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**Title**

Crowdfunding and the DIY Artist: The Effects of Web 2.0 on DIY Music Communities

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## 1.0 Introduction

During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it became well known that for a musician to record and release music they would require the backing of a major record label (Oliver, 2009; Dubber, Anderton and James, 2010). However, since technological development, in the early 2000s, such as the internet and social media platforms, it is now possible for musicians to record, release and promote their own music independently, without the need of a major or independent record label (Spencer, 2008). These musicians utilise do-it-yourself (DIY) ethics and practices, many of which were originally adopted during the punk movement in the '60s and '70s (Crossley, 2008). However, the internet and web 2.0 have drastically changed the way in which these practices are carried out, and have allowed DIY artists the opportunity to reach a much wider audience (Oliver, 2010).

The literature review section of this paper will explore the beginnings of DIY culture, looking mainly at the punk movement and exploring their ethics, views and motivations. Communities of Practice will then be discussed, exploring how they work with regards to the internet and web 2.0, looking at how artists employ co-creation and user generated content (USG) marketing to develop the artist/fan relationship. Finally, the concept of entrepreneurial bricolage will be explored, looking at the emergence of crowdfunding and how it affects the sustainability of the modern-day DIY artist.

This paper adopts an interpretative research approach, as the main goal of interpretivist research is to understand and interpret the meanings in human behaviour; making sense of motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences that are time and context specific (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988).

Interpretivism tends to provide subjective, qualitative data (Lincoln, 1995), and so a qualitative approach will be adopted, with primary research being conducted through semi-structured interviews with DIY artists. When analysing the primary data, a thematic analysis method will be adopted to identify recurring themes and ideas. Finally, the research findings will be presented in the form of three vignettes; one for each participant, and key themes will be identified in the analysis of the vignettes, referencing back to the main aims of the research.

The aim of this paper was to gain a deeper understanding behind the motivations for do-it-yourself (DIY) artists to partake in music-making and managerial processes, and to look closely at the concept of communities of practice to better understand the emerging role they play in the sustainability of a DIY artist's career. Also, to shed some light on the emergence of the DIY artist, exploring new ideas and how new technologies, such as social media platforms, can support the DIY artist in building a sustainable career.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 DIY Culture

Do-it-yourself (DIY) is a well known ethic based on self-reliance and exceeding one's own expectations of what can be achieved with the tools at-hand (Oliver, 2009; Gordon, 2005). This perspective can be applied to almost any aspect of life ranging from home repairs to home recording (Strachan, 2007). However, in terms of academic research, the field of DIY is relatively untouched.

In popular music, DIY culture as a concept has been synonymous with DIY music-making, dating back to the early 1900s, with the advent and growth of "skiffle" bands (Levine and Stumpf, 1983). These were blues and jazz bands who did not have access to real instruments. This led to them creating their own instruments from household items to play and perform music (Spencer, 2008). "Skiffle" bands displayed two characteristics, which are commonplace and almost a necessity, in DIY artists: resourcefulness and imagination.

In the 1960s, the punk movement brought about new motives for DIY practices: a disenfranchised youth wanting to rebel against big corporations and the money-driven music industry (Moore, 2004). These frustrations led to groups of musicians coming together and creating their own communities, independent of the corporate music industry, and led to them adopting DIY practices within these communities.

This began with punk bands arranging and performing gigs at local venues during which they “made a statement that they were not above their audience and so the audience felt that they knew these people, they were just like them, they could be their friends”. This was in stark contrast to the “distant and inaccessible” major-label bands like The Who and The Rolling Stones, who were regarded as rebel icons at the time (Spencer, 2008). These early punk bands aimed to blur the lines between the audience and the musician; involving the audience much more in the process and even encouraging them to start their own bands (Moore, 2004).

In the 1970s the demystification of the music industry began as the process of recording and releasing music became more transparent and available to everyone (Shepherd et al., 2003). It became apparent to bands, at this time, that it was relatively easy to access cheap recording studios and pressing plants; and so now bands could record and release their own music independent of record labels (Strachan, 2007). This was a significant turning point for DIY culture and independent music artists, as it allowed them the opportunity to build and sustain a career in the music industry without backing from a major label; and so, the self-sufficient DIY artist could fully take form (Oliver, 2010).

One of the many advantages that major labels still had over DIY and independent artists was money (McDonald, 2014). Things like rehearsal space, studio time and vinyl manufacturing all cost money, which would be needed before any money had been made from music releases etc. While major label acts would be given an advance, and have financial backing from their record label for such expenses (Albini, 1993), indie bands were required to cover these costs themselves. Moreover, communities within the punk movement would pool money together to help cover these costs under the guise of an independent record label (Higgins, 2012).

This sense of community built a sound framework for independent artists to sustain a career in the music industry. Working together as a community allowed members to share knowledge, skills, workload and the financial risk of orchestrating a release, all whilst building a place where members felt accepted and like they belonged. Since the inception of the internet, as well as continual development of open source software and mobile hardware, the concept of DIY culture within the music - and broader creative - industries has become much more complex in nature (Mōri, 2009).

Since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it has become increasingly difficult to refer to the “music industry” (singular) as Williamson and Cloonan (2007) explore in their paper ‘Rethinking the music industry’. They argue that the music industry is often confused with the “recording industry,” and so it is more appropriate to use the term “music industries” (plural) to represent the diversity of industries that exist today. This, in turn, has created a need to define sub ‘industries’ or groups outside of the traditional hierarchies of the music industries but that still play a significant role culturally and economically (Bennett and Peterson, 2004).

## **2.2 The DIY Artist**

The DIY artist is an individual working within the creative arts – for example, music, photography, sculpture - who uses the resources at-hand to be the most creative and as highly productive as possible (Oliver, 2009; Oliver, 2010).

The DIY artist can potentially have multiple roles: musician, artist, manager, distributor as well as promoter; referred to by Charles Handy (2002) as a ‘portfolio income’. These roles are essential if he or she is to survive working in the music industries.

The DIY artist is an individual who lives by his or her strong DIY ethic towards being creative (Oliver, 2010). Therefore, if an artist does collaborate it is simply to improve the quality of the creativity rather than to necessarily become more commercially viable as with most business collaborations (Spencer, 2008).

In comparing the DIY artist with the commercial artist, it is possible to make an analogy of two chefs with different cooking styles baking a cake. Chef A is the commercial artist who buys the most expensive ingredients, measures them out and cooks to the time precisely according to the recipe provided. When completed the cake is sold per slice to make a profit. Whereas, chef B is the DIY artist who uses the ingredients at-hand to make the best possible cake they can, not measuring out the ingredients but instead improvising with quantities and cooking times. When

completed the cake is sold to friends, family and other interested people to make enough money to cover the cost of the ingredients (Oliver, 2009).

### 2.2.1 Local Music and Art Scenes

Local music and art scenes are sub-sectors of the music industries in the UK, but local in terms of a small locality, not necessary personnel. The local – or DIY - artist that inhabits a local music scene has a strong ethic that relates back to the punk ideals of being creative and having fun whilst remaining independent at the same time (Bennett and Peterson, 2004).

In terms of infrastructure the local music scenes are extremely difficult to define as they are quite fluid and free flowing and are not like a typical organisation. They function in a completely different way, in that the people who inhabit these scenes consist of “performers, support facilities and fans come together to collectively create music for their own enjoyment” (Bennett et al., 2004, pp.2-4). These ideals of community and creativity are important aspects a self-sufficient DIY community of practice (Kuznetsov and Paulos, 2010).

## 2.3 Communities of Practice

Due to its ever-evolving, flexible nature, there are many proposed definitions of communities of practice (COP). One notion is that COP’s are:

*“Groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on-going basis.” (Wenger, 2002: 4)*

Using this definition, it can be argued that the punk movement consisted of many DIY communities of practice. These were small communities of people who all shared the same frustration at the corporate, manufactured music industry and all had a passion to create their own alternative by pooling together their own resources, skills and knowledge. These communities during the punk movement were more than likely limited to geographical location: local groups of musicians and fans gathering at physical locations such as music venues. However, it should be noted that the term “community” is not a physical entity and “may not necessarily have to be defined by location” (McLean, 2014).

The advent of the internet and web 2.0 completely changed the perception of community and really brought to light its non-tangible nature (McLean, 2014). The internet allows people the tools and means to share ideas around the world (Torrey, 2009). Web 2.0 and social networking sites allow people to form virtual communities online, with members of the communities living in different locations. It is noted by Holmes, Greenhill and McLean (2014: 279) that “there are also parallels between web 2.0 culture and the DIY ethos as both present opportunities for members to shape, contribute towards and build their own (be it media or craft)”.

This helps to explain the natural gravitation of DIY artists towards web 2.0 and social networking sites, as web 2.0 nurtures and encourages involvement and collaboration, providing a virtual space where anyone can share their ideas, knowledge, skills and experiences. In comparison to Web 1.0, which was static and more of a “broadcast,” Web 2.0 is more of a conversation between users and therefore fosters community (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh and Farsani, 2012).

Artists are no longer required to communicate through intermediaries, and can communicate directly with consumers and fans (McLean, Wainwright and Oliver, 2010), making communication feel more personal. In recent years, this has only increased with the growth of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

Now artists can reach a global audience in a matter of minutes. An example of this instant, viral nature of social

media is Ellen DeGeneres' 'selfie' tweet from the 2014 Oscars. The tweet featured an image of 'selfie' with Ellen and an array of other celebrities taken live during the Oscar show. The tweet reached 779,295 retweets in just half an hour (Smith, 2014). This shows the potential to reach a wide audience in a matter of minutes through social media.

## **2.4 Co-Creation and User Generated Content**

These new virtual DIY communities created through social media between artist and fan can often amount to much more than just business to consumer (B2C) relations as it helps to cut out intermediaries, thus making it cheaper to create and promote music through co-creation (Morris, 2014).

Increasingly musicians and brands are involving fans and consumers in the marketing process much more, making it interactive rather than just a one-sided "sell". Just as in the punk days, bands relied on fan labour to help promote and support releases through word- of-mouth promotion and the creation of 'zines (Gauntlett, 2012); so, it is that in the music industries, especially local music scenes, bands rely heavily on the free labour of fans. This started off with the fan helping by liking, commenting on, and sharing content created by the DIY musician to help them reach a wider audience. However, more recently we have seen these relationships giving fans more involvement and control in every aspect of the creative process, but especially in promotion.

These varying levels of involvement and control given to the fans depend on the band, promotional activity and the type of co-creational marketing that is being adopted (Gamble and Gilmore, 2013).

For their 2015 tour, the Vaccines ran a Twitter campaign in which they utilised Twitter's new poll feature. Every night of the tour they allowed fans to vote from a choice of two, which song they should perform on their set (Vaccines, 2015). This provides fans with high levels of involvement and medium levels of control regarding figure 1. Although the Vaccines are a major label band, this type of co-creational marketing could work effectively for an independent or DIY artist looking to engage more with fans. The initial tweet would ignite interest and excitement in the up-coming show and provide the fans with a feeling of involvement. Allowing fans to choose the set list for an up-coming show is just one of the ways in which musicians are involving fans more in the creative process.

A more extreme example is that of independent artist Imogen Heap's promotional campaign for her 2009 album "Ellipse". Making an album without the backing of a record label, Heap relied heavily on the labour of her community of fans to take on the duties usually performed by publicists, graphic designers and record labels. As well as sharing updates on the writing and recording process of the album, she also gave fans the opportunity to design the album artwork, write her artist biography, and even provide feedback on unfinished songs for the album (Morris, 2014).

According to Holmes, Greenhill and McLean (2014: 285) "the opportunity to receive direct feedback allows the maker to develop and realise potential by building on existing ideas and creations."

An example of this is when Heap shared with fans the chorus of an unfinished new song "Last Train Home", requesting some feedback. Most feedback was positive; which is expected as, within communities, members usually approve of each other's contributions and share similar tastes and ideas, therefore meaning this may not be the best environment to seek constructive feedback (Holmes and Greenhill and McLean, 2014).

However, several fans did note that the chorus sounded like a song by another artist. Upon revision of this and comparing the two songs, Heap eventually altered the chorus and played the new revised chorus for fans to hear (Morris, 2014). This is an example of an DIY artist utilising Web 2.0, co-creation and communities of practice to complete aspects of the creative process that would usually rely on a record label. Thus, these resources are making it easier for the artist to create and distribute their music, and sustain themselves without major label backing.

## **2.4 Entrepreneurial Bricolage**

Many artists are reluctant to refer to themselves as entrepreneurs (De Klerk, 2015) even if much of what they do places them simultaneously in the categories of “artist” and “entrepreneur”. Scholars have often interpreted art and business to co-exist (Caves, 2000), and several of the participants in Saskia De Klerk’s (2015: 7) research agreed with this: “when you’re an artist, you are a business, and artists and business are intertwined”. However, the term ‘entrepreneur’ has caused some of the participating artists discomfort:

*“When the participants were asked if they saw themselves as entrepreneurs, most of them associated this with the idea of having a business practice, but not all of them felt comfortable using the word ‘entrepreneur’. They preferred to refer to ‘entrepreneurial’ behaviour in that they viewed themselves as building their own brand and pursuing opportunities in the market.” (Saskia De Klerk’s, 2015, p.7)*

De Klerk (2015) proceeds to explain; “artists see themselves first and foremost as artists and their craft as the core of their business. Even if they do not sustain themselves with their practice they still view their craft and artistic ability as their livelihood”. Susan Coulson (2012) also explores this issue in her research in which she coins the term “accidental entrepreneur”. Coulson used this term to describe the 17 freelance musicians participating in her study as their focus is not entrepreneurial or to start a business, but instead to work creatively “in areas such as writing, recording, and performing, where self-employment is generally the only option” (Coulson, 2012). Both Coulson and De Klerk appear to agree that generally most artists do not make a conscious decision to be an entrepreneur, or act in an entrepreneurial manner, however they also agree that business and art are closely linked and musicians are often “accidental entrepreneurs”.

The word “bricolage” is French for “DIY” and the English definition is “construction or creation from a diverse range of available things”, and in both languages, bricolage denotes any works or products of DIY endeavours. Levi-Strauss (1966, p.17) defined bricolage as “making do with what is at hand”. The entrepreneurial process appears to thrive on creativity, critical thinking, improvisation, and flexibility; all of which bricolage offers (Winkel, 2013). In music, bricolage again means, “making do with what is at hand” and links back to the skiffle bands who would use ordinary household objects to make music. Shuker (1988) also notes that punk best represented stylistic bricolage, a form of bricolage, which uses common music devices in a new way.

Bricolage is about recognising what resources are available and how best to utilise them; and for the DIY artist this can be using their own resources such as their fan base and networks of peers. As mentioned in the previous section, DIY artists often rely on these communities, both online and offline, of fans and peers to provide feedback, promotion and oftentimes some of the creative content.

## 2.5 Crowdfunding

With web 2.0 has come the relatively new concept of crowdfunding. Crowdfunding means seeking small sums of money from a large dispersed audience to fund a project or venture (Lehner, 2013). This can be fundamental in allowing an independent artist to complete projects such as recording and releasing an album, going on tour or creating a music video, projects which would usually be funded by a record label (Albini, 1993). Crowdfunding is often used as a solution to sustaining a career in the music industries independent of a record label, and people are often willing to give financial support to a person or project that they believe in (Kappel, 2009), which is not dissimilar to the idea presented by Gamble and Gimore (2013) whereby people appear to be willing to give their time and effort to a community that they believe in, or feel strongly about.

Crowdfunding links back to the point made by Higgins (2013), appearing to mirror the DIY vinyl age in which communities within the punk movement would pool money together to help cover the costs of rehearsal space, recording and vinyl pressing, under the guise of an independent record label. In return for their financial contributions to the project, donors would usually receive “patronage perks” such as use of their name in the album liner notes, advanced autographed copies of the work, or backstage access at a performer’s show (Spellman, 2008). Again, this is another area where DIY artists can utilise their creativity and offer unusual and unique perks, which often link in with the idea of co-creation; for example, musician Ken Allen offered donors the chance to perform on one of his tracks as a perk, and another musician Nate Borofsky offered to record a song on the topic of the donor’s

choice as a perk for contributing (Pinchefsky, 2013).

As the concept of crowdfunding develops, more complex forms are emerging. Some individuals have begun dropping the patronage perks in favour of offering fans a monetary return based on the sales of future recordings, depending on the contribution they have made (Tozzi, 2007). This form of crowdfunding allows the fans and contributors to adopt the role originally occupied by a traditional record label, in which money is invested in an artist, in the hope and expectation of a financial return. This again links back to the previous section on co-creation which discusses about fans taking on the tasks and roles often occupied by the traditional record label, such as promotion, creative feedback and funding. It can be argued that this “patronage-plus” form of crowdfunding is more sustainable for the artist than the traditional “pure patronage” model discussed previously.

With “patronage-plus” crowdfunding the fans and contributors literally become invested in the success of the artist and their music, therefore they are more likely to continue to support the artist, rather than support a one-off project (Tozzi, 2007). This form of crowdfunding adopts the punk DIY ethos in which they specifically aimed to avoid any connections to a corporate record label and wanted to involve the fans in the creative process as much as possible. This form of funding seems to be another step towards being able to replace a traditional record label with fans, thus allowing DIY artists to build sustainable careers in the music industries.

### **3.0 Methodology**

This study, which has primarily focused on DIY music artists and how they utilise web 2.0 and online communities to build a sustainable career, takes two forms. Secondary research is the first form, and was presented in the previous section, exploring the history of DIY culture and the ethos of the DIY artist. The researchers went on to explore communities of practice and explore how web 2.0 is being utilised to build and maintain online communities in which co-creation is nurtured. The researchers progressed on to have a more in-depth exploration of co-creation and user generated content (USG), applied to the music industries, and more specifically, at examples within the music industries, and proceeding to explore entrepreneurial bricolage and crowdfunding.

The second form is primary research, which was based on the findings from the secondary research. This section outlines the methodology of the primary research that was conducted; the methods employed and approach taken. The suitability and drawbacks of these methods have been assessed, and consideration has been paid to the method of analysis.

#### **3.1 The Research Paradigm**

In recent times the term ‘paradigm’, with regards to educational research, has come to mean a framework that determines the motivation and goals of the research as well as the way in which knowledge is studied and interpreted (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006).

The framework of interpretivism was deemed the most appropriate paradigm for this research, as the main aim of this research was to understand modern-day DIY artists and communities and uncover their approaches, motivations and beliefs. This was subjective and therefore better adopted the interpretivist paradigm.

Interpretivism tends to provide subjective, qualitative data (Lincoln, 1995), which is what the researchers aimed to do in this paper. The researchers were interested in exploring the DIY artist’s experiences, perceptions and emotions and, therefore, a qualitative approach was adopted.

#### **3.2 Research Design and Strategy**

This study has adopted a vignette method in answering the research question. In experiments of a psychological or



sociological nature, a vignette presents a hypothetical situation to which participants respond with their opinions, values or experiences (CRAM101, 2014). The researchers wanted to draw on the experiences, perceptions and values of DIY artists and communities and noted that presenting these as vignettes would be most effective. Data gathering for the vignettes was through semi-structured interviews, with the questions varying depending on the participant.

Semi-structured interviews were deemed the most appropriate approach to collect this qualitative data as it allows for fluidity of asking questions, as well as allowing for participants to be in-depth with regards to their answers, opinions and experiences. A semi-structured interview is a qualitative interview that is structured by a pre-set question guide. The aim of this type of interview is to provide detailed findings through informal discussions with participants (Collis and Hussey, 2003).

The themes and topics covered in this study have been derived mainly from the review of literature and were crucial in developing and constructing the questions raised during the interviews. The semi-structured approach also presented the opportunity for the researchers to probe answers. Answer probing was particularly useful regarding responses requiring more detailed explanations.

### **3.3 Participants**

A total of three vignettes were created based on three commercially recognised DIY artists, as follows:

- Beccy Owen – is a DIY pop singer/songwriter based in Baildon, West Yorkshire, UK. Owen has used crowdfunding platform *Sponsume* to fund her album ‘Imago’.
- Toby Morrell – is a vocalist and guitar player in independent Christian rock band Emery. Along with the other members of Emery, Morrell founded music collective and independent record label ‘Bad Christian’.
- John Pointer – is a DIY singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist who founded crowdfunding platform ‘Patronism’.

### **3.4 Materials**

Pre-composed questions were constructed for each participant, with questions being based on prior research that was conducted of each participant, as well as on the main themes and ideas that arose from the literature review. An interview with Beccy Owen was conducted via Outlook email, unfortunately giving no time to answer probe. However, the researchers had the opportunity to continue communication with Owen, allowing for related questions to be asked if necessary. Owen answered the questions verbally, recording these as an audio file, which emailed to the researchers. The researchers then transcribed these answers by playing back the audio and typing into a Word document. The interviews with John pointer and Toby Morrell were conducted via a voice call on Skype, with the researchers recording the calls using a voice recording application. This made the transcribing process easier, and meant no notes are required to be taken during the interview, allowing the researchers to pay full attention to the respective interviews and participants. The Skype voice call interviews allowed for a less structured and rigid interview, with answer probing. Once interviews were completed, this data was combined with secondary information, found online, about the respective participants to help form the final vignettes.

### **3.5 Analysis of Research Findings**

Upon the completion of interviews, all recorded audio data were transcribed into Word format and a thematic analysis method was adopted regarding the transcribed interviews. Then, combined with secondary information (for example, basic biography, experience etc.) taken from personal websites, gathered about the artists, a holistic thematic analysis was conducted.

Thematic analysis provides a systematic and transparent approach to the procedure of uncovering themes or patterns in the data (McLeod, 2011). The first step in this process was to reduce the transcribed texts to make them more manageable, which allowed the researchers to obtain an overview of the material and, thus, simplify the task of identifying patterns and important ideas within the interviews. Regarding analysis, the definition of theme used is “a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Because of this definition, when it came to identifying themes, the researchers referred to the research question and aims to identify ideas or themes that would aid the answering of the research question.

Important ideas have been arranged into categories: “Motivations Behind DIY Practice”, “Communities”, “Co-Creation”, “Bricolage” and “Crowdfunding”, which has made themes much more identifiable. Recurring ideas in each category have been noted, with close attention paid to answering the research question. The researchers have presented the findings in the form of vignettes, highlighting the information which links to the main aims of the research and any quotes that are relevant to the key themes of the research question. Progressing from this, the researchers have identified and discussed the key themes brought about from the vignettes, comparing and contrasting views and referencing back to relevant literature with the aim of better understanding the results.

### **3.6 Ethics and Limitations**

The major limitation to this study would be the small number of participants interviewed. However, within the interpretative paradigm, and qualitative research in general, this is usually the case (Lenth, 2001). Unlike quantitative research (which focuses on a large volume of participants, generating results of lesser detail), qualitative research focuses on a small number of participants, generating much more detailed, in-depth research (Blaxter, 2010). Regarding ethics and the Skype voice call interviews with John Pointer and Toby Morrell, the researchers were required to ask for permission from Pointer and Morrell to record their voices, as they had to be aware that they were being recorded. Also, all participants have given permission for their names to be used in this written paper.

## **4.0 Findings and Discussion**

In this section three vignettes are presented, one for each of the participants mentioned in the methodology section. These vignettes are formed from the participants’ answers to the researchers’ questions that were formed using information and themes uncovered from the review of literature. The key points and themes from these vignettes will be explored and discussed in the section succeeding the vignettes.

### **4.1 Vignette 1 – Beccy Owen**

Beccy Owen is a 38-year-old DIY artist based in Bradford, whose DIY and punk ethos has led to her embracing social media, web 2.0 and crowdfunding. After beginning to write songs at the age of 21, Owen naturally started to adopt into DIY practices:

*“I guess I somehow tacitly understood that, at that point, I either did it myself or it wouldn't get done and I've kind of had that philosophy ever since.”*

After beginning to perform gigs around Newcastle and taking part in small open mic nights, Owen had enough musical material to create her first full-length album. However, she did not have enough money or resources to do so. Exercising entrepreneurial bricolage, Owen sought assistance from Newcastle University music students who needed to increase their portfolio of production work. This allowed Owen to record and complete her first album for a fraction of the amount it would have cost without this option. This is an example of a DIY artist making something out of nothing and using the resources at-hand to overcome an obstacle; which is an exact illustration of Levi-Strauss’ (1966) definition of entrepreneurial bricolage.

Crowdfunding was a natural progression for Owen, who decided *Sponsume* would be the most suitable platform to raise funds for her 2013 album 'Imago'. Although having not directly used a crowdfunding platform before, Owen affirms that she has always indirectly used this model by asking fans and audiences to pledge in advance for albums where possible. This is like the punk communities in which members of the community would pool money together to cover the costs of an album cycle (writing, recording, mastering, release etc.) as discussed by Higgins (2013).

More than just a means of raising funds to sustain her career or album cycle, Owen believes crowdfunding has given her the opportunity to build a community around the piece of work, providing her with support which she may not have otherwise had:

*"I hadn't made an album for a few years then and, you know, it can be quite a lonely feeling suddenly to then be putting something out... it was really about feeling a sense of support around me to do that work and to make that album... It did create a dialogue between me and my audience and it did create a sense of community which was an absolute bonus."*

Owen's online presence appears to be personal and honest; a 'Song Blog' - which she humorously abbreviates to 'Slog' - on microblogging platform Tumblr plays host to an array of personal content from unfinished demos and lyrics, to stories from Owen's day-to-day life and the conceptualisation of some of her songs. When discussing her 'Slog', Owen describes it as an "exercise in exploring vulnerability and openness". In being so personal and open with her online audience Owen believes that it makes the music she creates more universally resonant, and Owen believes stories are important in terms of connecting individuals as equals.

This ability of being able to connect with other individuals on a human level is fundamental in building a community that will ultimately lead to building a sustainable DIY music career. This is a similar concept to that presented by Amy Spencer (2008) in which DIY punk bands "made a statement that they were not above their audience and so the audience felt that they knew these people, they were just like them, they could be their friends." It is clear that connecting with your audience on a personal level and presenting yourself as one of them, rather than being above them is one of the ways DIY artists, both past and present, have built communities around their work.

Owen further explored openness and vulnerability through her 'Songathon' on her Tumblr 'Slog'. Owen decided to write, record and upload a new song every day for the month of January in 2013. Some other form of media accompanied the uploaded audio of the new song: a relevant image, a story explaining the conceptualisation of the song, or sometimes simply the lyrics of the song. This process proved to be a very personal one: with Owen being completely open about her inspirations, her day-to-day life and events, which had inspired the personal tracks. The Songathon was inspired by a Jerry Seinfeld interview in which he said his rule to himself was to write a joke a day, and that the chain should never be broken. The main motivations behind Owen's Songathon were to generate some new material and Owen believes that it is good for an artist to be proactive, rather than waiting for inspiration to strike. Although it was more of an exercise in self-discipline, it ultimately allowed Owen's fans to have a glimpse into her creative process and personal life. This is a fundamental part of building a community, having the ability to communicate with fans directly, with no intermediaries (McLean and Oliver, 2010) and also links back to Owen's previous idea that stories are important in terms of connecting individuals as equals.

As well as having similar views to the '70s punk community in that anyone can create and perform music - "you don't have to read music, you don't have to play in a certain way, you don't have to be a certain thing," Owen's personal politics with regards to her DIY motivations are also very reminiscent of the ideals of the '70s punk era. Owen seeks to make art on her own terms independent of any organisation or hierarchy dictating her direction:

*"I've had various industry interest and label interest and managers but ultimately I've always wanted to keep my own sense of fluidity around how I spend my time, what kind of music I make, what kind of clothes I wear and how small or big this whole thing called being a musician gets for me."*

This relates back to the points covered by Amy Spencer (2008) in which she discusses the '70s punk movement and their desires to specifically avoid involvement with a major record label after witnessing the commercialisation of original punk bands such as The Who and The Rolling Stones, and not wanting to have a similar, negative

experience.

Owen is clearly very much rooted in DIY culture and thrives working under her own authority. Owen continues to independently write, record and release music, now with a new band 'Joy Atlas'.

#### 4.2 Vignette 2 – John Pointer

John Pointer is a 42-year-old DIY artist based in Austin, Texas who has built a successful career on the concept of community building. Having started piano lessons at the age of five, Pointer is a multi-instrumentalist who, in the space of one show, can go from playing piano or cello to playing guitar and beat boxing, as well as singing.

Additionally, to having won several Austin Music Awards, Pointer has produced for, performed and recorded with numerous bands such as Ozomatli, Schrödinger's Cat and Sixpence None the Richer. Pointer thrives on creativity and when he was first coming through as a musician he looked at the likes of David Bowie and Prince as role models of what being a professional musician in the pop world should look like. However, in the 1990s Pointer began looking at major label recording contracts and was disappointed: "they didn't really offer a big enough reward based on what you have to give up to get it".

As well as the lack of relative reward, Pointer notes that creative freedom and artistic integrity is another motivation for his DIY practices:

*"I've talked to a million of them, and every record label I've been to it always turns out 'oh you're a rhythmic white guy with a guitar, you want to be Jack Johnson, John Mayer, or Dave Matthews, we can turn you into those guys overnight, we can sell that all day long...' I was constantly getting bad label offers trying to change me..."*

Many of the record labels would suggest Pointer should stop playing cello at live shows, and stop stomping as it seems "aggressive", and stop beat boxing as it is "too novel". For these reasons, Pointer made a conscious decision to build a career as a DIY artist, rather than conforming to the mould presented by a major label, which is like the ethics and beliefs of the punk movement in the 1970s (Spencer, 2008).

At this stage Pointer, who had a small core fan base, began to explore alternative models to the major label model. Pointer first exploring the pressing and distribution model used by the likes of Dave Matthews, in which the artist would produce the records themselves and the label would simply oversee pressing and distributing the record. This would allow him full creative control of his music, but also provide him with some aid from a record label when it comes to the task of pressing and distributing the album. However, those artists who had used similar types of deals to this one already had a large established fan base and Pointer believed that he still required to build his fan base before exploring this option.

The next model explored by Pointer was one which he conceptualised in which an ad agency would use their expertise to complete a core sample of his current fan base, predict where the rest of the fan base are and build a marketing campaign around driving Pointer and his music to the rest of the fan base. Pointer partnered with some grad students in Austin who worked on a project creating this alternative model.

The only issue in moving this model and platform forward was lack of funding: "I came up with the business model, but I just couldn't fund it. I didn't know where the money was going to come from because ad agencies don't have money, they spend other people's money. So, then I realised I'd had to find people to put up \$50,000 - \$100,000 so that this ad agency can do this campaign, where could I find those people? I had been thinking about it for years; where was the money?" (app.1, p.16). Ultimately Pointer's question was answered during dinner with a fan in which the fan provided him with a dollar bill to keep "doing what he was doing" (making music) and Pointer recalled a conversation that he had with his father in which his father said: "artists have never made a living they have patrons".

These events led to Pointer's conceptualisation and creation of a new type of crowdfunding platform 'Patronism'. Unlike Kickstarter, Indiegogo and some other major crowdfunding platforms, Patronism is a subscription model, meaning patrons pay a monthly subscription, rather than a one of donation. As aforementioned, standard crowdfunding platforms offer patrons rewards or perks based on how much money they donate (Spellman, 2008), however with Patronism, Pointer believed physical rewards were unnecessary and that rewards are not the reason for the patron donating money. Likening it to people who donate money to their favourite local radio stations Pointer says:

*"I always ask people 'when you give money to your public radio station, are you doing it so that you can have another coffee cup for your cabinet, or are you giving them the money hoping that they'll continue to make the great content you love to hear?' And I think that's the fundamental thing when people realise 'Oh yeah, I don't care about the coffee mug, I want them to continue doing that great work in the world that I want to see'" (app.1, p.15)*

When further discussing the motivations for the patrons to donate money to him Pointer goes on to explain: "I've written something they really love [a song or piece of music], they want to make my life a little better, just as I made their life a little better." (app.1, p.18). Pointer explains that this is a "relational economy" which, unlike a transactional economy, does not rely on offering rewards or an incentive ladder for people to donate money. In a transactional economy, there is a direct relationship between the money donated and a physical reward, a direct trade happens: money for incentive.

However, in a relational economy there is no transaction or trade; the interaction and donation are based on a feeling. Instead of offering physical rewards to the patrons, on Patronism Pointer gives them access to locked content such as his entire music catalogue, blog posts and previously unheard recordings. However, Pointer still maintains that content, and an incentive, is not what is important in this model: "I actually think nowadays wholeheartedly that connection is king and that the quality of that is the queen, and your mission is massive, and that your intent is everything."

Pointer clearly believes the reward is secondary to the connection created between artist and fan. Pointer believes that the Internet has empowered fans to be able to selflessly support people and causes they believe in, which is what we are seeing nowadays. This sort of relational economy is like the idea of co-creation and USG and the idea that fans are happy to work, completing tasks for the artist without any sort of reward or pay-off (Morris, 2014). In discussing this concept Pointer believes that the motivations are again relational: "they are actively being the change in the world they hope to see; which is that this thing they believe in succeeds, because then they succeed by proxy." (app.1, p.15).

This idea in which "if one of us succeeds, we all succeed" links back to the idea of communities and community spirit in which groups of likeminded people who share similar concerns, issues and passions group together to support and nurture one another (Wenger, 2002). Pointer believes we naturally aggregate into communities that we feel affinity and affiliation with, and this is due to us, by nature, being a collaborative species:

*"We need other people and that's why communities are so important, I could not do what I do if I didn't have a community that cared enough... Not to mention the very practical reality which is if 'nobody gives you money to do what you do, you cannot buy food, you cannot pay rent, you cannot pay your utilities.' You need a community to sustain you."*

This links back to the issue of sustainability, and Pointer believes that building communities is a way for the DIY artist to build a sustainable career independent of a record label. The internet has changed how communities are built and sustained, arguably making it easier to form communities (Torrey, 2009). The idea that the Internet has cut out intermediaries in the artist-fan relationship (McLean and Oliver, 2010) is something that Pointer believes the fan enjoys: "Even Radiohead could do this, they sold directly to their fans their fans were like 'Joyous day! We can skip around these interlopers and just give you money directly'. So, you can do it, even at that large a level, but especially at the DIY indie musician level" (app.1, p.16).

Pointer continues to work as a DIY artist, sustaining his career through support from his community believing that

“what people are supporting is this character who’s out in the world doing all of this crazy stuff like making music, doing live shows, helping other people etc.”

#### 4.3 Vignette 3 – Emery/Bad Christian (Toby Morrell)

Toby Morrell is the lead singer of Christian rock band Emery and co-founder of indie label Bad Christian. Founded in South Carolina in 2001, Emery moved to Seattle, as they believed it would allow them access to a much more music-centred scene. After releasing two EP’s, Emery signed with independent Christian rock label Tooth & Nail Records between 2002 and 2013 and, after releasing five full-length albums through Tooth & Nail, they decided to part ways with the label to form their own record label Bad Christian. Of the change, Morrell says:

*“We know the music industry so well now; we wanted to do it all ourselves. With everything being digital and online now it is so much easier for a band to work without a record label and we thought it would be fun if we could be even more closely connected to our fans.” (app.1, p.30)*

This idea supports the points covered by Amy Spencer (2008) in which she discusses how the digitisation of recording, releasing and promoting music has made it easier for DIY artists to sustain themselves and thrive independent of a record label. Emery decided to cut out the intermediary (Tooth & Nail) and instead communicate directly with their fans, something that has been made possible by the Internet (McLean and Oliver, 2010).

Money was another motivating factor behind the change: Emery realised that going independent would mean that they could keep all profits made, without having to give percentages to record labels etc. Another driving force behind Emery acting as a DIY band is their inability to fit a mould or to conform to the expectations of others of labels:

*“We might write songs about our life as Christians, but because we play bars and clubs and don’t stick within this ‘church bubble’ a lot of Christians don’t think we’re ‘Christian enough’. And then on the other hand you’ve got atheists who say we’re ‘too Christian’ because we talk and write openly about ‘Christian stuff’” (app.1, pp.30-31)*

Emery refused to simply play in churches and religious venues as they wanted to share their message with the world, rather than just the church, but they make Christian music and do not want to change this to suit a trend. This non-conformity is reminiscent of the punk era in which bands were frustrated with the increasingly controlling music industries and wanted to break away from this (Higgins, 2012). Emery going independent allows them to choose the venues they want to play and make the music they want to make, regardless of external views or opinions. Bad Christian are more than simply just an independent record label; they have also released several e-books as well as serving as a blog, a podcast and releasing a mobile application which allows access to the podcast, blogs and much of Bad Christian’s music catalogue. These felt like natural progressions for Bad Christian:

*“We [Morrell and the other members of Emery] used to have a blog called ‘Un-learning’, where we would write about moral and religious issues wanting to hold an open discussion about sensitive topics. This naturally led on to a podcast and books followed soon after, all continuing the same idea.” (app.1, p.33)*

This is all part of Emery and Bad Christian’s transparency and honesty when it comes to their fans:

*“In my music I can’t not tell the truth of who I am, it’s something I have to do; and the same with the podcast, and the same with life in general. We’re open about everything from the creative process and money, to our views on all sorts of topics and issues. It can get really personal but we can’t expect people to support us if we aren’t 100% honest with them.” (app.1, p.32)*

Exploring the idea that fans want a deeper connection with the artist (Morris, 2014), both Emery and Bad Christian often involve their fans in discussions regarding current affair, religious issues and the content that they share. For example, one of the patronage perks of being an ‘All in Bad Christian Club Member’ is having access to a Bad

Christian production and team meeting, allowing the patron to see the preparation that goes into Bad Christian podcasts, and can provide feedback and ideas. This is like the Imogen Heap case study (Morris, 2014), with Heap asking fans for feedback on unfinished demos and allowing them to contribute ideas etc. About figure 1 (Gamble & Gilmore, 2013) this kind of exercise would place this action under the heading of 'UGC Marketing' in which fans are given medium level involvement and medium level control.

As an independent label, Bad Christian digitally and traditionally releases Emery's music as well as music for other artists including Vocal Few and Kings Kaleidoscope. Bad Christian also utilises a subscription model, inspired by crowdfunding in which people can subscribe to the label and receive content and perks depending on how much they pay per month. There are different levels in which patrons can contribute; giving them access to the Bad Christian music catalogues as well as e-books and merchandise. Bad Christian also relies heavily on crowdfunding to raise the funds for bands on their roster to produce and release music. Discussing their reasons for being drawn towards crowdfunding, Morrell says:

*"Before being signed, getting the money to produce an EP was a daunting task. We'd all have to scrape together whatever we could and risk it all on the music. Now crowd funding's come along and taken away some of that risk, we can get the funding to produce an album without having to risk all of our own money. It's also a cool feeling knowing that these people believe in you enough to give you money up front without having heard music from the new album."* (app.1, p.31)

Morrell argues that some of the risk has now been shared with the fans: the band no longer must risk their own finances to produce a record, but now the fans happily give over money, with the risk that they may not even like the new music. However, people appear to be willing to give financial support to someone or something they believe in (Kappel, 2009), and are willing to take that risk because they believe in them.

This sharing of risk creates a sort of community in which the band relies on the fans for support (both financially and morally) and the fans rely on the band to create music that they enjoy. Communities are an important part of what Bad Christian does, as they provide support in the music industries that can seem daunting without a support network of likeminded people. The community surrounding Bad Christian is more than just the community of fans, but is also a community of bands and artists who are affiliated with Bad Christian.

It can be argued that Bad Christian is a COP as they are a group of people sharing a concern, set of problems or passion about a topic and they deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on-going basis (Wenger, 2002). It is not unusual for an act signed to Bad Christian to appear on in the credits for a track or album of another Bad Christian act, as a producer, writer or performer. It appears to be a community of likeminded musicians, sharing their expertise simply to help one another.

Therefore, Bad Christian are a label built around community and fan-funding, and they continue to release music for Emery and their roster of other acts, as well as running their regular podcasts and blog.

#### **4.4 Analysis of Vignettes**

The primary research highlighted some key themes and ideas in relation to the literature review and research question. One of the similarities noted is that all three vignettes include the theme of punk philosophy - not wanting to be controlled by a corporation (Spencer, 2008). Beccy Owen remains DIY to keep her own sense of fluidity around her music, image and path (app.1, p.1); John Pointer does not want to give up playing the cello and beat boxing in his music, like labels suggest he does (app.1, p.16); and Emery wants to create music with religious themes, but be able to perform them in whichever venues they choose, not limiting themselves to religious venues (app.1, pp. 30-31). This is important in understanding and answering one of the research questions: what is the motivation behind DIY artists partaking in DIY practices?

The participating DIY artists feel that being signed to a record label would result in loss of control and an alteration of them as an artist to suit an ideal or trend. Pointer goes on to say that he recognises he was always likely to "fall

outside of a system that would be able to market [him] to millions of people.” And he believes the fundamental weakness of the industry is that it only knows how to market what it’s already sold; and leaves little no space for innovation and artists who fall outside of these trends (app.1, p.9). It can also be noted that both Owen and Pointer noted that their DIY practices emerged out of necessity; falling outwith the trends and expectations of record labels meant that they had no choice but to partake in DIY practices to pursue their music career.

Owen noted that she either had to do it herself or it wouldn’t get done (app.1, p.1), and that philosophy has followed with her. It is clear from the research that DIY artists partake in DIY practices out of necessity and wanting to retain control of their image, music and career, which is mirrored by the ideas presented by Spencer (2008) regarding the punk era and their desire to break away from the increasingly profit-driven and manipulative music industries.

Another common theme that arose from the research was the necessity of community building in DIY artists building a sustainable career. Pointer believes artists require a community to sustain them, not only financially but also morally (app.1, p.11). This view is echoed by both Owen and Morrell; Owen felt support from her community when it came to the daunting task of releasing her first album in several years (app.1, p.1), and Morrell states that communities are important as the music industries can be intimidating and the support of a community is invaluable (app.1, p.28).

DIY artists also appear to rely on the support of their communities financially. Crowdfunding is becoming common ground among DIY artists as a way of obtaining the funds to produce and release an album. Unlike an artist signed to a record label, who would receive a repayable advance to produce their album (Albini 1993), DIY artists are required to fund the entire process themselves.

The internet has allowed DIY artists the opportunity to ask for an advance from fans in return for certain perks. A form of entrepreneurial bricolage, in which something is generated from nothing (Levi-Strauss, 1966), all interviewed participants had directly used a form of crowdfunding to fund the recording and release of an album, thus showing crowdfunding is becoming commonplace within the music industries and that it supports the DIY artist.

Crowdfunding also offers the moral support, with Morrell noting that it is inspiring to know that people are willing to pay money for music which they have not yet heard, purely because they believe in the artist (app.1, p.31). In reference to the research question, this shows that the Internet and web 2.0 have helped the DIY artist by offering an interactive space that nurtures the community building process and community relations (Holmes and Greenhill and McLean, 2014). In turn, this allow the artist to build a support network as well as allowing them the opportunity to raise funds to record and release music, something which is fundamental in building a sustainable career as a DIY artist.

As originally suggested in the literature review by Tozzi (2007), the research supported the idea that new models of crowdfunding are emerging and being developed. The participants are moulding crowdfunding to suit their needs and vision. For example, while Owen uses what would be described as ‘traditional crowdfunding’ (patrons are given rewards or perks based on the amount of their donation), Pointer uses an alternative form of crowdfunding, a subscription model, in which patrons subscribe, and no matter what their monthly payment is they receive access to the locked content, with no physical rewards on offer.

Morrell and Bad Christian are situated somewhere in the middle of this, utilising a hybrid model, which features the traditional incentive ladder for physical rewards being tied into a subscription model giving access to the entire BC music catalogue, and can be seen in the Venn diagram in figure 1. This is another important piece of information in answering the research question; the Internet and web 2.0 allow DIY artists the freedom, space and ability to develop and test new business models to sustain themselves. This involves creativity, critical-thinking and flexibility, all of which entrepreneurial bricolage offers (Winkel, 2013).

DIY artists can now test different models of generating income to determine which best suits their needs, requirements and vision as an artist. John Pointer presented the vision of a DIY artist aiming to bring people together and move away from a transactional relationship with his fans, and so developed a new crowdfunding



model Patronism to suit this.

Meanwhile, Beccy Owen had a vision to create an album, a one-off project, as well as building community spirit around that specific project and so the traditional model of crowdfunding worked best for her. This development and adjustment of crowdfunding models is important for the sustainability of DIY artists, as no one solution and model works for every artist.

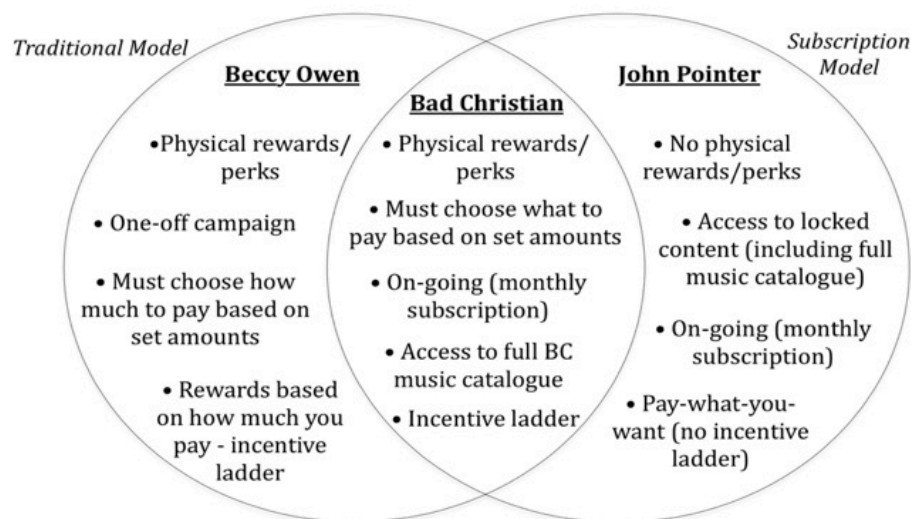


Figure 1 – Crowdfunding models based on vignettes from primary research

These new models are important in understanding the future of the DIY artist and communities. Independent record label Bad Christian are utilising a new model based on the idea of a record label. Bad Christian is ultimately a community of practice in that they are a group of likeminded people who share a common concern or passion and work together to share knowledge and expertise (Wenger, 2002).

Acting under the guise of an independent label, the community of bands and artists work together on music and support each other's crowdfunding ventures, while offering fans of the label the opportunity to subscribe to the label, giving them access to the label's entire music catalogue. The idea of being able to subscribe to an individual record label is a relatively new one (Richmond, 2012), and online service Drip offers artists, record labels and fans the opportunity to do just that. Drip is a community of independent artists, record labels, and audiences who support their work directly and was acquired by crowdfunding site Kickstarter in 2016 (Russell, 2016).

Drip states that "artists on Drip enjoy closer connections to the fans who help sustain their work. And fans enjoy early access to new releases, rare tracks, unique experiences, visual art, exclusive video, writing, and beyond" (Strickler, 2016). Artists, record labels and collectives can sign up to Drip and give their fans the opportunity to pay a monthly subscription fee to gain access to all their content. This is like the model used by John Pointer, who aims to develop the relationship between artist and fan, rather than generating funding for a one-off project. This move into subscription-based models could represent the future of DIY artists and music-based COP's, allowing for a consistent monthly income which will help DIY artists and collectives to sustain themselves.

Pointer explored the idea of a transition from a transactional economy to a relational economy (app.1, p.18) in music and it appears that Drip provides a space for this transition. With Drip and Pointer's Patronism there is no direct trade-off of money for "thing", the economy centres on the artist-fan relationship.

As explored in the literature review, some artists have been using co-creation and USG as a means of building and developing the artist- fan relationship. Ultimately crowdfunding is one way of artist's giving fans some control (Gamble and Gilmore, 2013), and about figure one, crowdfunding rates as high consumer involvement and medium-high consumer control (ibid.). There are also some signs of artists mixing the new crowdfunding models with the idea of co-creation: on his Drip profile, ambient musician Christopher Willits states that subscribing to him will allow fans the opportunity to "participate in remixes and other special projects". This shows progression from the model adopted by Pointer, with Willits offering a co-creative relationship in exchange for subscription, which will ultimately develop a closer relationship between Willits and his fans, allowing them some control and involvement in a creative venture.

## **5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

In conclusion, it can be drawn from the research that many DIY artists partake in practices out of necessity and the desire to retain full control of their artistry, music and career path. Emerging niche artists such as Beccy Owen, John Pointer and Emery do not wish to compromise their artistry or music to be commercially successful through a major record label, and so have decided to complete the many roles of running a record label independently. As DIY artists, this relies heavily on building communities of practice to help sustain their career and it is apparent that the internet and web 2.0 have immeasurably impacted the way in which these online communities are built and maintained.

Web 2.0 offers collaborative space that nurtures co-creation, allowing for a more intimate artist-fan relationship. This relationship is ultimately what will sustain the DIY artist in this new relational economy. Within this new economy, crowdfunding appears to be one of the major ways the internet has helped DIY artists build sustainable careers and, therefore, new business models are being developed to suit the needs of individual artists.

## **5.1 Implications**

As the music industries continue to grow, economically and culturally, through the continued expansion, democratisation and commercialisation of creative content on digital platforms such as social media, specifically crowdfunding platforms; it is becoming more difficult for DIY artists and entrepreneurs to have a voice. However, it is apparent that the DIY artist is thriving at the hands of web 2.0 and crowdfunding, and subscription models are becoming more and more common. The near future will bring about developments and innovation as a new kind of DIY music scene undoubtedly emerges, with an important integration of these new technologies, from being transactional to being more relational.

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