"The implementation of Web 2.0 technology on an alternative business model in the music industry"

Drigkopoulou Ioanna

H00167389

August 2014

Computer Science

School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences

Dissertation submitted as part of the requirements for the award of the degree of MSc in Information Technology (Business)
Table of Contents

DECLARATION .............................................................................................................................................. i
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................................................ ii
Abstract .......................................................................................................................................................... iii
INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................................................... 1

1 THE EVOLUTION OF MUSIC INDUSTRY ..................................................................................... 2
   1.1 The traditional business model ................................................................................................. 2
   1.2 The decline of the traditional business model ........................................................................ 3
   1.3 The emergence of new business models ................................................................................. 5

2 WEB 2.0: BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF IMPORTANT TOOLS .................................................. 8
   2.1 What is Web 2.0 ......................................................................................................................... 8
   2.2 Web 2.0 services and applications ......................................................................................... 9

3 THE IMPACT OF WEB 2.0 TECHNOLOGY ON MUSIC INDUSTRY .................................. 14
   3.1 The revolution of Cloud computing in music distribution .................................................... 14
   3.2 Social computing and its contribution to promotion ............................................................... 16

4 METHODOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE WEB PLATFORM .................................. 20
   4.1 Requirements analysis .............................................................................................................. 20
   4.2 Designing the Website ............................................................................................................. 23
   4.3 Detailed presentation of the website ........................................................................................ 26
   4.4 The main functions of the business model ............................................................................. 29
   4.5 The social media features ....................................................................................................... 35

5 EVALUATION OF THE WEB TOOL ....................................................................................... 38
   5.1 Constructing the survey ............................................................................................................ 38
   5.2 Analysis of the collected responses ....................................................................................... 40
DECLARATION

I, .................................................................
confirm that this work submitted for assessment is my own and is
expressed in my own words. Any uses made within it of the works of
other authors in any form (e.g., ideas, equations, figures, text,
tables, programs) are properly acknowledged at any point of their
use. A list of the references employed is included.

Signed: ...........................................................
Date: ..............................................................”
Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to professor L. Georgieva from the Computer Science Department of Heriot Watt University for providing me an opportunity to do my project work on the topic of this dissertation and for guiding me with patience and wisdom all these months that I was working towards my dissertation. I sincerely thank to professor Reza Mohammadi Engineering and Physical Sciences Department of Heriot Watt University for guidance and encouragement in carrying out this project work I also wish to express my gratitude to professor Evi Kopanaki of Computer Science Department of University of Piraeus who rendered her help during the period of my project work. My special thanks to my friend Peter Benos for his fundamental technical help in my developing the website.. Last but not least I wish to avail myself of this opportunity, express a sense of gratitude and love to my friends and my beloved parents for their manual support, strength, help and for everything.
Abstract

This dissertation aims to create an alternative business model for the music industry, based mainly on Web 2.0 technology for the promotion of a new music artist. The use of this type of technology would be provided basically through a main website, which will enclose the most significant functions that a music artist might need, such as his promotion, the sale and distribution of his work, the booking of his concerts and the sale of tickets as well as the funding of his/her next project, album or video clip.

The goal of this model is to maximize the profit of an artist’s work by omitting any middlemen that other business models consider to be fundamental such as agents, record labels and music stores. The artist will be the main administrator of this platform, promoting his/her own work in complete autonomy.

An extensive research was made in order to comprehend all the facilities and marketing power of Web 2.0 technologies. First a retrospect of the stages of the music industry was carried out, following up a presentation of the web 2.0 technology and the impact that it has made in all kinds of internet sales and people's preferences over the years. Finally, the web platform, which is the main tool of this business model is developed and presented extensively as well as evaluated through survey.
INTRODUCTION

Music has always been tightly connected with human civilization. However, it was the growth of technology that actually enabled the spreading and possession of music as a physical product and not just as a pleasant experience, as it was before. Recorded music in the form of vinyl records had taken its first steps in the early 1940s, whereas tapes and compact disk first appeared in 1977 (Chanan M.,1995). The material of the recorded artifact and the producing process might have changed but the channel of distribution remained the same for several years until the arrival of some certain applications of Web 2.0 technology that changed the history of music industry for good (Koster A.,2007).

More specifically, it was the mp3 format of a recorded piece of music that established the internet as a new distribution channel and embedded it in the progression of the music industry. The arrival of mp3 players as the most widely common way of listening to music as well as the peer – to – peer movement lead to the decline of the traditional business model of record labels, which was based on selling cds in retail music stores.

Music industry is now facing a restructuring with liquidations and mergers between different record labels, as well as the complete extinction of music stores and the new idea of record labels getting into the concert business (Koster A., 2007). Earnings from selling digital music are being increased, compensating the huge loss of cd sales. The providers of that particular technology seem to have taken full advantage of it, with a good example of Apple company increasing steadily every year the sales of iPod mp3 players and the downloading of music from the iTunes site. On the other side, the providers of music, the artists and labels, are considered to be “victims” of music downloading. Many business models arise in order to face this problematic situation.
1  THE EVOLUTION OF MUSIC INDUSTRY

1.1  The traditional business model

The advent of recording technology changed the scene in the 20th century. A music product as an object that could be sold, purchased but most importantly be reproduced in someone’s private area, was a brilliant revolution at that time.

Until recently, the music industry was giving the opportunity to artists to create fans and to share their work with them, as well as to gain some profit out of their recorded music, exclusively via record labels. A business model had started developing, dating from the early 20th century through the present, with the standard procedure of an artist signing a contract with a record label. A definition perhaps to a business model could be: “the method by which a firm builds and uses its resources to offer its customers better value than it competitors and to make money doing so” (Afuah & Tucci, 2003, p. 4 cited in V.L.Vaccaro & D.Y.Cohn, 2004).

The artist used to grant the ownership of the copyrights and master recordings to the label and the record label was responsible for carrying out every activity and procedure in order to make sure that the album would reach the customers. More precisely according to Byrne, the record company would fund the recording sessions, manufacture the music product, distribute and market it, loan and advance money for promotion costs such as tours, videos, hair and makeup and manage the artist’s careers (Byrne D., 2007). The table below gives an idea of the value chain of the traditional business model.

| Artists      | Song writer: $0.755 per song  
|             | Recording artist: 14% of the wholesale price but subtracts for breakage |
| Production   | $100’000 to 200’000 ($1/CD)  
|             | studios, sessions musicians, covered by the advance the artists receives from the label |
| Labels       | $140’000 to 350’000;  
|             | $1 to $2/CD of production costs and $3 to $10/CD of up-front marketing costs |
| Wholesaler   | Price: $10.50 to 11.50 |
| Music stores | Mark up $3 to 5  
|             | Vs $1 to 2 for online retailers |
| Customers    | CD price: $17 to 19 for a major label and $13 for an independent label |

Table 1: Music industry traditional value chain (Dubossen-Torbay, Pigneur, Usunier, 2005).

The manufacturing cost is estimated to 0.6 dollars in raw materials and 0.4 dollars in graphic design per cd. Promotion and touring is estimated to cost from 10.000 to
100,000 dollars per song and from 50,000 to 75,000 dollars video budget. (Dubosson-Torbay M., Y. Pigneur, J.C. Usunier, 2005).

Hughes and Lang had tried to define the traditional business model as the one that “includes the mass production and distribution of physical goods” (Hughes & Lang, 2003, cited in V.L.Vaccaro & D.Y.Cohn, 2004). Vaccaro and Cohn also described it as the model where the record label is responsible for the manufacturing of the product, the distribution of it via bricks-and-mortar stores, direct mail clubs or through the internet. Artists could also sell their cds at their own concerts (V.L.Vaccaro & D.Y.Cohn, 2004).

Five big companies emerged from that business model, AOL Time Warner, BMG, EMI, Sony and Vivendi Universal. According to Ku, these companies used to manipulate the public’s music preferences by paying radio stations in order to play the music of the artists that these companies had a contract with, at that time. This inflicted competition in many ways such as a) distorted taste, b) manipulated demand c) created barriers for new artists to enter the business. (Ku, R. S. R., 2001).

1.2 The decline of the traditional business model

Since 1999, many changes have altered the scene of music. The most important ones, were the audio compression, with the creation of mp3 files as exact copies of cds and the digital distribution via peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing, which was a consequence of the first one and spread radically as a very popular activity towards the internet circles.

The evolution of the mp3 player that suggested a new way of compressing the audio files was very innovative at that time, as it enabled the distribution of music in many different means such as computers, iPods and other mp3 players in the exact audio quality as before (Stafford A. S., 2010). On the other hand, what the technology experts and analysts did not predict, was the blooming of the online file-sharing sites such as Napster and KaZaa that took profit from this by offering music content with ought paying for the copyrights of the music to the artists and the record labels. These websites were immediately considered illegal because, according to the Copyright Act of 1976: “Copyright holders have the exclusive right to control the reproduction, modification, distribution, public performance and public display of their copyright works.”( Dubosson-Torbay M., Y. Pigneur, J.C. Usunier, 2005).

Music piracy, the legal or illegal downloading and sharing of music, seemed to have caused severe damage to the traditional business model, which was based in sales of CDs in retail stores. Record sales in the U.S. dropped to 12.9 % in 2006 from the previous year (De la Merched, 2007 cited in Koster A., 2007). Since the peak year of
2000, the CD sales fell to 30.6%. This huge decline of CD sales took place all over the world with France facing a drop of 12.4% in 2006, a decline of 40% over the next four years. Given that U.S. sales began to decline between 2000 and 2001, the rate of decline also increased with the exception of 2003-2004, when there was a slight increase of 1.9% (Demarthon, 2007 cited in Koster A., 2007).

![Figure 1: Consumer spending on music (by format) from 1991 to 2012 (Byrne D., 2007).](image)

Some researchers though, such as Oberholzer-Gee and Strumpf, disagreed with the idea that this decline of CD sales was caused only by music piracy, suggesting other reasons connected with industrial practices as well as the current general economy (Koster, 2007). Nevertheless, the Supreme Court was not convinced from Oberholzer-Gee and Strumpf’s arguments. They themselves have submitted a resume for Grokster, a file sharing software development company, in its legal fight against industry music, but the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the music industry eventually in 2005 (Koster, 2007). But the decline in CD sales continued on despite all the legal victories against many peer–to–peer websites such as mp3.com and Napster.

In order to face this situation, record companies decided to protect their CDs against copying with the use of encryption and some software companies offered to contribute to the protection of copyrighted music such as the Microsoft Media Player that included “a digital rights management system allowing content owners to specify such things as how often files can be opened and when they expire” (Dubosson-Torbay M., Y. Pigneur, J.C. Usunier, 2005). Another visible change in the music industry is the movement of record labels into the concert business, as a new source of income (Koster, 2007). More specifically, Universal bought the well-

All these efforts to sustain the traditional business model could not intercept the emergence of new alternative business models in the music industry. Other important issues that contributed to the emergence of these models was the fact that recording costs had dropped significantly (Byrne D., 2007), since nowadays someone can record music even with a proper sound card in his portable computer. What is more, manufacturing and distribution costs are much cheaper than before, due to the rise of digital distribution and the fall of LPs and CDs (Byrne D., 2007).

1.3 The emergence of new business models

A new business model could be successful in the case of taking into consideration three basic questions (a) What does the customer value? (b) How does the business generate income? and (c) Who is the customer? (Magretta, 2002). According to Vaccaro and Cohn (2004), the next model after the traditional business model was the “Renegade business model”. This was considered to be representing the peer – to peer revolution of trading music illegally, without the permission of the copyright owners (usually the record labels). This model gives services and products to the consumers free of charge and usually gain profit by including advertisements in their website. Napster was the most famous representative of that model, with more than 60 million users worldwide, before it was shut down by the U.S. court system (Greenfeld, 2000, cited in V.L. Vaccaro & D.Y. Cohn, 2004).

As the new business model that followed the renegade model, Vaccaro and Cohn (2004) described it as a business model that is based on legal online music services and is a part of the native internet business model category of digital products and digital delivery that often have strategic alliances with access providers. A great example of that model could be the iTunes music store, which within its first 6 months of operation, a record number of 14 million songs were purchased for download (“iTunes Tops,” 2004, cited in V.L. Vaccaro & D.Y. Cohn, 2004). The problem still remains though for the artists: These websites pay a portion of money for the copyrights to the record companies but the artists are not paid at all because the contracts they had signed did not mention anything about digital copyrights (Ku, Raymond Shih Ray, 2001).

On the other hand, Dubosson, Pigneur and Usunier (2005) carried on with the classification of alternative business models in other categories such as “the subscription model”. In an effort to control digital distribution, different record labels created their own online services to provide their own music for a certain subscription fee and for some limited time. If a consumer desired to continue listening to that particular music, he had to renew his subscription. Similar to that
model is the “a-la-carte subscription model” where the customer can download single tracks from an album and pay for them one by one for a month or for a permanent access (M. Dubosson-Torbay, Y. Pigneur, J.C. Usunier, 2005).

Other alternative models include “the tipping model” where the user can download a track and tip the artist. (M. Dubosson-Torbay, Y. Pigneur, J.C. Usunier, 2005). “The promotion model” was also used by the rock band Smashing Pumpkins, is a model where the artist provide his music via a peer-to-peer network for free as a way to advertise his work and expects to receive earnings through other sources as a result of fame. In the following picture, “promotion model” is illustrated in detail.

![Figure 2: The promotion model (M. Dubosson-Torbay, Y. Pigneur, J.C. Usunier, 2005)](image)

![Figure 3: 6 Distribution models—with different levels of artist control (Byrne D., 2007)](image)
The above figure depicts six distribution business models that David Byrne (2007) had detected, based on the handling of copyrights, the distribution channels and the influence of record labels and artists upon the music product. The first model, also called “equity deal”, is described as the one where the artist has very little control over his career and his creative content and everything is handled by the record company, which turns the artist into a “brand” and sells many related products to the artist. A enormous marketing machine is working hard to accomplish that. Byrne (2007) gives the example of artists such as Pussycat Dolls, Korn, and Robbie Williams who have these kinds of contracts.

The second model is the “standard distribution deal” model where the record label is responsible for funding the recordings as well as the manufacturing, distribution and promotion of the artist. In return, the record company owns the copyright to the recording forever and the artist gets a big percentage of the sales after all the costs are repaid. Artists such as Michael Jackson and TLC used to have these kinds of contracts. Byrne (2007) also signified that this kind of contract is sometimes responsible for artists falling to debt, even though they are really successful.

The third model, “the license deal”, has the same basic ideas with the second model, except in this case the artist can own the copyrights of the master recording after some time, usually seven years. The disadvantage of this model is that the record label invests less in all aspects of the product.

The fourth model is the “profit-sharing deal” where the artist takes a minimum deposit from the company for the recording of the album and share the profits from the start. The artist retains ownership of the mastering. The record label is responsible for the manufacturing, distributing and the marketing of the album.

The fifth model, “the manufacturing and distribution deal”, where the artist is the head of every single part of the process except for the manufacturing and distributing of the album.

The last model, the sixth one, is the one where the artist has complete autonomy and is called “self distribution model”. The artist pays for the recordings and promotion is usually accomplished by a social media website and a web server is leased in order to handle digital downloading of the album.
2 WEB 2.0: BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF IMPORTANT TOOLS

2.1 What is Web 2.0

The term “Web 2.0” was created originally in 2004, by Dale Dougherty, a vice-president of O’Reilly Media Inc. during a conference between O’ Reilly and MediaLive International discussing the future of the Web (O’ Reilly, 2005). Despite the great dot-com collapse in the Web, the team of O’ Reilly signified that the Web was now more important than ever, with exciting new applications and many websites emerging in surprising regularity (O’ Reilly, 2005). In an attempt to categorize all these companies that managed to survive after the dot-com crisis and include certain characteristics, Dale Dougherty came up with this term in order to fore body a new era about to begin (Anderson P., 2007).

According to O’ Reilly (2005), a definition of Web 2.0 would be: “Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an “architecture of participation,” and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences.”

Figure 4: Popular Web 2.0 tools (Murray J., 2012).
The term though remains controversial and this might be attributed to the fact that Web 2.0 is not associated with an upgrade of a current technical specification, but with a whole sum of changes concerning the way software and operations are being developed by user (Anderson P., 2007). This can however be safely said, is that it changed the ease of use of web applications. Thus, although the term "Web 2.0" feels that it is a new version of web, ultimately this is not a new protocol but refers to the changes of how to harness the already existing technologies and in the way developers and everyday users now use internet (Cormode, Krishnamurthy, 2008). There are clear distinctions between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 sites but we can not really tell if the one is the evolution of the other (Anderson, 2007). Technically speaking, Web 1.0 does not allow users to interact with a web page, as it is a static HTML page, whereas Web 2.0 sites are based on Ajax technologies, encouraging user-generated content and are a strong social component including user-profiles and social networking (Cormode, Krishnamurthy, 2008). An example of the equivalent applications in Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 are depicted in figure 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Web 1.0</th>
<th>Web 2.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DoubleClick</td>
<td>Google AdSense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OIiolo</td>
<td>Flickr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akamai</td>
<td>BitTorrent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mp3.com</td>
<td>Napster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britannica Online</td>
<td>Wikipedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal websites</td>
<td>blogging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evite</td>
<td>upcoming.org and EVDB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>domain name speculation</td>
<td>search engine optimization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>page views</td>
<td>cost per click</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>screen scraping</td>
<td>web services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>publishing</td>
<td>participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>content management systems</td>
<td>wikis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directories (taxonomy)</td>
<td>tagging (&quot;folksonomy&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stickiness</td>
<td>syndication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5: Equivalent applications in Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 (O’Reilly, 2005).

2.2 Web 2.0 services and applications

A great number of important Web 2.0 tools have arisen, created by the same foundations of the Web 2.0 principals and concept. The main common thing these tools share is a cognitive strategy for retrieving content in a spontaneous way as it can be noticed in social media, blogs, social bookmarking, image sharing tools and many more. (Pettenati and Cigognini 2007, cited in Harsh Bardhan Arya & J. K.
Mishra, 2012). Some of these tools, that are widely popular in the Web and are particularly used for the needs of music industry (their influence will be defined in Chapter 3) will be presented in this chapter. In table 2, a sample of these Web 2.0 applications is depicted. These tools clearly represent relations among different subjects based on people’s views, hobbies, studies and research goals. What social networking truly does is that it allows people to gain more and more information on daily basis, through revealing new applications (Harsh Bardhan Arya & J. K. Mishra, 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Web 2.0 Applications</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social networking, online social networks</td>
<td>Category of Internet applications to help connect friends, business partners, or other individuals together using a variety of tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social network search engines</td>
<td>Social network search engines are a class of search engines that use social networks to organize, prioritize, or filter search results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>A Weblog is a Web site where entries are made displayed in chronological order. They often provide commentary or news on a particular subject, typically combining text, images, and links to other blogs, Web pages, and other media related to the specific topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog guides</td>
<td>Specialized search engines for searching blog and news contents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social tagging (folksonomy)</td>
<td>Ad hoc classification scheme (tags) that Web users invent as they surf to categorize the data they find online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social bookmarking</td>
<td>Saving and applying keywords to one’s personal collection of Web site bookmarks on a site that enables others to share those bookmarks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Syndication, Web feed management</td>
<td>A list of tags used in the site with some kind of visual indication of each tag’s relative popularity (ex. large font). Web sites that implement tag clouds functions allow both finding a tag by alphabet and by popularity. Selecting a single tag within a tag cloud will generally lead to a collection of items that are associated with that tag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer production news</td>
<td>Web sites combining social bookmarking, blogging, and syndication with a form of nonhierarchical, democratic editorial control. News stories and Web sites are submitted by users, and then promoted to the front page through a user-based ranking system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wikis</td>
<td>Collaborative Web sites that allows users to add, edit and delete content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative real time editing</td>
<td>Simultaneous editing of a text or media file by different participants on a network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content aggregation and management, Mashup (Web application hybrid)</td>
<td>A Web site or Web application that combines content from more than one source.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant Messaging</td>
<td>A form of real-time communication between two or more people based on typed text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcasting</td>
<td>Podcasting is the method of distributing multimedia files, such as audio programs or music videos, over the Internet using either the RSS or Atom syndication formats, for playback on mobile devices and personal computers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and group organization</td>
<td>Allow collaborative tools, project management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Significant Web 2.0 applications (Harsh Bardhan Arya & J. K. Mishra, 2012)
1) Blog

The term “blog” was first discovered by Jorn Barger in 1997. A blog can be defined as a simple website that consists of personal ideas and opinion, information and links to relative pages that are called “posts”. It can also be characterized as a personal diary where the person who owns the blog expresses his thoughts on certain things. Posts are arranged chronologically with the most recent first, in the style of an online journal (Doctorow et al., 2002, cited in Anderson, 2007).

“Linking” and “tagging” are the main aspects of blogging, that make interactive conversations of the blogshere richer and more interesting and increase the sense of directness among the people involved (Anderson, 2007). Tim O’Reilly has characterized blogs as “the wisdom of the crowd” and Tom Coates has also mentioned that “For the first time it became relatively easy to gesture directly at a highly specific post on someone else's site and talk about it”. (O’Reilly, 2005).

2) RSS Feeds - Syndication

RSS is a XML-based data format website tool that enables the collection of information in an automated way. Feeds could refer to many kinds of information vary from postings, announcements, news, new events, new materials (books, movies, etc.) as well as announcements (Bolan, Canada, and Cullin 2007). In its early days RSS actually meant Rich SiteSummary because it was originally used to push out blog updates, but later it became widely used for blog content syndication, RSS became known as Really Simple Syndication (Doctorow, 2002, cited in Anderson, 2007). RSS feeds not only boost notices of new blog entries but also updates, comments and photos available.

O’Reilly (2005) points out that even though it seems to be of simple functionality, the effect RSS produces is really important. That was in fact the device that “turned weblogs from an ease-of-publishing phenomenon into a conversational mess of overlapping communities. For the first time it became relatively easy to gesture directly at a highly specific post on someone else's site and talk about it. Discussion emerged. Chat emerged. And - as a result - friendships emerged or became more entrenched. The permalink was the first - and most successful - attempt to build bridges between weblogs.” (O’Reilly, 2005).

3) Podcast

Podcasts are a type of digital media used for handling audio, video, radio, pdf or ePub as radio programs or music programs online. They are usually in mp3 format and include talks, music, interviews and other recorded artifacts and they were called audio blogs in the past because of the effort to include music in blogs (Felix and Stolarz, 2006 cited in Anderson, 2007). The term podcast is a coined word
"Broadcast" and "pod", the success of the ipod (the well known Apple product that reproduces music in mp3 format) (Anderson, 2007).

“Enclosure” is a process where a URL link is added to an audio file (also called as podcast) including other information such as the host server of the file and the location of it into the RSS (Patterson, 2006). Podcast clients are subscribed to the RSS feeds and are given the opportunity to learn more about new podcasts available. That was revolutionary for the distribution part of music industry. There is a flaw though to this: bad quality audio files can be quite often (Anderson 2007).

4) Youtube

Youtube is an online network that shares videos, and enables users to upload videos for free and share comments or recommendations of other videos on the clips uploaded. Users also can watch other users’ videos through browsing (Harsh Bardhan Arya & J. K. Mishra, 2012). They can also report or “flag” certain videos that they consider offensive and then, youtube staff investigate these reports. (Weaver and Morrison 2008 cited in Harsh Bardhan Arya & J. K. Mishra, 2012). They also can recommend popular videos to their friends via e-mail or via links that include the URL of each video to be published. What is more, with just a simple code users can display YouTube videos on their own web pages and individual blogs. (Harsh Bardhan Arya & J. K. Mishra, 2012).

5) Social networking

Social Networking (Social Networking) is another feature of Web 2.0 which offers an unprecedented platform for all the users of the Web to collaborative dynamically for social purposes in order to exchange opinions and thoughts in public as well as to share all kinds of content (personal information, photos, videos, comments, messages) (Anderson, 2007). The main goal of this most promising technology is to facilitate meeting people and to produce and share individual user generated content via blogging, streaming and tagging (Harsh Bardhan Arya & J. K. Mishra, 2012).

Many popular examples of social networks have been created over the years such as MySpace, which also includes a specific category that enables musicians to expose their work through a media player, Facebook, which enables fan groups, Tweeter, Flickr and Delicious (Harsh Bardhan Arya & J. K. Mishra, 2012). A noted feature that these networks also provide is that users are able to choose what content is public and what is private (Harsh Bardhan Arya & J. K. Mishra, 2012).
6) Tagging and social bookmarking

In information systems, a label (tag) is a non-hierarchical keyword or term assigned to a piece of information (such as a digital image, a bookmark or a computer file). This type of metadata helps to describe an item and enables retrieving it through a search in the Web. Tags are generally chosen informally by the creator of the item or the user, depending on the kind of website. (Anderson, 2007).

Social bookmarking systems are often used to retrieve online publications in order to find bookmarks that other someone else has generated or for topic bookmarks. (Harsh Bardhan Arya & J. K. Mishra, 2012). They often have common features (Millen et al., 2005, cited in Anderson, 2007): Give people the opportunity to create lists of ‘bookmarks’ or ‘favourites’, and “save” them in a remote service (not in the client browser) and to share them with other users of the system. Keywords are often used to tag these information, and the basic difference between them and the ‘folder’-based categorisation is the fact that a bookmark can belong in multiple categories.
3 THE IMPACT OF WEB 2.0 TECHNOLOGY ON MUSIC INDUSTRY

3.1 The revolution of Cloud computing in music distribution

Cloud computing, a new business model for the computing industries, which is based on renting storage and processing power that the cloud generates (Morris, 2011), has opened the way for legal streaming of music, promoting new sources of income for major and independent record companies. The national licensing systems in Europe could be an obstacle for the development of the cloud network, but that cannot become a burden to a radically expanding new Web 2.0 technology which is becoming a reality market (Makki, 2012). The registered users enrolled in one of the services available can listen to music stored on remote servers, regardless of the devices they use (Morris, 2011).

Listening to music nowadays has started shifting gradually from a system based on device (for example iPods) to an approach based on access, where what matters is registering to huge libraries stored in network folders, the so-called digital music lockers. (Morris, 2011). The music industry welcomes these new developments, and record companies are looking forward to see these technologies bloom and increase the profit coming from digital boutiques where customers access to network folders to store or stream their music preferences.

There are two main types of cloud music services (Strickland, 2013). The first one is similar to a radio station. One can create a profile to the service and create a music library based on preferences. The service then finds the music on the Internet and transmits it to the user. If the user has a slow or unreliable Internet connection, he/she might not be able to use these services all the time. (Strickland, 2013). Some of these types of cloud services, such as Pandora Radio, allows the user to create stations based on a particular artist or song. It is not guaranteed though that the user will hear this artist or song whenever he/she uses the service.

Pandora Radio evaluate the match preferences and transmits to the user similar music to the one declared of preference. While listening, the user can approve or reject the songs playing on stations and Pandora Radio adapts list playback to suit the current taste. There are many services operating like Pandora Radio, using various algorithms to create playlists according to the preferences of listeners, having received permission for the respective music rights.
Other popular cloud streaming applications are Spotify and Rhapsody that have optimized a unique Digital Rights Management system (Betchtold, 2004, cited in Makki, 2012). Spotify allows users to store music already owned on their personal cloud, while they can also access all the music that they have legally taken the permission from the music companies (Makki, 2012). The consumer gets the idea that he gets the best balance of both ownership and access of music files. The cloud may be implying infinite choices for the user and infinite access to the cloud, the space is actually restricted and controlled by the service provider. (Morris, 2011). All of that music that passes through, however, must have been legally obtained by Spotify. In figure 7 is depicted the homepage of Spotify.

![Spotify homepage](image)

**Figure 6: The homepage of Spotify**

The next major category of cloud services gives even more freedom, but may also require a lot of work from the user (Strickland, 2013). These services store the music from a distance. The user may need to upload their own music files to the service, which can prove to be quite time consuming if someone has a large library or a slow Internet connection (Strickland, 2013). The service operates as a External Hard Drive and the user can access the music via a specific interface. These services are like Amazon Cloud Player and Google Music that have electronic and smart-phone applications and perform this function (Strickland, 2013). Amazon and Apple both have services that give some more options when the user wants to add music to the library. Allow music market through their respective stores and automatically add the markets in the library user.
3.2 Social computing and its contribution to promotion

A possible definition of social network sites could be as web-based services that allow people to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, decide on a list of other users with whom they contact with and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within a system (Boyd, Ellison, 2007). The nature and terminology of these types of communication usually vary among different websites (Boyd, Ellison, 2007). As soon as social networks and social media appeared on the Web scene, they gradually generated a new way of exchanging information and as a result a new way of marketing products.

This new way of marketing, also called Word-of-Mouth marketing (WOM) is the new intentional trend, a new way of influencing and consumer manipulation with the use of professional marketing techniques (Ferguson, 2008). Known also as social media market based on consumer-to-consumer communication, viral marketing and buzz (Kozinets et al., 2010). What is more, many industry associations, such as the Word of Mouth Marketing Association, have emerged and rapidly expanded in order to promote this new, promising industry (Kozinets et al., 2010). In figure 6, one of the most popular social media websites profile view is presented.

![Figure 7:Typic Facebook profile view (Hines, 2013).](image-url)
According to Bickart and Schindler (2001), the original WOM communication was the one that involved spoken words exchanged with some friend or relative and their physical presence was necessary as well. Contrarily to that, online WOM usually consists of people's point of view and opinions through the written word (Bickart and Schindler, 2001). One of the most important advantages of the written word communication, is that people can search for information at their own pace as well as the transfer of information in more accurate and precise and formal rather than the verbal communication (Bickart and Schindler, 2001). What is more, online communicators tend to be less social stressful, and exhibit less public self-awareness and inhibitions, and as a result they are more eager to expose more their personal information and express more easily their honest opinions because of the anonymity of social media seem to offer (Roed, 2003, cited in Sun et al., 2006).

WOM is considered to be much more influential and effective than the traditional option, because of the fast spreading of information, the convenience, the tremendous number of addressees, and the absence of social anxiety. Moreover, when someone wants to seek different opinions on a particular matter or product, it is much easier and effective to do so by a search engine. (Boyd, Ellison, 2007). The impersonal, anonymous nature of internet and social networks provides the best place for someone to gather the opinion of strangers which many times can be proven to be more credible than in the real world. (Boyd, Ellison, 2007).

There are some researches concluding that social marketing can be an extremely successful and effective way of marketing. For instance, Fisher (2009) stated that seventy percent of consumers seek information through a social network, while forty nine percent of them make a decision on what to finally buy after this search and sixty percent of the consumers would pass the online the information to other interested people. (Fisher, 2009, cited in Miller, Lammas, 2012). In figure 8 below a map is illustrated, simulating the way users influence others users in a social media network. It divides users into actors and creators and the arrows depict the complexity and flow of communication between them, as drown by Ryan Shaw and colleagues (2005), (Ryan Shaw et al, 2005 cited in Anderson, 2005).

Advertisers always searched for new ways to communicate with the potential customers and to intrigue them with the use of innovative means of advertising media. In an era where advertisers seriously doubt on the effectiveness and the cost of traditional media (television, radio and press), a serious increase in the use of social media advertising is now in the spot of interest and research (Sun et al., 2006).
Figure 8: Empowerment of users in a social network (Ryan Shaw et al, 2005 cited in Anderson, 2005).

For example, one estimate says that there are 142 million Americans, 46.6 million Japanese Brazilians and 31 million consumers who have access to social networks and blogs from December 2009 (Miller, Lammas, 2012). In Australia, the internet users reach more than 11 million, of which over 70% are actively social networking. Facebook has over 6 million registered users and Twitter has 800,000 registered fans (Comscore, 2009 cited in Miller, Lammas, 2012). What is more, McCann tracker study (2008) found that active users who blog really often increased from 54% - 77% within two years (Miller, Lammas, 2012).

The number of those who record their opinions though blogging has increased from 28% to 45% and it is really important to notice that people who watch video clips online went from 32% in 2006 to 83% in 2008 (Smith, 2009 cited in Miller, Lammas 2012). It is also said, (Kaplan, 2001), that this transition to social media in marketing is an important means of communication due to combination of technological factors such as bandwidth, economic factors such as the user access to more tools for developing User Generated Content (UGC) and social causes, such as the generation of youth who had greater contact with technology in the past decade and now have become active consumers with purchasing power.

The way in which consumers interact with social media has become vital for various merchants. A current research suggests the existence of a "credit rating" in social networking communities dividing users into categories such as "Observers" (those who are skeptical contributors to websites), in "Tourists" (those who submit comments but not show any commitment to the network), the "actors" (those who comment without any periodicity or specific frequency) and "Evangelists / insiders" (who are enthusiastic, expert and regular in contributions) (Harridge-March & Quinton).
2009, cited in Miller & Lammas, 2012). Other researchers divide users at slightly different sets, for example: "social clickers" (users who communicate with their friends and create content in table-messages and web pages with reviews), in "online connoisseurs" (online Buyers who openly express their preference in a particular product) and "Kings of content" (usually young people addicted to online games and other types of online entertainment) (Miller, Lammas, 2012). These groups signify the difficulty to categorize the marketers’ target groups, their complexity and lack of uniform measurement for the users of social media. (Miller, Lammas, 2012). On the other hand, mainstream media such as television and radio are considered to be acceptable and well-established and resource of measuring and managing marketing campaigns that require investment in the field of marketing communication campaigns.
4 METHODOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE WEB PLATFORM

4.1 Requirements analysis

The main goal of this dissertation is to present a new business model that might be characterized as an evolution of the self-distribution model of a music artist. Many similar models have arisen before, some which presented in Chapter 2. Nevertheless, nowadays with the blooming of the social media, the online communities and other important Web 2.0 technologies and services, the self-distribution model can go a step further and be much more effective and profitable for the artist.

The most important tool of this evolved model will be a personal website, which will include many Web 2.0 features to cover all the main areas of an artist’s needs. The business models that were presented in chapter 2 revealed four parts that are vital for the release of an album such as: 1) funding the recordings, 2) manufacturing the physical product, 3) distribution of the product 4) promotion of the album and the artist.

In this platform that will be created for the needs of the dissertation, these vital parts will be taken into consideration and will be substituted or covered by the Web 2.0 features that are analyzed extensively in Chapter two of the dissertation. More specifically:

1) The funding of the recordings will be covered by using a similar idea like the funding platforms, such as kickstarter.com. A certain button will allow users to fund the next album of their favorite artist. A promoting video can be placed on top of it, in order to present to the fans the ideas and plan that the artist has for the next album.

2) The manufacturing of the physical product will not take place in this model. The decline of sales in the physical product is without doubt (Koster A., 2007) so the product in this model will only be digital, in order to save extra cost.

3) The distribution of the product will be digital. In many parts of the website the user would have the opportunity to buy the new album or alternatively to buy an individual track from the album. There will also be a certain area to buy previously released records. All these transactions would be executed by the artist, who will gain maximum profit as no other digital store will be mixed in the sales.

4) The artist could be promoted by using multiple web 2.0 features, such as links to social media websites and to fan blogs. What is more, many links from video-uploading sites
will be available in the site to present the artist’s work. Another important feature will be the booking of the artist for gigs. A user will be able to make an application to book the artist for a concert in a suggested area that the user will propose. Tickets for the artist’s concerts will be sold in another particular part of the website.

The website to be designed, will provide the opportunity to the user to purchase whichever album from the whole discography of an the artist directly and easily. The intention , however, of a user to support the artist and buy their albums straight from the website and not to " Download " them free from a peer-to-peer network is a matter of introspective reflection. Certainly, the image of the site should be designed in a way that it can give certain impressions, which can mobilize a user to become a buyer of the music product. The site should also offer full information on upcoming performances and ticket purchase, so that the user is not plagued with further searching on the internet.

When it comes to the artist’s benefits from the website, a big part of his/her income should be collected through the website, thereby omitting various intermediaries who were necessary in other business models in order to accomplish that. For example, it is likely that the artist will not need a manager to book his/her concerts, because if some concert hall desires to book the artist, he can apply straight through the website. Furthermore, the funding of the new album would be made by the fans of the artist so there will not be necessary to have a record label to do that. That would also maximize the profit from the record sales, as the artist will not have to share those incomes with a record label.

In order to make the website more effective, competitions can be added for winning tickets or albums. These competitions can be considered as a good reason to re-visit the site and are beneficial to exist. Another new innovation introduced is the opportunity for funding the new video-clip of the artist from the same site , a new idea introduced by the Web 2.0 new funding sites such as kickstarter.com. In these sites, the participants that request for the funding , have to give a percentage of the funding back to the site, whereas in this case the funding is direct and without intermediaries. This is a new trend which is proving profitable and efficient so far. These types of websites have managed to carry out great movie and musical productions by user funding. But there is a view that says that such a move is not favorable to the public image of the artist. The same side argues that the artist must show that it has full support and assistance from contributors who believe in him and asking for financial support from strangers shows despair.

Another advantage which will facilitate the booking of live performances, is a special form positioned on the website for any user that wants to invite the artist to organize a live show in a place that the user would like to propose. This would certainly facilitate and perhaps bypass booking managers. On the other hand, an agent who effectively promotes an artist connotes human contact and human interaction, which is a very
important factor in business area. A skilled manager is an irreplaceable figure that gains people trust, respect and admiring. This feature is omitted from the site, despite efforts to reflect the character and quality of the artist through the image and sound. The manager is an important partner of the artist who brings in end much more than the booking of a concert.

When it comes to the designing part of the website, the designing process should pay high attention to graphics part of the website, which should emphasize the singularity of the artist and try to reflect his/her music and character. In music websites, this is the one of the most important characteristics, apart from the professional look, which is equally important. In figure 9, the difference in music styles is depicted in these two websites. The one on the left, illustrates a more experimental, perhaps acoustic and introverted type of music, whereas the other one illustrates a more pop and perhaps folk kind of music style.

![Figure 9: Two different music-genre websites](image)

In the developing process special tools that will strengthen the professional appearance of the website such as flash player, CSS and HTML should be added. Through these features, websites are able to achieve a more sophisticated look that will be able to bind a web surfer to browse the site. Another important issue is the “user-friendly” characteristics of the website, with easy navigation to every section of the site so as to make browsing easy and simple and also to be accessible to people with disabilities.

The website should be able to have a short loading time (10 to 15 sec), because users’ attention is often easily distracted and the designer should make sure not avoid that unfortunate situation. Compatibility with most popular browsers should be also insured. The website should also include a Guest book, a message board, a mailing list and links to the artist’s personal blogs as well as information on latest news and
concerts. External links with social media should be definitely included in order to facilitate users sharing their opinions on the website material with other users and to generate viral marketing.

Many alternative ways of selling music should be provided, such as “sale of whole album” or “sale of single track”. A Media player in the homepage should be used for the downloading of single tracks as well as to preview the songs of the artist. The latest album released should be sold in the homepage too, whereas past albums should be provided in other pages of the website.

### 4.2 Designing the Website

In order to proceed to the development of the web platform that was described in the requirements analysis, a joomla framework was used as the essential open-source management system (CMS) and XAMPP was also used as the open-source cross platform web server which consists of the Apache HTTP server and a MySQL database.

An existing artist had to be chosen to be presented and promoted via the web platform. This artist had to have a lot of photos of him/her available online, as well as interviews in the press, video clips on Youtube and recorded albums to cover the needs of the website. This artist was chosen to be Tori Amos, a famous American singer/songwriter. This alternative business model though, aims to a less famous artist, as the marketing and promotion strategies differ based on the publicity of the artist.

The first thing to consider when designing the web tool is the color that the pages should be covered in. It is one of the most important elements as each color can be considered that hides a symbolic function, which is connected to a very large extent with the cultural standards of the time and place it was set up. The juxtaposition of colors can create certain meanings as well. (Skarpelos I, 2000). The color may well be regarded as a means of transmitting information that the promoted of the site desires to pass to the visitors. It works like a stimulator of emotions, widely used in advertising language. It can be regarded as an element of meaning, as an integral part of the code of aesthetics that reflects a system of values common to the producers and readers of the advertisement. (Clare A., 1998).

Some colors are often used because they demonstrably act as catalysts in specific emotional stimulations. People often respond intensively from "mild" to more hot colors (red, yellow, orange, etc.). Perhaps the most striking example is color red, which refers calls to the thymic (state of soul and emotions) of the receiver and is linked to eminently powerful emotions, such as passion, anger, cheer the sprightliness. On the other side is the color blue which reflects hues peace, safety, tenderness and melancholy. (Moriarty S, 1990). Some colors, like green, can also be associated with whole situations, in this case nature and natural life. It is no coincidence that the color green is found very often
in advertisements of food, food supplements or types of care in order to emphasize the physical origin and purity of these products. (Moriarty S, 1990).

Equally or more effective in the presence of color irritating optic nerve of the visitor can be shown and the intentional lack thereof. The presence of absolute white to a site is able to attract the gaze receiver much easier than a blatant colorful picture, just because this imposing vacuum invites the viewer to complete it activates the imagination and finally captures and drives it to focus on the message, which may be a slogan or just a product of.

Many times advertisers use color as an “objective correlative”, wherein the color of the product is spread in the environment setting (eg a model’s clothes, decoration of the room) subjecting the assumption that the qualities and style will enhance one another through this optical link (Gillan, 2009). When it comes to the “Tori Amos website”, these are certain factors that should be considered. The most critical, is the genre of music that Tori Amos can be categorized. Her music can be characterized as alternative rock, with electronica and classical elements. The piano is the main instrument of her compositions and her singing is defined as highly sensitive and emotional, with a high pitched, smooth voice that can be hard at times. This contrast of textures in her music and performance should be depicted in the coloring of the website. The best choice is to have a white background with purple distinctive elements on the front.

The white color is equally or even more effective than the presence of another color, because it stimulates the optic nerve of the visitor. The presence of absolute white in a site can attract the eyes of the viewer much easier than a blatant colorful picture, just because this imposing vacuum invites the viewer to activate the imagination to fill in the empty space and finally captures and drives him to focus on the message, which may be a slogan or just a product. (Gillan, 2009).

The color purple is the combination of blue and red which is a mixture of a calm and an aggressive color, blue and red, symbolizing the music of the promoted artist. The image of the website is illustrated in figure 1:
Figure 1: The homepage of the website
4.3 **Detailed presentation of the website**

The homepage of the website is one of the most important elements of the website as it instantly creates the first strong impression to the visitor. However the site, as in paper advertising, where the image is the one that dominates, the ground is fertile to emotionally approach the viewer. The emotional arousal is formed by a series of stimuli and when that connects successfully with images then the emotional state is expressed without the intervention of thought and sometimes against logic. (McSweeney & Bierley, 1984). For that reason, it was chosen to place a sample photo gallery of the artist on the upper part of the website and combine it with the purple background color, in order to attract immediately the eye of the visitor. Figure 2 depicts the upper part of the website.

**Figure 2: The upper part of the website**

What is more, comment text was added in each photo of the photo gallery, to describe the album that was released during that period of time that this specific photo was taken. This could be considered as a marketing idea, as the viewer would link the photo with the album and would be intrigued to buy that album. Specially in the field of music industry, the mirror-technique is very commonly used. The pictured product, the artist, is projected in a way that addresses to the “narcissism” of the viewer. (Barthes, 1993) It motivates him/her to put himself in the position of the person in the picture and to feel
what the model seems to be feeling, described by a message status: feel the pleasure that can be seen on the face of the model advertising, adopt the posture, become mentally the user of the product but under the specified conditions of the portrayed scenario. (Barthes, 1993). The viewer interprets the ad as if he/she looks his own self in the mirror, entering a matching process with the displayed scenario.

Perceiving now the significant role of the image in the website, photos of Tori Amos were carefully selected in order to trigger that emotional stimuli that would urge the viewer to seek for her albums. In the right part of the purple background space, a media player was placed for the visitor to immediately listen to Tori Amos music. The media player also gives the visitor the opportunity to buy each track separately.

![Figure 3: The Media player](image)

Right down the top menu, a small gallery consisting of her latest album and some previous ones is placed, with the name of each album to work as a link to another page where the user can buy it and read a review about it too.
Figure 4: Album gallery on top

The top menu consists of eight main sections that inform equally the visitor about Tori Amos music and news feeds. The section “blogs” navigates the visitor to the official blog of Tori Amos as well as to the online community.

Figure 5: The Blog section on top menu

One of the most important features that a website that include selling products should have is a safe procedure of sales and that could be accomplished by a PayPal button (Wong, 2014). The “Contact us” section also, in the top menu gives a credit of reliability to the website in terms not only of sales but also for all the other important functions of the website that will be presented later in this chapter, by including the contact details of the booking manager and the communications manager of Tori Amos (Wong, 2014). Figure 6 depicts the Contact us section on the top menu.
4.4 The main functions of the business model

As it was mentioned in the requirements analysis in section 5.1 of this chapter, the website tool should mainly cover four basic needs of the music artist, which are: 1) The sales of the product (music albums), 2) the promotion of the artist via social media, 3) the funding of the artist’s new project (new album, video-clip), 4) the booking of concerts. For these purposes, a section in the homepage was placed exactly down purple-colored background, in a very distinct spot of the website to achieve immediate attraction of the viewer’s attention. Figure 7 illustrates that section.
Figure 7: The main functions section

The first picture that comes with a link with the explanatory text “Buy tickets”, is related with the tour that Tori Amos has planned to make in the summer of 2014 and navigates the visitor to the “Tours” page, which can also be reached through the top menu. In the Tours section, one can follow the link with the text “On-Sale” to navigate himself to buy the ticket for the specific concert. Figure 8 illustrates the page “Tours”.

Figure 8: “Tours” page

The next picture of the main functions section is about a competition, where the users can win special gifts such as a deluxe CD/DVD edition of Tori Amos latest released album. Competitions are one of the most common ways to intrigue a visitor to keep visiting the website (Wong, 2014). A special form was constructed for this purpose, containing questions about Tori Amos, along with certain fields that would save the personal information of each contestant. Figure 9 depicts the competition form.
The following category that is placed in the special functions section is the “Buy albums” section, with a picture of the latest album that was released in 2014 by Tori Amos. The link navigates the user to the “Music” page of the website, which can also be reached from the top menu. The music page includes all Tori Amos discography, with album reviews and an “Add to cart” button for the user to buy the album and continue his shopping through the site, or a “Buy now” button which allows him to buy only that album. Figure 10 indicates the “Music page”.

There are two other categories that are also included in the main functions section, which are “Fund Tori’s new project” and “Book Tori for a concert”. These two sections are two of the most significant features of the alternative business model, as they cover the funding of the artist’s albums or video clips, which are vital for the existence of his/her career and the booking of a concert, which makes things much easier for people who would like to contact the artist for that such a project. Both these categories have links to sections with specific forms, where the user can fund a project or apply for a booking request of the artist. More specifically, in the funding section, the user is motivated to offer a small price and for a reward he/she would be rewarded by participating in the artist’s recording process. The user can spend hours in the same studio with Tori Amos, and would have the opportunity to observe the process as well as communicate and meet Tori Amos and other talented musicians.
Figure 10: The “Music” page

In the booking section, the user is requested to fill the form, providing useful information to the booking manager about the date of the requested concert, the space and its capacity, the budget that the owner could offer, the sound and lightning facilities of the area and other important details.

All of these important functions of the website are projected in all of the pages of the website in a different form, by placing boxes with the similar phrasing or content in the right side of every section. In Figure 10 it is these boxes are demonstrated in the “music” page, but these boxes are also placed in the “news”, “photo gallery”, “press”, “tours” and “contact us” pages. Figures 11, 12, 13, 14 illustrates these boxes.
Figure 11: The album release box links to the new album buying section

Figure 12: The “Take part in Tori’s new project” which leads to the “Fund Tori’s new project page”
Figure 13: The “Tori Amos performing in your place!” box, which leads to the “Book Tori for a concert page

Figure 14: The banner that is placed on the bottom of each page, which leads to the “Tours” page
4.5 **The social media features**

The social media links should be available in many places in the website, for the visitor to be intrigued to connect with them. For this purpose, a bar that consist of all the popular social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Myspace, Google Bookmarks, Pinterest, Pin it, and in, is placed in the upper right side and has the ability to remain in that position while the visitor is scrolling down the page to see the content. Figure 15 indicates the social media bar.

![The social media bar](image1)

**Figure 15: The social media bar**

What is more, a Facebook like-box is placed on the top right side of every page except the homepage, to make the connection even more available to the user. Figure 16 illustrates the Facebook like-box.

![Facebook like-box in the “photo gallery” page](image2)

**Figure 16: Facebook like – box in the “photo gallery” page**
A newsletter registration is also available for the users, with just a submission of their personal email address. The newsletter box is embedded on every page of the website on the bottom. An RSS feed is also incorporated in the social media bar, to keep the visitors informed on latest news of Tori Amos. The website also has a footer menu to make it easier to the visitor to navigate himself through the webpages. Figure 17 indicates the newsletter box and the footer menu.

Figure 17: Newsletter box and footer menu

In order to promote Tori Amos Youtube channel, a proper box was placed in the homepage, right after the most significant and updated news of Tori Amos, in the main body space. There are only three elements in the main body, so as for the visitor not to scroll down a lot to notice that connection with Youtube Channel. Figure 17 illustrates the main body of the website.
Figure 17: The main body of the homepage
5 EVALUATION OF THE WEB TOOL

5.1 Constructing the survey

A quantitative research was conducted in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the alternative business model, which was substantiated in the form of the website tool, described in Chapter 5. For the purposes of this survey, ten Greek music artists with recorded albums were requested to answer the survey with complete honesty and confidentiality. The artists were carefully chosen to have significant past experience in the music field so that they would have strong critical thinking in terms of this alternative business model. In order to strengthen the honest responses from the music artists, the survey was clarifying that no personal information was going to be requested or saved during the survey.

Many issues were taken into consideration during the process of forming this survey. When formulating the questions it became necessary to have clear and specific goals for the survey. The survey included both technical and functional questions, to examine the quality of the website in terms of designing and functionality was tested to examine whether the website fulfilled its purpose. The particular artists that were selected should have some basic technical knowledge of websites and represent best the type of artist that will monitor the website tool. The survey website surveymonkey.com was used in order to conduct the survey and internet links with the survey were sent to the artists via Facebook. The survey was carefully formed in the cases of defining topics, concepts and wording. The survey conductor also made an effort to avoid using jargon when asking technical questions. The possible answers that could be collected as quantitative data, were in the form of “yes-no-yes, to some extent” in order to be analyzed and presented with statistical and analytical reporting. The aims of the survey were clarified in the introduction of the survey as follows:

Title of survey: Music artist’s website evaluation

Introduction: The website under evaluation, is an attempt to form an alternative business model for the promotion of a music artist’s work. The aim of the website is to be monitored by the artist himself as the main tool to promote his/her work without the interference of any middleman (record label, booking manager, communication manager, traditional promotion tools such as television, radio and press). Middlemen may be involved but as a secondary priority tool. The following survey is consisted of questions regarding the quality of the website (accessibility, appearance, security) as well as functionality (achievement of purpose). The respondents are kindly requested to answer the questions with honesty. No personal information would be kept for the
needs of this survey. The questions are structured in the form of multiple choice, with a sample of “yes”-“no”-“yes, to some extent” answers available.

First the respondents are requested to visit the website http://joannadrigo.co.uk. Then respond to the following questions.

**Questions:**
1) Did your browser fully load all elements of the website(audio, visual)?
2) Is there alternative explanatory text on all significant images of the website?
3) Do you think that it takes a large number of clicks to reach a desired page of the website?
4) Is every page clear of what its subject is about?
5) The website covers five aspects of a music artist’s needs: a) News feeds – press, b) Albums on sale, c) Promotion – Marketing (links with social media) d) Booking concerts, e) Funding next projects of the artist. Do you think that this website has covered sufficiently the needs of a music artist?
6) Did you find it easy to navigate yourself to the album sales section?
7) Does the site provide a secure procedure of buying a product?
8) Do you think the “Book Tori for a concert” section would be tempting for a user to book an artist online?
9) Does the website inform sufficiently the user about the artist?
10) Is the website overall a satisfying tool for a music artist’s career?

Figure 1 indicates a part of the survey in the format that it was sent to the respondents.
5.2 *Analysis of the collected responses*

As it has already been mentioned, ten music artists had the opportunity to participate in the alternative business model evaluation survey. The responses were collected and analyzed in percentages and graphically through a bar graph for each question. For the first question, which was “Did your browser fully load all elements of the website?” there was unanimity of agreement. Figure 2 illustrates the related bar graph, with the percentages of the answers to be 100% “yes”.

![Bar Graph](image)

**Figure 2: Statistics for question one.**

In question two, which was “Is there alternative explanatory text on all significant images of the website?”, 60% answered “yes” while 40% answered “Yes to some extent” as illustrated in figure 3.
Question three was:”Do you think it takes a large number of clicks to reach a desired page of the website?” , the respondents all agreed that it does not take a lot of clicks as illustrated in figure 4.

Figure 3: Statistics for question two.

Figure 4: Statistics for question three.
Question four was about clarity of each page on the subject that it presented, “Is every page clear of what its subject is about?”. The answers were 100% the same, responding “yes”. Figure 5 indicates the statistics analysis for question four.

![Figure 5: Statistics for question four.](image)

The next question had to do with the main purpose of the business model and asked the participants if the main aspects of the music artist’s business are covered by the functions of the website. The 80% of the respondents thought that the web platform had covered the needs sufficiently while a 20% answered that the web platform covered the needs to some extent.
The website covers five aspects of a music artist's needs: (a) News feeds, (b) PressBox, (c) Albums on sale, (d) Promotion, (e) Marketing (links with social media), (f) Booking concert tickets. Do you think that this website has covered sufficiently the needs of a music artist?

Answered: 10, Skipped: 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, to some extent</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Statistics for question five.

Question six was “Did you find it easy to navigate yourself to the album sales section?”. Every respondent answered “Yes”.

Did you find it easy to navigate yourself to the album sales section?

Answered: 10, Skipped: 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, to some extent</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Statistics for question six.
Question seven was a security question, referring to the PayPal procedure and was formed as follows: “Does the site provide a secure procedure of buying a product?”. All the respondents agreed that the site does provide a safe procedure.

![Figure 8: Statistics for question seven.](image)

Question eight was referring to the crucial section of “Book Tori for a concert, which is completely innovative in the field of the music industry to book a music artist online. The answers here were mixed, with 60% answering “yes”, 30% answering “Yes, to some extent” and 10% answering “No”.

![Figure 9: Statistics for question eight.](image)
The next question was “Does the website inform sufficiently the user about the artist?” and the answers were 90% “Yes”, whereas a 10% responded “Yes, to some extent”.

![Figure 10: Statistics for question nine.](image)

The last question was “Is the website overall a satisfying tool for a music artist’s career?”. The answers were 80% “Yes” and 20% “Yes, to some extent”.

![Figure 11: Statistics for question ten.](image)
6 DISCUSSION

It is apparent and obvious that the evolution of technology has affected drastically the shaping of business models in the music industry. The traditional business model monopolized for a long time when companies had as a main source of income the sales of music albums, whether these albums were in vinyl format or cd format. (Vaccaro and Cohn, 2004). Technology evolved rapidly, causing a huge impact on record labels, which were forced to take various measures to respond to change (Koster A., 2007). The rise of peer-to-peer networks though and digital trading was the change that caused severe damage to music industry with huge compensation issues in the payments for copyrights. (Dubosson-Torbay, Pigneur, Usunier, 2005). In early 2000s alternative business models started to bloom because of the limited capita that record companies could provide to music artists, a result coming from the rapidly declining profits of cd sales for the past two decades. These models differed mainly in the cost, responsibility and profit percentages that were shared between the artist and the company (Byrne, 2007). Shifting the burden of responsibilities now to the artist, he/she gained much more freedom in expression than before but also a lot of responsibility on the final outcome.

The main purpose of this dissertation is to develop a Web platform that would satisfy all aspects of a new music artist’s needs and would provide to him/her the necessary facilities needed in order to carry out the activities necessary for carrying through his job as a music artist. These facilities can be named as: 1) funding the recordings of the album, 2) immediate contact for booking concerts, 3) sales of concert tickets, 4) digital distribution of the artist’s work, 5) marketing and promoting the artist with the use of social media, YouTube and blogs (external links), 6) funding new necessary activities such as new video clip or the recordings of the next album. This report assumes that the artist is quite “new” in the music industry field in order to study better the impact of this project when an artist is still not very popular, so as to benefit more from the contribution of this website to consolidate his career. To attempt such a project as the one described above, analysis of the behavior of the music industry through time was carried out in chapter one. Many interesting conclusions were conducted from this analysis. The main thing is that the convenience in access of a music product has always been a factor that increases sales and therefore the popularity of an artist . For that reason, when it was first introduced to the audience the ability to copy easily and quickly an album in the same quality with the original one, the audience took full advantage of it. Later, when the handling of digital material through peer-to-peer networks emerged, consumers welcomed it with great acceptance and preferred it from the old-fashioned buying the disc from a music shop. The price that became almost zero was another tempting thing, but it was the instant and immediate access that brought the revolution to this field. Certainly this movement conceals a deeper interpretation: The music product had gradually been subjected to a downgrade in some way so as to be consumed that easy and fast. When the music industry reached its apogee of glory,
gradually it could be observed a different attitude towards the composition of music, perhaps a “dehumanization” of it.

The author of this dissertation made an attempt to form an alternative business model that would provide the necessary functions that were described previously, by embedding them all in the web platform, a website tool that would be monitored by the music artist himself in order to minimize his/her dependency on other middlemen such as managers, record labels and traditional media promotion. More specifically, the key objectives of that business model would be:

1) To create a new business model as an evolution of the self-distribution model of a music artist.
2) The main tool of this model is a Web platform in which the music artist is the main administrator.
3) This platform provides all the fundamental services required for the release of a recorded album, as analyzed in Chapter 2, such as: a) funding the recordings, b) manufacturing the physical product, c) digital distribution of the product d) promotion of the album and the artist.
4) It also includes other vital services such as a) people applying for booking a concert, b) selling tickets for upcoming concerts c) funding next project of the artist.
5) All the above services will supported by using Web 2.0 technology features.

When it comes to the development of the website:

1) The style and basic design of the website reflects and emphasizes the singularity of the artist by adding graphics that describe his/her music and character
2) Special tools were added to strengthen the professional appearance of the website such as flash player, CSS and HTML.
3) The design of the website should be user-friendly, with easy navigation to every section and easy accessibility for people with special needs.
4) The website has short loading time (10 to 15 sec) and has compatibility with most popular browsers.
5) Guest book, message board, mailing list and blogs, information on latest news and concerts are some of the contents that were included.
6) External links with social media were included.
7) Many alternative ways of selling music was provided, such as “sale of whole album” or “sale of single track”.
8) Media player to preview the artist’s latest music was included.

After the analysis of the results of the survey, a lot of interesting observations could be reported. The respondents seem to be satisfied with the technical designing of the
website, as they all agreed that their browser fully loaded the website. All the respondents also agreed that navigation is quite easy as it did not take them a lot of clicks to navigate themselves to different sections of the website and they could all find the album sales section quite easily, which is one of the most important pages and basic source of profit from the website.

In some images though of the website, it seemed like it had to be added more explanatory text as 40% of the participants in the survey answered that not in all the images of the website text was provided. What is more, when it came to the content of the website, all respondents agreed that the content of each page was clear of what each subject was about and when asked about the security of the buying procedure, they all replied that they thought it was secure enough. As for the functionality of the website, which is the most crucial topic of all the other questions, when the respondents were asked if the website was covering sufficiently the career aspects of the artist, 80% answered “Yes” while 20% answered “Yes, to some extent”.

One of the most innovative parts of the website is the “Book Tori for a concert” section, where the website visitor can actually submit a request to book the artist for a concert by adding some specific information about the place that the event might take place. This is a quite practical procedure, which allows the booking requests to be stored, examined and selected, a bureaucratic procedure that enables a much more efficient way of examining the booking requests. In the past managers and artists to discuss about booking concerts mostly via telephone calls or via email where important information could be omitted or forgotten. When the respondents were asked if that particular section would be tempting for a user to use it in order to book an artist online, the opinions were bifurcated with 60% answering “Yes”, 30% answering “Yes, to some extent” and 10% answering “No”.

The other innovative function of the website is the “Fund Tori’s new project” section where a user is given the opportunity to give a small amount of money in order to support his/her favorite artist and accept special gifts in return. If the donation is larger they are given the opportunity to participate in Tori Amos’ recording of the album, meet Tori Amos and her musicians. This idea has already come true with many funding platforms such as kickstarter.com that have successfully managed to sponsor many large or smaller projects, video clips to movie productions. It is a function that seems to have succeed in these web platforms and could equally be used to benefit the music artist that owns that certain web tool. When the respondents were asked if they think that the website is overall a satisfying tool for a music artist’s career, 80% agreed that in fact it is, while a 20% stated “Yes, to some extent”.

48
It is quite obvious from the survey that these music artists that were asked to participate in this survey and to examine evaluate its content, seemed to be satisfied from this alternative business model embedded in the form of this website. The basic functions of a music artists career such as distribution of music, informing the audience about upcoming shows as well as the artist’s background are covered from many different parts of the website. New innovative features such as the booking and the funding are added to that model, placed in many significant spots of the website so as to definitely attract the visitor’s attention and properly verbalized so as to be tempting for the visitor to use them. Social media links are also placed in many parts of the website to make sure that the visitor would be intrigued to use them when possible.

In fact, the use of social media is the main source of promotion and advertising the artist in this business model. Thereby traditional means of promotion such as radios and television are bypassed, where it was customary to pay some amount of money to promote an artist or a product (Ku, 2001). The advantages of the free promotion of social media is analyzed and the third chapter thoroughly as well as the dangers of it. The artist has direct communication with the potential customers (Sun et al., 2006) and this in fact gives him/her the opportunity to understand the preferences and impact of his/her music endeavors as well as his colleagues of this powerful tool, he is free. Viral marketing is relatively difficult to successfully implement and measure adequately (Ferguson, 2008). The tactics that are used in social marketing are unfortunately considered experimental, or sometimes intuitive rather than based on measurements.

Nevertheless, the social media are unarguably a very effective and direct way of promoting one’s image and product (Miller & Lammas, 2012). What remains arguable though, is the impression an artist should give to his/her audience. There is an idea that an artist should not be that easily accessible and cultivate the model of an inaccessible, enigmatic figure that communicates solely through his work with the world. The nature of social media is exactly the opposite and the danger of over-exposure without any substantial reason waits out. Finally, it is generally worth considering when a user enters the procedure of buying a music product and not downloading it for free. This may happen when the product emits a respectable uniqueness and gives the impression to the user that this sale will upgrade him socially and existentially. Even nowadays there are people with huge collections of rare vinyl recordings and it is particularly obvious that only the more sophisticated and eclectic people purchase music, which they could show off whenever given the opportunity like a scepter of culture and intellectual superiority. These perhaps should be incentives that an advertiser needs to create about music to prospective purchasers.
Additionally, when it comes to the efficiency of this new business model, it is important to mention that the music industry is still in a phase of transition from the traditional business model to some another. In practice this means that some of the traditional media such as television, press and radio may have declined but not disappeared and still have value. In a world where only YouTube, social media, blogs and forums would be the only means of advertising a music artist, the traditional media would be considered useless. Hence, this is not true. The social media often act towards reinforcing traditional means. For instance, a song playing in the radio motivates much more someone to look for it in YouTube. Generally speaking, Web 2.0 technology provided freedom to everyone to promote their work through Internet media with no filter, completely uncensored, thus this can be considered as a double-edged knife. That is because it is not customary for users to discover from scratch new artist, and should an artist should not rely on randomness of "Discovery", simply because their music material is released in the internet. So in this case, a public relations manager is necessary to convey the artist’s work in traditional media.

Another matter that should be taken under consideration is the “Fund Tori’s new project” section as well as “Book Tori for a concert”. These two sections might seem to be fundamental an vital for an artist’s career but they are still a bit controversial as to how a part of the audience would react to them. As with the immediacy of the social media promotion, again these functions cultivate and reflect a much more familiar image of the artist that does not remain a grand and distant figure but in fact requests sponsorship and shows great availability in booking concerts. Again here, it is necessary for the artist to facilitate his/her need for sponsorship and booking with the help of a specialized team that could ensure that other alternative ways could be discovered to serve these needs. Under these conditions this business model could be implemented successfully via the artist’s website. With the help of a group of qualified booking and public relations managers in cooperation with the web application, there is a strong chance to overcome the decline of the traditional business model and make the best of the online business tools offered.
CONCLUSION

This report presented an effort to create an alternative business model for the music industry. Extensive research was carried out in order to profoundly comprehend the history and significant changes in music industry. Then, an introduction was made to the Web 2.0 technology and services that could provide potential facilities and benefits to such a model. Viral marketing was also presented in order to be examined as a tool of promotion for the music artist. An extensive requirements analysis was formed to define properly the structure and designing of the website. Evaluation procedures had also taken place via a survey that was submitted to music artists and the results were presented through bar graphs in order to have an idea of the effectiveness of the website. This alternative business model was designed as a “one-man self-distribution and promoting” concept to bring about complete autonomy for a music artist.

However, that model might fail to meet the expectations of the artist, if not combined with the activity of a group of professional managers who will interact with the platform and the artist. In the music industry the ease and speed of accessing to the product is important, but equally important are public relations, which are applied through the social media, but mainly in the real world. So in terms of "booking" live performances, the website can provide direct communication on this issue through the application form in homepage, but to complete such an agreement, a physical person with appropriate skills should contact either by telephone or in person. Thus a public relations manager is necessary, in terms of communicating with the press and radios and other traditional means of advertisement, which might be not that effective, but still important for a music artist’s career.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

REFERENCES


53


O' Reilly. (2005). 


Skarpelos I., (2000). *Historical memory and Greek elements in comics,* Kritiki, Athens, p.70


INTERNET SOURCES


