physical, I suppose.

4. Based on your experiences and opinions, what are the best aspects of digital promotion?

The best aspects of digital promotion are:

- faster delivery,
- Easier
- and cheaper

5. Do you feel that the format of digital promotion could be changed in any way? (Feel free to list your own suggestions)

Sincerely, never think about it.

6. Please feel free to share any comments or opinions you've got on this matter!

Nothing to add!