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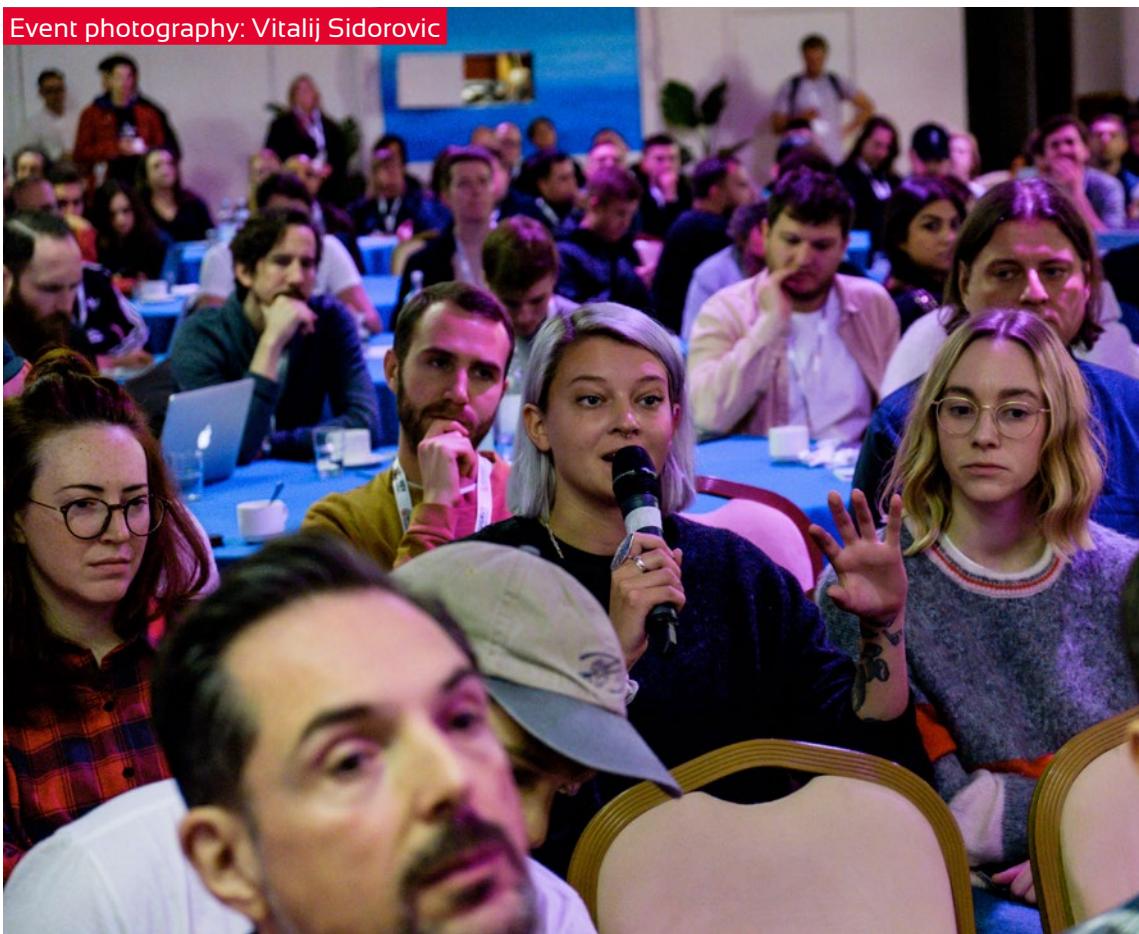
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'BOXING CLEVER
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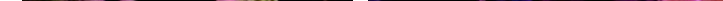
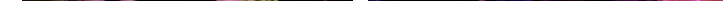
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'BOXING CLEVER

MUSIC ALLY'S SANDBOX SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN LONDON, IN ASSOCIATION WITH LINKFIRE, EXPLORED MUSIC MARKETING TOPICS, AS WELL AS SOME RELATED AREAS, WITH A LINEUP DRAWN FROM THE SHARP END OF THESE TRENDS.

Last Wednesday (31st October), Music Ally held our latest **Sandbox Summit** conference in London. While we were tweeting from the event, you may have wondered why we hadn't published any reports from the sessions on our site and in our bulletin.

Why not? Because we were trying something different: preparing our writeups for this special-edition **sandbox** report.

From the YouTube Music keynote to panels about manager/label relations, new technology and in-house ad-buying, taking in Fortnite and esports, Ed Sheeran, Snapchat campaigns and marketing to older fans along the way, we've broken down the key views, stats and debates from our one-day event. We hope you enjoy the results. :)

TALES OF THE 'TUBE

COMMUNITY TABS, PREMIERES AND CURATION CHANNELS CITED AS KEY TOOLS FOR ARTISTS ON YOUTUBE IN 2018

Tensions between YouTube and the music industry remain at raised levels following the recent European Parliament vote to approve Article 13 of the proposed new Copyright Directive, with YouTube's CEO Susan Wojcicki and (the day after Sandbox Summit) music chief Lyor Cohen both publicly criticising the legislation.

Article 13, safe harbour and the "value gap" remain important talking points for the industry, but it's also true that in 2018, the features that make YouTube a partner for artists and rightsholders have stepped up several notches: from the launch of the YouTube Music subscription service to various tools for artist marketing.

It was the latter that was the focus for YouTube's global head of artist services Vivien Lewit's keynote at the conference, in what she described as "the year of music" for YouTube.

Lewit made a pitch for the "complementary system of two different platforms" – the main, free YouTube service on one hand, and the new subscription tier on the other. That included a defence of the free version.

"You've got unlimited discovery, a driving force of connectivity between artists and their fans [...] The ability to engage directly and build your own



"You're the marketing experts. We'd love to work together with you specifically to help drive subscribers"

narrative, and discovery of new talent on a daily basis," she said. "The organic promotion of YouTube, which is fueled by algorithmic recommendations is super-powerful – and that aids in discovery."

Lewit also noted that YouTube Music has launched in 22 countries so far, with "more to come in 2019", while admitting that it's still early days and that YouTube is seeking the help of the music industry to help it drive trials, app installs and, ultimately, conversions to YouTube

Music subscriptions.

"You're the marketing experts," she said. "We'd love to work together with you specifically to help drive subscribers. Please make YouTube Music part of your social campaigns [...] And talk to the team here about how we can come together on co-marketing partnerships. If we do this together, we think there's infinite possibility; and we're committed to



making this enormous."

Lewit showed some images of an upcoming YouTube Music marketing campaign in the UK featuring artist The 1975, with Anne-Marie, Stormzy, George Ezra and The Beatles also due to feature: "The single biggest marketing investment in music that YouTube has made in the UK" as she put it.

Much of her keynote focused on the tools launched by YouTube in 2018 for artists, including official artist channels, which brought together the subscribers and content from artists' personal channels, their Vevo-branded channels and fan-uploaded content, with 'shelves' that they could curate themselves.

Lewit also highlighted the 'music in this video' feature, which provides artist and songwriter credits for music used in other videos on YouTube. "Over half a billion

TALES OF THE 'TUBE

videos on YouTube have music in this video links associated with them," she said.

She also encouraged labels to make use of YouTube's newly-launched charts. "It gives you a sense of how your artist is doing [...] Use it to help open up doors for other opportunities with your talent. Use it in brand meetings, use it in radio meetings," she said.

That's something that labels and managers have been doing for some time with data from Spotify, as well as more recently with Apple Music. YouTube is keen for its numbers to be wielded alongside those other services, clearly.

Lewit cited some artists who've been finding success with other new features on YouTube. Its community tab, for example, where artists can publish the kind of posts familiar from other social networks. Gorillaz have made 10 community posts in the last month on YouTube, for example, with 'total engagement' that's four times

the rate they're getting on Facebook.

(The fact that YouTube is pushing that comparison with Facebook is certainly interesting, even if it's a low bar to vault, given the ongoing decline in organic reach on that social network.)

Lewit's point, though, was that artists should get involved. "Activity on the platform begets more activity on the platform. The more actions that you take on a YouTube channel, whether it's uploads, playlisting, posting to community? The more that fires up the recommendation system to drive discoverability."

Lewit also praised Charli XCX's use of YouTube's new premiere feature, which enables channels to cue up the launch of a new video as an event to be watched and chatted about by fans on a certain day and time.

Charli XCX's video for her duet with Troye Sivan, '1999', was watched more than 860k times in the day after its premiere, compared



Mahalia - Sober | A COLORS SHOW

19,774,370 views

221K 3.3K SHARE SAVE ...

to just 88k first-day views for her '5 In The Morning' release earlier in the year. While the addition of a popular collaborator will have also given some uplift for the newer song, Lewit's point was that the premiere got '1999' off to a fast start.

Curatorial channels – the ones that film original content around music and musicians – were also warmly praised in Lewit's keynote. "Perhaps to use YouTube to its fullest extent means tapping into the community of other creators, music curators and, of course, the fans of the music themselves," she said.

Lewit picked out two channels in particular: GRM Daily and Colors, who have 1.5m and 2m subscribers respectively, while also recognising British channel SBTV as a pioneer in this field. "These types of platforms, these promotional vehicles, could only appear on a platform like YouTube," she said.

"These channels were once primarily thought of as curiosities, but are now defining the zeitgeist, and are a crucial part of breaking your artists and new music [...] They have wide reach, deep breadth of audience, and global potential."

As one example, Lewit pointed to artist Mahalia's single 'Sober', whose official video has 1.5m views on YouTube, while a version shot by Colors has 19m views.

"Colors have been driving a ton of viewership and really breaking new boundaries around artist performances [...] The videos of these artists are up in double-digit millions. In many instances they're more than, or at least close to, what the official videos do," said Lewit.

She also praised artists who are leaning into fan-created content. Alan Walker compiled cover versions of his 'Darkside'



Charli XCX & Troye Sivan - 1999 [Official Video]

10,553,384 views

439K 12K SHARE SAVE ...

track by fans, as well as getting some of his fans to contribute to a 'reaction video' to the track's official video. "He's gained 2.3m subscribers since he launched that campaign," noted Lewit. "The power of doing things like this: of engaging the fan community, is enormous."

She also pointed to Dua Lipa's launch of an official reaction video – again with fans – to her track 'IDGAF', which has been watched 553k times so far. "It celebrates the fan more than anything else. There is no stronger evidence of fandom than the person of whatever age who is going to make a video using works of their favourite artist. So to celebrate that is really special and gives something back to the fans," she said.

Here, there was a sense of a political message, given that this kind of fan-created content is what YouTube maintains may be threatened if Article 13 in its current form becomes law. Rightsholders argue that it should not be affected. That argument continues, but we suspect both sides agree that fan content – especially when embraced by artists – can be a powerful thing on video and social platforms of all kinds. :)

"Colors have been driving a ton of viewership and really breaking new boundaries around artist performances"

CAMPAIGNS OF THE YEAR

ASYLUM / ATLANTIC PREVAIL IN AUDIENCE VOTE FOR THE BEST MARKETING OF 2018

Music Ally shortlisted five marketing campaigns that really stood out for us this year. During [SandboxSummit](#), we gave short presentations on each of them, outlining their structure while explaining what we were impressed by and where we thought they were breaking new ground. Attendees at the event then voted for the winner, which was revealed at the end of the event. Here is what Music Ally's Wesley A'Harrah and Chiara Michieletto said about the campaigns in their overviews.

WINNER:

Asylum/Atlantic for Charli XCX's 'Boys'

It is the only single campaign in this competition because it is one of the few singles in the world that can go head-to-head with any album.

The main focal point of this campaign was a video and then loads of stuff going on across Instagram. Fans ravenously follow her and engage with her, making fan content around anything she does.

Any time a fan made a really amazing piece of content, Charli would put it up on her social media accounts. This is something that really good and really authentic artists who have a community with their fans are doing more and more now.

Every single one of the 60+ people [pop stars, actors, influencers] who appear in the video had their own social media assets created for them. They had their own behind-the-scenes footage that they were using. They had their own different pieces of fan content that were being spread around.

Some of the best ads we have ever seen run in Spotify accompanied this campaign.



They were HTML ads and there was an audio button on the top left which you could click to hear the song. The clickable elements of the ad where Tinder cards which you could swipe left or right on. And they keep swiping left and right to keep drawing your attention to the ad. This is a great type of ad to run in Spotify.

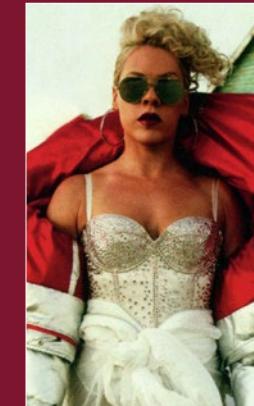
This campaign treats fans as collaborators and it treats artists as the biggest collaborators. It is about remembering your fans are a community and they are creating things too. They love you and want to work with you – and it is about emphasising that. We see that much more here than we do in a typical campaign. :)

And the other nominees were...



AWAL for The Wombats' Beautiful People Will Ruin Your Life

This was about looking at the data beforehand and building a campaign around that. They had a good combination of offline and online marketing as well as a comprehensive social media strategy. Not only was it comprehensive, it was in the right tone and in the right voice, which was particularly effective.



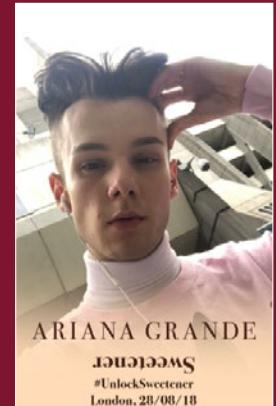
RCA for P!nk's Beautiful Trauma

Sometimes simplicity can go a really long way if you have all of your ads optimised properly. It was a great example of catalogue and frontline sales teams working together.



Polydor for Years & Years' Palo Santo

Palo Santo probably has the most campaign elements that we have seen across an anglo-



ARIANA GRANDE
Sweetener
#UnlockSweetener
London, 28/08/18

centric campaign in the last year. Everything from creating your own alphabet and having scavenger hunts across different platforms to bots that drive everything from pre-saves to dance video tutorials, all the way through to a Vevo Originals series, websites that are navigable via voice, YearCoin [a bespoke cryptocurrency], working with Facebook's AR camera in Messenger and a QVC-style shopping channel.

Republic/Island for Ariana Grande's Sweetener It was a great use of AR to sell physical bundles. Working with Landmrk, they tried to incentivise fans as much as possible to go out there and perform actions, searching for all the clues about her new album. They encouraged fans to take selfies when they were unlocking things, which incentivised them to unlock more and more rewards along the way.



CONTROLLING STAKES

THE BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN LABELS AND MANAGERS IS SHIFTING. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The relationship between labels and managers is changing, with marketing one of the pressure points. Who owns what data? And who has access to that data if they don't own it? Who controls the marketing relationship and spend? And how can both sides work together better to the benefit of artists?

Sandbox Summit's first panel session saw TAP Management's head of global marketing and artist development Hannah Neaves; ie:music director Stephen O'Reilly; Ignition Records director

John Leahy; and PIAS group director of streaming strategy Justin Barker debating these questions.

There were no fireworks: the natural consensus is that no one benefits from a testy relationship between manager and label when compared to a trustful collaboration. And it's also important to avoid generalising: some management companies can take on many (and perhaps all) the duties of a label. Others are far from that point.

Neaves talked about some of the

changes wrought by streaming, including management companies doing more of the initial development work for an artist before trying to sign them to a label. TAP launched one artist six weeks ago on streaming services, for example, and picked up good playlist support from both Spotify and Apple Music.

"We don't need that label at that initial stage [but] we will need them at some point. An artist can be a priority at development phase at a management company, and that's very hard to do at a

"we need services. We look at our major label partners as service providers"

big label [...] But then you can hand it over when that artist is completely ready to step up and become bigger," she said.

"If you sign a brand-new artist too quickly to a major label and haven't defined properly what they are, you've got 50 people with 50 different opinions [...] So I think it's important to completely define what that artist is in the first place."

O'Reilly explained how ie:music, which has the capabilities to release records for artists like Robbie Williams and Passenger without a label, sees these partnerships.

"We need services and we look at our major label partners as service providers," he said, noting that Williams also put an album out with Columbia Records in

CONTROLLING THE STAKES

recent years. "We could have done that in many different ways – on our own or through other services – but we got a really brilliant pitch from Columbia and it felt right. They put together a brilliant services plan globally."

The conversation touched on access to data, with Leahy saying it's important for a manager "to have access to the same data for the artists that I have as the labels [...] If I ask Apple for access to the data, I usually get it; same from Spotify. Other service providers are a little slower than that, but I know they're working to get there."

Management companies increasingly have direct lines into streaming services, but the panel stepped back from suggesting this treads on labels' toes.

Barker said that it can come down to personnel and expertise. "You can have those in a label and you can have those in a management company," he said. "Maybe we're just an extra pair of hands to help with something. The industry got a lot more complicated after streaming – there's a lot more nuances to discover."

He added, "There is a lack of education throughout the industry as to what success means: how to use data, how to plan a campaign, how to optimise for these streaming platforms. Or not! A lot of that expertise is hard-fought, it's been years of experience doing it that you can draw on to advise managers of any description, and provide a service."

The panel talked about access to the data provided by streaming services, with Barker saying managers are happy to share data from (for example) Spotify for Artists with labels.

"There was a little bit of scepticism

maybe a couple of years ago when Spotify for Artists was a new thing and managers were maybe more reticent to give access to that data to labels," he admitted. "But realistically these days, there's a much greater move towards collaboration and having another pair of eyes on the same data. If I ask for access to Spotify for Artists, it usually arrives within five minutes. It's rarely something they kick back on."

O'Reilly said there are limits to this collaboration, however. "We'll share the data with our partners within the campaign. But the artist owns the data – full stop. It's the artist's; it's not anybody else's," he said. But Neaves pointed out that labels have their own data capabilities that can be useful for managers.

"When a big company like Universal has their own dashboard where they can analyse the data a bit deeper – as a small management company, that's where if you're not at the forefront of streaming all the time and doing a lot of releases [...] That's where you need a label or label services to disseminate all that information for you."

O'Reilly talked about the rationale for bringing digital marketing spend in-house at ie:music, rather than leaving labels to handle it. "In some cases we think it could have been done better. A lot of times labels outsourced some of that work to agencies and digital marketing companies



[...] But I don't think anyone could do it better than us," he said.

"So we spent years building systems that work for us. When you can work across the live side of things – when you're spending money to sell tickets to shows [...] You can use that same money and data to sell records and merch. It just makes sense, for us as a management company, that we would be in the driving seat there."

Other points touched upon in the discussion included the strain of dealing with data. "I think there's almost too much data in the industry," said Leahy. "Most of the information is still very topline. The thought that all this data gives us time to drill into detail, to analyse [...] I think it's a bit of a myth. I think a lot of the data isn't used to the benefit of the campaign still, because there's not enough time."

The overall sense was one of shifting dynamics: managers can do much more for their artists, including duties that a label would have handled in the past. But that doesn't mean they will by definition

"We'll share the data with our partners within the campaign. But the artist owns the data – full stop"

take on all those roles for every artist.

"If we don't have the right partners, we're going to do it ourselves [...] But it requires a team of people," said O'Reilly, who stressed that the key to healthy partnerships with labels is transparency.

"Spotify and Apple and YouTube made the business more equitable, so it's important to us that the deals that we do with our partners reflect that [...] Transparency is really a priority for us. We've seen some contracts and deals come in for life of copyright today that makes no sense for us. And people want to take a slice of the publishing and the merch, which we find crazy!"

Neaves brought the conversation back to the early development work for artists. "From our point of view it is very much being able to incubate those artists and having complete creative control, and getting to the point where the artistic proposition is so nailed on and complete – to the point where you're happy to hand over to that huge infrastructure and scale [of a major label].":)

BITS AND 'BYTES

FANBYTES BOSS TIMOTHY ARMOO ON HOW SNAPCHAT CAN PAY OFF FOR LABELS

There's a popular media narrative at the moment about Snapchat's failure in comparison to Instagram, which filched its popular Stories feature and ran off cackling into the distance (in terms of user numbers).

Yet Snapchat remains a big social platform, with 186m daily active users. For music marketers doing it well, the app is becoming an important and effective part of some inventive campaigns.

One of the companies trying to help labels and music brands do Snapchat better is British startup Fanbytes, which was founded by its CEO Timothy Armoo a couple of years ago. It creates AR Snapchat lenses for clients, but it also has a community of influencers who can help to push their content out through the app.

In his [SandboxSummit](#) interview, Armoo said Fanbytes was an attempt to get away from traditional display advertising online. "If I tap on your shoulder so many times with just a bunch of display ads over and over again, hopefully you stream my song," is how he characterised that. "Is there a way, rather than just bombarding people with ads, to create something that actually engages audiences?"

Fanbytes has been pitching labels on its lens-creating skills and its community of influencers, but Armoo said the first



music company to bite was actually a streaming service: Deezer. The company created a boombox lens that reached 1m views in 24 hours, before developing it into a second lens that helped people to choose specific songs that represented moods like happy, sad and "lit", and share them in their Snapchat stories.

This 'What's Your Song?' lens became, at its peak, the second most-popular lens on the whole of Snapchat over a 24-hour period, with more than 1.2m views, according to Armoo.

"The genesis of the company was this idea of 'don't create ads that take away from the experience'. Do stuff that's cool and aids the experience. We've always thought that AR was the way to do that," he said.

"So many people think people hate advertising. I don't think that's true. People hate crappy advertising. But advertising that actually helps and is entertaining? People don't mind that at all [...] I'm really bullish on AR. It is advertising, but it's not 'Jesus Christ get



"So many people think people hate advertising. I don't think that's true. People hate crappy advertising"

this display ad out of my fucking face!' advertising. It's cool."

That's something that's been coming through in the sponsored lenses produced by Fanbytes and by other agencies or brands on Snapchat: that a playful, creative approach is what works best for lenses that people will use and share with friends, rather than sledgehammer marketing messages shoehorned into Snap's AR format.

Armoo said that Snapchat is also blurring the boundaries between organic content (for example, from musicians) and paid advertising – whether that's ads booked with Snap itself or paid-for influencer campaigns.

"We find a lot of the labels here, they might run stuff like paid ads, and they will then repurpose that content to push through influencers. Or they might do stuff with influencers and then repurpose it [as paid ads].":)



FIGURING OUT WHAT TECHNOLOGIES ARE VALUABLE – AND WHICH ARE WHITE ELEPHANTS – IS A KEY SKILL FOR DIGITAL MARKETERS

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE TECHY

How do you spot the good from the bad in the tech sphere, as a music marketer? A panel moderated by The Orchard's director of marketing and sales for the Nordics Nikoo Sadr, and featuring: Island head of digital Claire Mas; RCA Label Group UK head of digital Kara Mukerjee; and Decimal MD Chris Garrett explored the question. Here are some of the key lessons:

Have an open door – but also know when to close it

Mas said that having an open door was key and that any tech company approaching a label that seems interesting should get a meeting.

"Sometimes the ideas are terrible," she

said. "But even if the ideas are terrible the person might be really interesting [...] It is about investing time in finding people with good ideas and helping them get to the point where you can help each other. That is what I tend to do."

Budgets are still a huge hurdle

"The music industry is unique in that as the tech requirements are quite high as there is a massive amount of data that is generated and that brings scale challenges with it," said Garrett. "At the same time, it generally has lower budgets than other industries. Compare that to pharmaceuticals where you might be looking at ten times the budget a lot of the time for similar projects."

Mukerjee agreed. "It is 100% true that we have limited budgets as an industry. If any of us are looking to build campaigns with significant budgets to launch with then we are probably all in the wrong industry and we should probably just leave the room! [...] We have to run on a shoestring budget and we have to work with tech partners to run experimental R&D projects."

First is rarely best

Sometimes campaigns will run on a box-fresh platform purely to get media coverage around the fact they were first – but this is often a risky short-term strategy that benefits neither the artist nor the startup involved.

"I think the idea of being first to market is a fundamentally flawed concept," is how Mukerjee put it. "It is really lovely and sexy and it helps with PR – but fundamentally that is not what it is about. What we as music marketers are supposed to be doing is doing the best by our artists and our artist campaigns. The consumers don't really care if it was first to market or not. What they care about is if they have had an experience that has created a bridge between them and their artist."

Mas added that labels need to be careful they are not being used by startups to catapult them to scale. "I think a lot of tech companies want you to break their company," she said. "I am not

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE TECHY

here to break your company; I am here to break my artist."

AR is about engagement not consumption

Mas talked about creating the first Facebook Camera AR effect in Europe to slot into the marketing of Big Shaq's 'Man's Not Hot' single. "It was one of the best things I have ever done," she said, adding it had over 5m impressions and "hundreds of thousands of users".

It was successful, she argued, because it wasn't just about watching or sharing content – the fans could actually become part of it. Interactivity was behind its organic spread. Mas suggested that sometimes marketing is about ordering fans to watch or listen to something and give the artists their money, but this was a campaign element going the other way.

"Here is something for you to run away with and that is what we are trying to do more and more of," she said.

Enough new platforms already!

The panel agreed that a new platform that requires fans and artists alike to set up new profiles is precisely what the industry does not need.

Mukerjee talked of the "huge overheads in trying to migrate people onto new platforms" and argued it made more sense to work within the platforms that are already tried and tested – such as Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook.

"Our job is not to send people to other platforms," was her blunt summation.



"Our job is not to sell [device] units. Our job is not to sell smart speakers. And it is not to migrate people over to Instagram."

Messing up is natural

There's an inevitable tendency for marketers and startups to talk about their successes and gingerly skip over their failures. But it can be healthy to accept, own and learn from mistakes, with no shame in failing.

"If we didn't fuck up quite frequently then we wouldn't be doing our jobs properly," said Mukerjee. "We are meant to be learning all the time. We are meant to be experimenting. Inherently part of the experimenting is fucking up."

She gave the example of a virtual-merchandise platform not working for an artist that she has worked with. It was a great concept and nice execution, but "just way too early" in that technology's rollout.

"We were just a little bit too keen," she said, before noting that virtual merch is now a viable offering. "Sometimes it's

better to let somebody else go first... ideas can come cheap, but it's about quality of execution."

Getting excited about tech

Caution is important, but that shouldn't stop marketers from being excited about the potential of new technologies. Spatial computing in general, and AR startup Magic Leap in particular, are currently on Mukerjee's radar for example.

"The barrier to entry is really high and it's still very expensive – but over the next couple of years I think they will be creating really incredible experiences," she said, citing the work the company has done with Industrial Light & Magic on Star Wars experiences tied to the last few films.

For her it was about replacing lean-back videos with music experiences where fans can properly interact with an act.

Web VR, she said, was the great unexplored opportunity here. It is so low barrier to entry in terms of terms of

technical development as well as in terms of consumption, turning any browser or mobile device into a VR device.

"And yet there has been no killer execution in music so far," she said, citing the lone example of the LCD Soundsystem partnership with Google for 'Tonight'. She suggested that companies could build something in-house in half a day to work, but the music business as a whole was missing a trick here.

Cryptocurrency campaigns? They're a...

Last year, Björk explored the idea of giving fans free cryptocurrency – Audiocoins – when they pre-ordered her album. It hasn't yet sparked a wave of similar campaigns from other artists, which Garrett suggested was related to wider issues around the cryptocurrencies world.

"It's a head fuck!" was his blunt assessment. "Crypto is really interesting and at the same time it's really nothing."

Garrett suggested that the potential is in creating a truly universal cryptocurrency that works across all DSPs – almost a new type of loyalty-card scheme in waiting.

"If someone could unite all the little independent DSPs, like Boomkat and Bleep, you could actually create something very powerful," he said. "Until someone actually does that it's not really got any integral value."

However, he was optimistic that Björk's curiosity about crypto made her campaign a necessary first experiment.

"Someone will come along and take the next few steps and make it into something really valuable," he said. "We are just waiting for someone to do it. :)

GOOD SPORTS

FORTNITE IS THE GAMING CRAZE OF 2018, AND IT'S ALREADY CONTRIBUTING TO THE GROWTH OF ESPORTS AS A MAINSTREAM ACTIVITY. SO WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BOTH?



One of the wider-angle sessions at [SandboxSummit](#) this year came from Music Ally's Stuart Dredge, who talked about gaming trends: focusing in on this year's hit game Fortnite, as well as the growth of competitive gaming – i.e. esports – and opportunities there for music marketing.

Fortnite was released in 2017, but it was the launch of its free Battle Royale mode that autumn that sent it towards craze



The game is a third-person shooter: originally 100 players skydived onto an environment full of weapons, with the last survivor deemed the winner. Since then, more modes have been added: for example, two teams of 50 competing.

Fortnite is big: it had 78.3m players in August this year – around 44% of Spotify's active listeners, and nearly 7m more



than Pandora, as a comparison to our world. The game reportedly reached its first \$1bn in revenues by July, thanks to in-game purchases of its VBucks currency, which players use to unlock cosmetic improvements (i.e. ones that don't give them an advantage in gameplay) for their characters.

Research firm SuperData estimated that Fortnite made \$318m in May 2018 alone. As a comparison, again, the three major labels combined were making around \$540m of streaming revenues a month in the first half of this year.

Fortnite is also a big hit online: on Amazon's live-video service Twitch, people watched 389.1m hours of it in the third quarter of this year alone, and it's the second-biggest game on YouTube behind Minecraft.

The game has hastened the rise of some new online video stars, like Tyler "Ninja" Blevins and Ali-A, his British equivalent. Both have double-digit millions of subscribers on YouTube and Twitch, as well as on other social networks.

Ninja is already embedded in the music world: he's played Fortnite with Drake and

dance star Marshmello, breaking online viewing records in the process. And for the (very) young audience that watches these videos, these are partnerships of equals: for the average 12-year-old gamer in 2018, Ninja is as big a star as Drake – strange though that may seem to a music industry executive who's never heard of the former.

They likely have now: Ninja recently signed a partnership with Astralwerks, part of the UMG empire, to launch a compilation (and related merchandise brand) called Ninjawerks.

What does Fortnite mean for music marketing? The success of the likes of Ninja and Ali-A suggest opportunities for artists: especially younger acts who love games and who play online already.

Why shouldn't they experiment with live-streaming on Twitch and/or YouTube, and engaging with their fans around Fortnite or other games outside their regular promotional cycles? For an artist or label, this can also be an introduction to some of the monetisation mechanics (tips, for example) that are familiar to live-streamers, but less so to musicians.

There are also partnerships and collaborations to be explored, much like Ninja and Marshmello. This hopefully isn't just bare-bones influencer marketing, where labels seek out online-video stars and bung them cash to promote an album. Instead, it could be more about creative collaborations based around a shared love of gaming and music.

What we've been talking about so far is entertainment, but Fortnite offers a good link to esports because its publisher Epic Games is ploughing \$100m into tournaments for Fortnite over the coming year.



Tournaments is a useful word for understanding what esports are: it's competitive gaming – with all kinds of games, not just sports – with tournaments, prize money, teams and professional players, as well as large and growing audiences both offline and online. In esports heartlands like South Korea, watching these pro gamers attracts tens of thousands of fans to stadia, and tens of millions more online on Twitch and YouTube.

Research firm Newzoo published a report earlier this year that's been widely quoted since. It estimated that the esports market would be worth \$905.6m in 2018, with 40% of that coming from sponsorship, 19% from advertising and 18% from media rights.

Newzoo predicted that 380m people would watch esports this year – 165m 'enthusiasts' and 215m 'occasional' viewers. And while esports has traditionally focused on PC games like Dota 2, Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, League Of Legends and StarCraft II – which can feel

a bit inaccessible to outsiders – the trends are towards more mainstream and more mobile titles: card-battler Hearthstone, mobile title Clash Royale, through to console franchises like Rocket League, FIFA and Call Of Duty.

How can the music industry work with the esports world? We already have some examples. Universal Music is working with tournaments organiser ESL on a joint label that will sign artists and promote them at esports events, while UMG's Canada division is working with esports firm Luminosity Gaming on similar promo partnerships.

Drake and Scooter Braun recently became co-owners of esports startup 100 Thieves, joining the likes of Steve Aoki, Jennifer Lopez and Imagine Dragons as investors in this world. And MTV has worked with Riot Games, the publisher of League Of Legends, on an esports and music festival in Singapore called Hyperplay. Nick Jonas and Alessia Cara took top billing at the first event, alongside



a League Of Legends tournament.

In preparation for [SandboxSummit](#), Music Ally looked at some of the way non-music brands are working with esports. Mastercard, for example, has a long-term deal with Riot Games to sponsor its League Of Legends tournaments, with pop-up booths, meet'n'greets with pro gamers and digital content extensions.

US chocolate brands Hershey and Reese enlisted Ninja and fellow streamer DrLupo to promote a new bar, announcing it on their live streams from the recent TwitchCon event, while meeting fans at the brands' booth to give away chocolate and selfies.

That's one trend in brand/esports partnerships: the combination of online content and real-world, physical activations: brands helping fans to meet their esports idols, rather than simply paying those stars to promote a product.

Some partnerships involve in-game content. Tournament organiser Super League Gaming created a new mode for Minecraft based on a Spider-Man film, which makes us wonder what the equivalent could be for an album or artist. Riot Games worked with Dutch

blood bank Sanquin on a campaign to encourage people to give blood – unlocking an exclusive skin in League Of Legends if they gave their first donation during the campaign.

One trend in esports is for the publishers of games to also be running the tournaments, from Epic Games with Fortnite, to Electronic Arts with FIFA, and Supercell with Clash Royale. Where the game publisher is also the esports organiser, there may be interesting creative opportunities. Imagine a Drake skin for Fortnite, unlocked by doing something in the real world, which was promoted at a prominent esports tournament for the game...

"Imagine a Drake skin for Fortnite, unlocked by doing something in the real world, which was promoted at a prominent esports tournament for the game"

It's still early days for the young esports industry, and there are clunking campaigns as well as inventive ones. But it feels like we're long past the point where 'people like to watch other people playing games' is seen as strange or niche. It's mainstream entertainment – and a fast-growing business.

Esports teams, stars and tournaments are keen to do interesting, creative partnerships with brands of all kinds, and within the music world, we have plenty of artists and marketing people who've grown up with games, and are capable of forging those partnerships. Within the next year, Music Ally expects to see a number of campaigns that prove this. :)



DIVIDE AND CONQUER

HOW ATLANTIC RECORDS STRIVED TO “REWRITE THE RULE BOOK” FOR THE LAST ED SHEERAN ALBUM

As the biggest artist album of 2017 globally (and likely to repeat the same trick this year), the campaign for Ed Sheeran's *Divide* was never going to be a run of the mill one.

Callum Caulfield, head of marketing at Atlantic Records UK, offered a detailed breakdown of what was involved in the campaign and just how complex it was, addressing multiple audiences

simultaneously through very different strategies.

In brief, Atlantic wanted to be the ‘invisible partner’ in the campaign. It all had to look and feel like it was being driven

by Sheeran himself.

“This was the first thing all the activity had to adhere to,” said Caulfield. “Halfway through [previous album] *Multiply* it became really obvious that the thing that resonated with everyone was Ed. He is the person everyone wants to have the connection with. Everything that comes in between that is just going to dilute it.”

Excitement was also a key goal. “Everything we did had to be exciting, it had to be easy and it had to have the ability to scale to a mass audience,” he said.

“We wanted to tease the comeback in a really exciting and effective way,” added Caulfield adding there were nine months of planning before the first new pieces of music came out. “We were thinking about it for a long time.”

They discounted the idea of a surprise album drop, feeling this would not work for him or his audience. The exact opposite became the approach they took – focusing on maximum build up and impact. “We

wanted to deliver the biggest and most exciting album campaign that we had seen in a while.”

Key to that was returning with not one but two singles at the same time. “That was the cause for a lot of debate in the office,” Caulfield revealed of the persuasion job that had to happen internally. “We

were very keen on breaking some rules and causing some chaos [...] We were determined to try and rewrite the rule book.



For every major act returning, they should rewrite the rule book. The rules should be different afterwards."

Sheeran had taken a year off social media, so a year to the day (12th December 2016), he returned but only by uploading a blue square to his Instagram ("Pantone 306C for anyone who is interested").

"This was our comeback announcement – which wasn't even an announcement. It looked natural and it looked organic."

As hoped, fans began to try and decipher the meaning but things went quiet from Sheeran (and Atlantic) leading into Christmas. Then on New Year's Day they uploaded a video on Sheeran's Facebook page with him just holding a sign saying "New Music coming on Friday". That is when it all started to take off.

Between 1st January and 6th January (when the two singles dropped), they started to seed assets that allude to the tracks that are coming but they did not say if they were singles or related to the album title.

'Castle On The Hill' was aimed at an older audience while 'Shape Of You' was aimed at a younger audience. This was reflected in the platforms they chose to tease the singles on. 'Shape Of You' appeared on a 30-second Snapchat lens while 'Castle On The Hill' got a 30-second TV ad on prime time.

Fans realised they were two different tracks and were convinced the album was coming the next day. "We had got to a boiling point of excitement on the campaign," said Caulfield.



For full international impact, it was decided that the optimum time to release both singles was 4am GMT on 6th January. This was going to give it the biggest impact across multiple time zones and maximise the 24-hour period they were hoping to break records around.

Except at 3am he twigged the artwork for the singles was the wrong way round. Panic ensued but they still managed to go live at 4am.

Reflecting on this strategy a year and a half later, Caulfield said there were three identifiable no-nos for big international campaigns: having two lead singles is a big mission to get everyone on board; do not tease people for three weeks before giving them music as it is hard to get this to work globally in a cohesive way due to cultural differences; and do not release singles without the album pre-order being live.

"I had the great displeasure of sitting in a room with every label head from around the world all shouting at me, telling me I was mad and that I was doing a terrible job," Caulfield revealed of the internal struggles he and the campaign faced. "That was really enjoyable! But thankfully they sold a lot of records so they can't be too mad at me."

A video for 'How Would You Feel?' was recorded a video in a house in Suffolk and uploaded on 17th February with no announcement. What was important about this was that it was the first time people actually saw Sheeran perform in the campaign. It was aimed at the

'Thinking Out Loud' audience (the massive crossover single from the previous album).

For the actual album release, Atlantic considered and rejected big events (such as a show at Trafalgar Square in London or one at Wembley). "All these big things felt wrong," said Caulfield and they then took inspiration from the fact Sheeran said he always went to a record shop to buy his albums on the day of release.

From that, the team decided to have him go to HMV on Oxford Street in London on the Friday morning of release. A few people had been tipped off, but the plan was to have fans sharing news on social media to give an organic buzz to it all. In the space of 20 minutes, with Sheeran now behind the counter selling his own album, the number of people in the shop went from 50 to 250.

"I knew that this would be more exciting than a gig or an instore," said Caulfield,



"It felt genuine, organic and real. It genuinely felt that everything had come from him"

adding that they sourced the best UGC and used that in their advertising material. It also made the Channel 4 news in the UK that night. "It felt genuine, organic and real. It genuinely felt that everything had come from him."

Atlantic had the rest of 2017 planned out in advance but they let the fans (via streaming data) pick the next single, which was 'Galway Girl' (although that rather conveniently came out to coincide with St Patrick's Day on 17th March). That then led into his headline spot at Glastonbury.

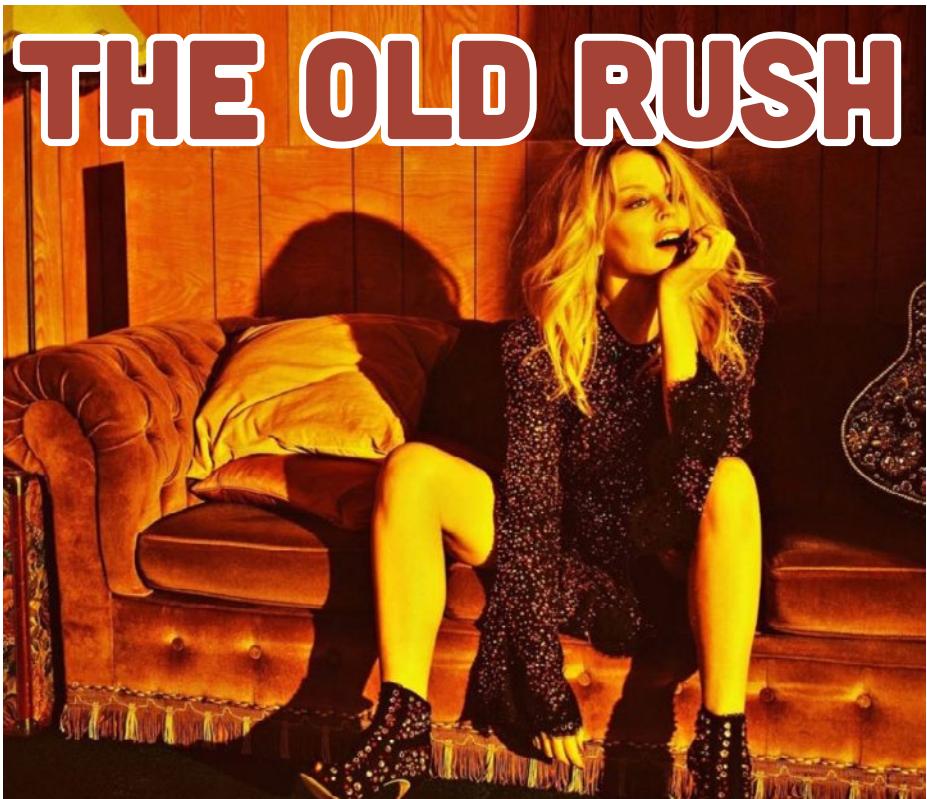
And then they pulled the brakes on everything.

"After Glastonbury, we purposely stopped everything," he said. "As much as I love him, you can only take so much Ed in a campaign in one year. You can't expect the entire world to stick with you month in and month out. It's not going to happen [...] That was a real hold-your-nerve time. There was no marketing and there were no discussions. There was no new content."

'Perfect' was picked as the next single in September and designed to lead into Christmas when and it all flipped into a seasonal campaign for Q4.

Asked if an album on this scale was at risk of being leaked before release, Caulfield revealed the scale of the security around it. They were having weekly security meetings from August 2016. But by January 2017 they had risen to two a week and by February they were having three a week.

"We had to hire a very expensive security guard to stand in front of all the stock in the warehouse for a week," he said, adding it was a "miracle" it never leaked. :)



IGNORE THE MORE MATURE CONSUMER AT YOUR PERIL – EVEN IN THEIR EARLY 30S

The first shock for the audience at the [SandboxSummit](#) presentation from BMG's head of digital marketing Sam Hill and director of marketing (UK) Gemma Reilly was their definition of 'older' music fans as those aged 30+. "Which is worrying or optimistic depending on how you look at it," quipped Hill.

Their presentation showed how BMG had worked on recent hit albums from Kylie Minogue and Rick Astley, although they stressed that their experience was also being put to work on campaigns for

younger artists whose fanbases include older listeners.

D2C sales, including physical albums, is a key part of this. "D2C is easy to set up and there is a higher profit margin often – but that is not always the case," said Hill.

"It also offers a simplicity. Simplicity of messaging is really important, especially when you get to people over 40 or 50. You have to make things as clear as possible [...] It is important to never forget about D2C no matter what audience you're working with. For us it offers a number of



"It is important to never forget about D2C no matter what audience you're working with"

things that we can't do initially with traditional retailers."

"It also helps artists future proof against the more turbulent retail market, giving them full control over their fans," said Reilly. "It enables them to sell multiple formats and deluxe formats to maximise revenues. It also allows them to gather data to continue a long-term relationship directly with their fanbase."

It can also involve some seemingly redundant formats. BMG sold 5,500 cassette versions of Kylie's recent *Golden* album, and a later run of 1,500 collector's-edition tapes sold out in 90 minutes.

The pair talked about partnerships with physical retailers, including getting artists out to meet their fans.

"For many artists, but not all, we are finding that it is very effective to have them in store to meet fans and do signings," said



Reilly. "Performances come with a bit of a cost so I am not overly keen on them, particularly for the more established artists where the costs are high for that. But signings and engagement really does work for certain orders."

They also talked about TV advertising, which retains a power even in this age of YouTube and Netflix – especially for older audiences, whose TV viewership is staying pretty steady. Reilly talked about the advantages of a "road block" tactic for TV advertising.

"Instead of going to the big shows with huge audiences – and you do get lots of wastage with shows like *Coronation Street* or *X Factor* – go for the more cost-effective programmes that are showing at the same time across multiple channels. That gives you such a huge reach and at a much lower cost," she said.

BMG has learned that physical and digital is not an either/or scenario for older music fans. "There are still a lot of people who are going to buy a CD for the car or the deluxe edition and then stream it because they have a Spotify subscription," said Hill. "Streaming should never be seen as replacement for your physical sales; they both augment each other."

The pair also talked about finding the right social mix for artists. Instagram was deemed to be key to Kylie's campaign, for example, even though a relatively small percentage of her total audience is on the platform. Younger and funkier content was posted first on Instagram – which is Minogue's own preferred channel – while content like tour photos worked better on Facebook.

"We can take content from Instagram and migrate it to other channels," said Hill. "But what we like to do is create unique content for each channel." :)



FULL HOUSE

WHEN LABELS AND MANAGERS BRING AD BUYING IN-HOUSE, WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

One of the ways labels and managers are taking more control over their digital marketing in 2018 is by bringing ad buying in-house, rather than relying on external agencies. A panel at [SandboxSummit](#) examined the benefits.

Duncan Byrne, head of marketing at Anjunabeats, explained that the dance label "pretty much run everything ourselves at the moment", while Brooke Salisbury, head of marketing at Domino,

pointed to that label's decision to bring ad buying in-house a year ago.

"It was very much about volume, very much about being wary of the volume that an external agency can handle, and just wanting to be able to achieve quality when you're buying media and when you're trying to deliver a campaign," said Salisbury.

One driving factor behind this trend is data: especially the deep, near-real-time

data available from streaming services and social networks.

"It's actually really simple these days [...] Once you do invest time in building out your audiences, [it's about] making sure you're pixelling absolutely everything possible," said Byrne. "Get that pixel absolutely everywhere, chop and change that data as much as possible. Once you get that data, it's possible to share specific, very granular audiences to do what you need to."

Live McKay, commercial director at Universal Music (Norway and Sweden) pointed to streaming. "In Norway, 85% of our revenue now is streaming. We are so streaming-driven that everything we do becomes very much online. Everything is online and everything is direct feedback, so we can always see the results of our campaigns very quickly," she said.

Universal is able to bring together data on marketing campaigns as well as social and streaming analytics to see, for example, if an advertising campaign has only reached the keenest fans of an artist or a wider audience – then act on that knowledge quickly.

"We can change the campaigns as we go and maybe change the targeting or tweak the content," she said. Salisbury said this is exactly the process that Domino has evolved since taking control.

"It's coming into the office, having a look at how things are performing, having a dialogue on it and then having the ability to change it in five minutes," she said. "It's versatility [...] However, we still work with a media agency: there's no big campaign that we work on where we don't value their input on strategy and don't rely on them to help us deliver on areas we don't

handle in-house."

Byrne agreed, saying, "Particularly if you're doing a global campaign and you're purchasing across a big network, you're probably not going to get the best deal in-house. Just know what you're best at. If you don't have the right amount of data or contacts, go with an agency."

Other points from the panel included McKay praising Snapchat as a platform, based on its popularity on Norway. "The usage is very high and the results are very good at the moment. We are spending more money on Snapchat now than on any other platform at the moment," she said.

Byrne talked about how Anjunabeats' focus on Spotify has shifted away from trying to get fans to pre-save new albums. "Rather than asking people to pre-save a release, we're focusing really hard on growing that artist follow, to play into that Release Radar game," he said, referring to Spotify's algorithmic, personalised playlist of new releases. "Which is having tremendous results for us. You can get that great first-week kick."

The panel also talked about the difficulty of understanding whether an ad has led to actual fan activity: labels can see that a fan has clicked through to Spotify or Apple Music, perhaps, but not if they have subsequently streamed the track, followed the artist and/or saved their music to their collection.

Lars Ettrup, CEO of Linkfire, was optimistic that this is changing. "My prediction would be that within the next 12 months we'll see more attribution being opened up to everyone, not just through Linkfire but through everyone," he said. "That's the sense I get when I'm out talking about partnerships. We see the dialogues progressing." :)

Kevin Brown is CEO of startup GigRev, but he used to be a music manager with clients including tribute band The Australian Pink Floyd – who under his wing moved up from playing theatres to arenas.

The process made him question how data was being owned and carved up within the music industry, reaching conclusions that will be familiar to many music marketers and managers.

"I looked at some of the data we needed to collect and I was a little bit alarmed that we didn't own the data," he said of what he found when managing the act. "It was owned by social networks, all the way from YouTube to Facebook."

This was the catalyst for GigRev, underpinned by a key existential question facing musicians in the digital age: "Are we being driven by the data or being driven by the music? If it's by the data, is it the right kind of data that we are being driven by?"

Brown argued that an emphasis on gathering likes, views and follows is painting the business into a corner. These are not, to his mind, the correct metrics to be focusing on.

"It is very difficult to separate followers from true fans," he said of the way a platform like Facebook is trying to prioritise things and make users fall in line. "The more followers you get, the more you pay to reach them."

He feels there is a growing schism between "followers" and "fans" and the industry needs to better understand the differences here.

"Followers are just that – they are followers," he said. "They are following an artist but the majority aren't actually doing anything else. There is a big discrepancy in those numbers."



FOLLOWERS VERSUS FANS

GIGREV CEO KEVIN BROWN LAID OUT HIS CASE FOR RECLAIMING FAN DATA

"Followers are just that – they are followers. They are following an artist but the majority aren't actually doing anything else"

To explain this in action, he noted that for many big acts today, 80% of their income is from live and 20% is from recorded. He then looked to break that down and figure out what percentage of their fans actually paid for concert tickets, merchandise and records.

For Depeche Mode, he estimated there was a 12% conversion rate and he said this was high. For U2, that dropped to 5.5% and for Drake (0.6%) and Adele (0.5%) it was lower still.

(Of course, touring artists are dealing with a finite number of shows and venue capacities, so demand is always going to outstrip supply here.)

Brown's wider point, however, was that this emphasis on followers and not fans can result in drastically inefficient spending.

"When advertising to fans, there is a lot of money being wasted on reaching people who are not actually interested in the music," he argued.

His thesis that "the website used to be the home of an artist and now it's social networks" underpins GigRev, giving each act a platform they can brand as they wish and where they, not the platform, own the data.

Of the 20+ acts using it, he says on average 15% of their social followers have downloaded and regularly use the app. Between 1% and 2% also sign up for their in-built fanclub subscription, monetising content that is already going out free on social media.

"This is really separating social followers from fans and bringing them into a place that feels like home," he said. "I don't think it is about big social networks [now]. They are already big in the first place. I think it is more about micro communities. They are the way forward." :)

IF THIS PANEL WERE A YOUTUBE VIDEO, WE'D CALL IT "DIGITAL MARKETERS REACT... TO NIGHTMARE SCENARIOS IN THEIR CAMPAIGNS"



"If it's really not connecting, to keep spending is just going to make it more of a flop, financially"

STICKY MOMENTS

The final panel at **SandboxSummit** was played for laughs, but also featured plenty of insight from a panel of marketers fielding scenarios (from Music Ally's Eamonn Forde) of challenges that can emerge suddenly during campaigns. The panel had not been briefed in advance on the scenarios – making it a chance for them to show how they'd respond on the fly, in real life.

The first scenario: a release that falls far short of expectations in its first week, despite careful preparation. "If right away all of a sudden you don't see it on any of

your important playlists, you don't see fans buzzing about it [...] It's our job to create a moment," said Rachel Stoewer, head of digital at Cooking Vinyl Records.

She added, "Talk to the artist, create video content, do something exciting, and talk to our partners to see if there's anything we can do – and if that doesn't work, then onto the next single, I guess!"

Dan Griffiths, director of digital marketing at The Orchard, chimed in. "I'd probably get some advertising on the go, if that hadn't already happened. Given the turnaround of the approval process, I'd be

looking at Facebook and Instagram," he said, citing the need to ensure that people who'd already engaged with the artist online had heard about the new release. "Gather as much data as I can and then push the messaging towards those fans."

Patrick Ross, director of digital strategy at Music Ally, warned that there has to come a point where "you stop throwing good money after bad". He said, "If it's really not connecting, to keep spending is just going to make it more of a flop financially."

Another scenario focused on an artist

who'd created an expensive official video for a new single, but two days before release decided to scrap it and make a new one, which would take a month. The panel agreed that while the artist's creative instincts need to be respected, in 2018 releasing the track without any video content at all is not an option.

"I would look at the existing assets and repurpose that in some way – potentially make an animated trailer or at least stick some audio behind the packshot and use that to create some ad assets," suggested Griffiths. "Then go back to the artist and see what they can provide to push the track through."

Stoewer agreed. "The first step is to have a really honest conversation and say video content is key right now, whether we cut this video up or have something else, we have to have something to engage fans. And if you have a track that's releasing without a piece of video content, it's not your strongest release. You have to have something."

Griffiths noted that launching even a static video on YouTube can be useful, if remarketing is in place, to later target the official video to people who watched the first, placeholder content.

The third scenario: a promise from a streaming service to put a new track on a key playlist falls through. The panel were unanimous in their belief that if this is a

disaster, it's the sign of a poor campaign: since marketers should never be relying entirely on a single DSP and playlist in the first place.

"The best thing would be to focus on lower-level playlists and then look to build up the support from there to hopefully get back onto the playlist we were aiming for," said Griffiths. "It would be our job to show there's momentum coming from other areas, such as the artist socials, pickup from video plays, radio play et cetera. And then we can go back into the service and explain the case for re-pitching to the playlist."

"My hope would be we haven't hung everything on a third party we can't control playlisting our track!" said Ross, as Stoewer nodded her agreement.

"It's not about one playlist; it's about a bunch of playlists. And it's also about different playlists internationally and different services as well," she said. "If it's not working on one playlist in one territory on one service from one editor? Well, there's a whole world out there."

Another scenario saw an artist about to release their second album, which is very different sonically from their first, only to find a track from that debut suddenly goes viral on YouTube or a streaming service – with the artist demanding that since it doesn't represent their new material, the label should somehow 'kill' it.

"If you're having success in the streaming environment, maybe we could add it to a collection playlist, pin that at the top of the artist's profile and try to drive people to the artist's newer music," said Griffiths.

Stoewer added that using the clip of



the viral (older) track in marketing for the new album could give the latter a promotional boost, while Ross said he'd try to sell the artist on the benefits for the algorithms of a service like Spotify, where the popularity of the older track could lead to the new material appearing in many more listeners' Release Radar playlists.

Another scenario posed by Forde focused on an artist who is ideologically opposed to social media, to the extent that they don't want to do it themselves, but they also don't want the label or management company to do it on their behalf.

"I think you could work in ways that would appeal to them," proposed Griffiths. "Potentially still running ads on socials. You could have accounts that were blacked out, with no visible posts on those public accounts, and you're running key content as dark-post ads. I think that might appeal to the aesthetic!"

Stoewer said there are other benefits of a no-social-media approach. "If they're that adamant, it becomes a news story and you can use press and other places to get it out," she said.

Among the other scenarios were



"It's not about one playlist; it's about a bunch of playlists. And it's also about different playlists internationally"

juggling streaming services' demands for exclusive content: especially if one large DSP takes offence at its main rival getting something that it thinks is better.

"You have to be honest with both the DSPs and say you felt both the pieces of content were equal," said Stoewer. "You have to reason and say, 'Well this partner may have given me this amount of money or this type of support, and in return I have to give them this.' So if you can do that, great!"

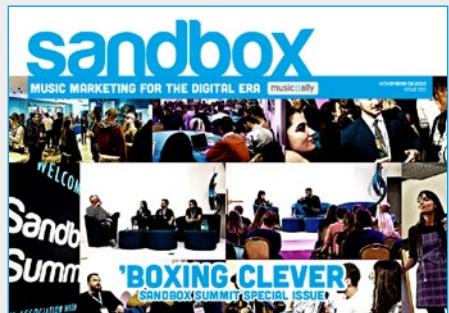
All three panelists agreed that there are other ways to mend bridges: such as doing mailouts or social pushes to drive fans to a particular playlist or the artist's profile on the aggrieved DSP's platform.

"You can't change history," argued Ross. "It's very much, 'Come to the table with what can we do better to work in partnership?' Which one does the artist perform better on? If they [the DSP] are completely unreasonable I don't know if you can have much more of a conversation, though."

Finally, the entirely theoretical situation of a popular artist coming out as a Donald Trump supporter, despite the fact – and Forde was piling pressure on the panel by this point – that their fanbase is almost entirely "Mexican women".

The consensus: there are situations where it's not the digital marketing team's responsibility (or even in their power) to solve. "Some Mexican females are actually Trump fans!" joked Ross. "Maybe they'll make new fans? I'm not confident with anything about this."

"It doesn't sound like an artist you can tell what to do," concluded Griffiths, to nods of agreement all round. :)



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