2006

Users and the Marketing Efficacy of MP3 Music Blogs

Patrick W. O’Donnell
THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION

USERS AND THE MARKETING EFFICACY OF MP3 MUSIC BLOGS

By

PATRICK W. O’DONNELL

A Thesis submitted to the Department of Communication in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

Degree Awarded:
Spring Semester, 2006

Copyright © 2006
Patrick W. O’Donnell
All Rights Reserved
The members of the Committee approve the thesis of Patrick W. O’Donnell on April 3, 2006.

___________________________
Steven McClung
Professor Directing Thesis

___________________________
Jay Rayburn
Committee Member

___________________________
Philip Grise
Committee Member

Approved:

___________________________
Stephen McDowell, Chair, Department of Communication

___________________________
John Mayo, Dean, College of Communication

The Office of Graduate Studies has verified and approved the above name committee members.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables........................................................................................................IV
Acknowledgements...............................................................................................V
Abstract..................................................................................................................VI

INTRODUCTION.....................................................................................................1

1. LITERATURE REVIEW.........................................................................................2
   Blogs.........................................................................................................................2
   Online Music...........................................................................................................5
   MP3 Blogs..............................................................................................................6
   Scholarly Research.................................................................................................8
   Theoretical Constructs............................................................................................9
   Research Questions...............................................................................................12

2. METHODOLOGY.................................................................................................13

3. RESULTS.............................................................................................................15
   R1............................................................................................................................15
   R2............................................................................................................................15
   R3............................................................................................................................17
   In Their Own Words...............................................................................................20

4. DISCUSSION.......................................................................................................24
   Limitations.............................................................................................................27
   Future Research.....................................................................................................28

APPENDIX.............................................................................................................29
REFERENCES.........................................................................................................41
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.......................................................................................44
LIST OF TABLES

1. Factor Analysis of Reasons to Use Music Blogs.................................16
2.1-2.3 Regression 1.............................................................................18
3.1-3.3 Regression 2.............................................................................19
4.1-4.3 Regression 3.............................................................................20
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks are in order for Dr. Steven McClung. Without his help and guidance this thesis would have never been finished. His assistance in editing and statistical analysis was invaluable, but it was when he first introduced me to music blogs that led to the genesis of the idea for this thesis and subsequently wasting hours filling up my computer with new music.
ABSTRACT

This paper examined the users and marketing efficacy of MP3 music blogs. MP3 blogs are a specific type of blog that feature posts about musicians and have sample MP3s available for download. This study found that artists looking to gain access to an early adopter and non-mainstream music audience might find some success approaching blogs as a promotional tool with the hopes that blog chatter would influence a larger, more mainstream music audience, but would not likely generate sales within the core readership by simply making songs available for download. A factor analysis identified four uses for music blogs: free music, learn about a band, be in on the buzz, and library building. Qualitative data added a fifth use, being a part of the blog culture and community. Regression demonstrated that using blogs for the purpose of obtaining free music negatively affected album purchases.
INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1990s, the Internet and World Wide Web have led to the growth and dissemination of many new ideas and technologies. Two of these innovations that have independently become popular since the release of the Web are MP3s and weblogs. MP3s, which first gained popularity in 1998, are compressed sound files that are most often associated with music and are easily downloadable to play on a computer or MP3 player. Weblogs, or blogs as they are more commonly known, are a type of website that contains periodic user posts, or diary-like entries. Two-thousand and four is widely considered the year of the blog because of the role they played in major news events and the increase in their numbers. Although there are many different types of blogs, blogs that combine the traditional diary/commentary format paired with MP3s are becoming more and more popular.

Online music has been a popular and well-publicized part of the World Wide Web. Since the creation of Napster in 1999, a peer-to-peer file sharing program that allowed users to download songs from other users in, which at its peak attracted over 20 million users (Ante, 2000), to the eventual lawsuit from the Recording Industry Association of America which led to its demise, online music has been a controversial issue. The RIAA has blamed illegal downloads for hurting music sales, and industry numbers do support this claim. From 1994 until 1999 compact disc and CD single sales regularly increased annually, but since 2000 there have been dramatic decreases in the number of CD singles and negative changes in the sale of CDs as well (RIAA.com, 2004).

MP3 blogs approach online music sharing very differently than Napster and the other free services that followed. The blogs often contain music from new artists or hard-to-find songs from the past, and encourage users to purchase albums if they like what they hear. These blogs tow the legality line, but also offer unique marketing chances for musicians and their record companies.
Blogs:

Herring, Scheidt, Bonus and Wright (2004, p.1), have offered one definition of blogs as “frequently modified web pages in which dated entries are listed in reverse, chronological sequence.” This definition though does leave out some of the key components found in other definitions. The Oxford English Dictionary, which added blog in 2003, has a much more specific definition: “a frequently updated Web site consisting of personal observations, excerpts from other sources, etc., typically run by a single person and usually with hyperlinks to other sites: an online journal or diary.” Together the two definitions do provide the major components of a blog: a website, regularly updated, with links to other sites.

Blogs are not restricted to having a single author; many blogs are written by a group of contributors. Although a random sample of blogs from 2004 found that about 90 percent of blogs had a single author (Herring, et al., 2004). A person who runs or writes for a blog is known as a “blogger.” Blogs can also cover any content area, and are not restricted to being personal diaries, although the majority (70%) are journals where authors discuss inner thoughts and feelings (Herring et al., 2004). The most visited blogs though deal with politics and the news, followed by hipster and tech blogs (Comscore, 2005).

Blogs are maintained by using web applications such as Blogger, which was purchased by Internet giant Google in 2004, and LiveJournal (Herring et al., 2004). These free applications are designed to simplify posting articles and have made blogging available to anyone who has access to a computer. In fact, blog hosting sites have become very popular with some receiving more visitors than traditional newspaper websites (Comscore, 2005). The community of bloggers and blog readers is known as the “blogosphere.”

Although some claim that the first blog can be attributed to the first website set up by Tim Berners-Lee in 1991, the term “weblog” can be traced back to 1997 when Jorn Barger created the term (Perlmutter and McDaniel, 2005). The Drudge Report, which
premiered that same year, mixed politics and gossip to become one of the earliest and most influential blogs (Baker, 2004). In 1999 the number of blogs began to rise exponentially when Pitas lab introduced Blogger, the free easy-to-use software used to create and maintain blogs.

It was not until 2001 that blogs really began the push towards world wide importance, specifically in the political arena in the United States. Following the September 11 attacks, blogs that supported the “War on Terrorism” began to develop larger readership (Seipp, 2002). Then in 2002 bloggers are credited with putting pressure on Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott for making racially insensitive comments, which eventually led to his resignation.

The 2004 Presidential campaign repeatedly demonstrated how important and ubiquitous blogs had become. Democratic candidates Howard Dean and Wesley Clark both used blogs to gain supporters and donations. Dean’s blog was regularly cited by reporters. Subsequently, 35 bloggers were credentialed as journalists for the Democratic National Convention (Baker, 2004).

The “Rathergate” scandal was also the result of blog activity. After a “60 Minutes II” episode where Dan Rather showed reports questioning President Bush’s military record, bloggers launched their own investigation which spread to the traditional media and led to Rather retracting the story and eventually resigning (Perlmutter and McDaniel, 2005).

Two-thousand and four is often considered to be the year of the blog. Bloggers began to be featured on television shows and there was regular blog coverage in the *Columbia Journalism Review* and *Newsweek*. Webster’s dictionary named “blog” the word of the year (Rigby, 2005) and Fortune magazine named blogging as one of the Top 10 Tech Trends (Lang, 2005).

With the visibility of blogs growing steadily the number of blogs and blog users has also dramatically increased. A report from August 2005 indicates that in the first quarter of 2005, 50 million Internet users visited blogs, roughly 30% of Internet users in U.S. (Comscore, 2005). A report from the Pew Internet and American Life Project released in early 2005 showed that as of November 2004, 32 million U.S. Internet users read blogs, a number that was 58% higher than numbers found during February of that
The number of blogs has also increased dramatically. A report from Technorati (2005), a blog search engine and tracker, found that in between March 2003 and June 2005 the number of blogs it tracked doubled almost every five months. By July, 2005 the site was tracking 14 million blogs. Technorati also found that as of July 2005 about 80,000 blogs were being created daily, resulting in about one every second. Further, more than one-half these blogs are still being posted on three months later (Technorati.com, 2005).

Demographic information on bloggers and blog visitors shed some more light on “the blogosphere.” Bloggers are likely to be male (57%), young (48% are under 30) and be veteran Internet users (82% have been online for six years or more.) Bloggers also tend to be well educated (39% have college or graduate degrees) and be well off financially, with almost one-half (42%) living in households that earn over $50,000 (Rainie, 2005). Blog visitors share many of the same characteristics, although more women and minorities are beginning to become regular visitors. Although blog visitors have demographics more similar to the Internet population than bloggers, there are some significant differences: blog visitors are 11% more likely to have incomes of $75,000 or more, are 30% more likely to live in households where the head is 18-34, and 11% more likely to be using a broadband connection (Comscore.com, 2005). These demographic characteristics make bloggers and blog readers a very attractive advertising and marketing audience.

Recently, marketers have discovered that blogs may be an important tool for getting out their message or advertising their products. In a much publicized campaign, Nike posted a blog, “Art of Speed,” on gawker.com in mid-2004. Nike was attempting to tap into gawker’s readership which was estimated to be 500,000 visitors a month, hoping to “gain access to the influential, early adopter crowd.” (Oser, 2004b). Other companies, from huge corporations such as Sharp, to small local businesses have started blogs hoping to attract customers (Trigaux, 2005).
Marketers have not only started to create blogs, but some have also begun to use blogs as a way of creating buzz for their products. Proctor & Gamble realized that auto enthusiasts were trading notes about products on auto blogs. To take advantage of the potential product placement, Proctor & Gamble introduced a new product to bloggers asking for their honest opinions. Most of the reviews were positive and led to a major increase of product awareness (Oser, 2004a). Similarly, messages posted from Microsoft software designers on Channel 9, the Microsoft Corporation blog, recently found the target audience of software developers has developed better attitudes towards the company (Oser, 2004a).

**Online Music:**

The emergence of the MP3 marked the beginnings of online music. MP3, which is short for Moving Picture Experts Group, Audio Layer III, is a compression format that shrinks audio files while only sacrificing a small part of the sound quality. The standard compression for an MP3 is 10:1, which makes a sound file small enough to be easily downloaded or attached to an email (Jones, 2000).

The MP3 was first developed in the mid-1980s at the Fraunhofer Institute in Erlangen, Germany. In 1989 Fraunhofer was given a patent for the MP3 in Germany, and later submitted it to the International Standards Organization. It was not until 1998 though, with the invention and spread of Winamp, an MP3 player that could be downloaded for free and used to play MP3s over a computer, that MP3s became a widely used technology (Jones, 2000).

In May of 1999, college dropout Shawn Fanning released Napster, a peer-to-peer file sharing network that allowed users to download MP3s from other Napster users. The program used central servers that indexed the songs users had on their computers and was downloaded for free. Within months of its release, Napster was rapidly spreading in popularity, especially at college campuses. At its peak, Napster had more than 20 million users (Ante, 2000). But by December 1999, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) had sued Napster for copyright infringement. In April 2000, Metallica, a popular heavy-metal group, sued Napster for allowing users to trade Metallica songs on its servers (Zeller, 2005). Although Napster was able to stay solvent through legal
wrangling, by February 2001 a federal judge ordered Napster to stop sharing copyrighted music.

With the absence of Napster, a host of file-sharing programs popped up, the most popular being Morpheus, KaZaA, and Grokster. These peer-to-peer services were different from Napster because they did not have central indexes (Zeller, 2005). This software remained very popular, in May 2003 more than 43 million Americans, half of Internet users, used free file-sharing software. In June of that year KaZaA had been downloaded over 270 million times (Harmon, 2003).

The RIAA continued to put pressure on these companies to stop aiding in copyright infringement, and in September 2003 brought lawsuits against hundreds of individuals who used peer-to-peer file sharing software. Eventually the RIAA won the suits forcing the “new Napsters” to shut down, ending with a Supreme Court ruling in 2005 that companies such as Grokster and StreamCast could be held responsible for encouraging users to illegally trade copyrighted content, allowing the recording industry to pursue damages (Zeller, 2005).

Peer-to-peer networks are still popular, but have lost many of the users from their heyday; an estimated 9.2 million people still use such software (Leeds, 2005). Some of this decrease may because of the rise in popularity of legal downloading services. In October 2003 Napster re-launched as a paid service. Apple, which launched the iTunes Music Store in 2003, has sold more than 500 million songs for $0.99 since its launch (Graham, 2005). This total number of legal downloads though, still makes up only a fraction of the total number of downloads.

**MP3 Blogs:**

Most MP3 blogs follow a similar format; a band, artist or song is introduced with a paragraph or two detailing some biographical or background information. A description of the music, often with comparisons to similar sounding bands, followed by a link to download a few songs in MP3 format from that artist often follows. There are usually photographs of the band and links to their website or an online retailer to buy an album (Wolk, 2005).
MP3 blogs rarely feature music found at the top of the popular charts. Instead, the blogs showcase independent bands or obscure hard-to-find songs from the past. Many of the most popular MP3 blogs focus on up-and-coming bands in the “indie” music scene. The term indie, short for independent, was first heard in latter part of the 1980’s as “a nod to the importance of independent labels” (Aaron, 2005). The five biggest record companies- Universal, Sony, EMI, Warner, and BMG- account for more than 70% of world-wide music sales, other record labels are classified as independent (Zentner, 2003). Independent bands such as the Arcade Fire, the Fiery Furnaces, Franz Ferdinand and M.I.A. have all benefited from web chatter. Other sites dedicated to hip-hop, jazz, funk, blues and classical music have also begun to pop-up on the Web (Pasick, 2004).

Although it is difficult to say when the first MP3 blog was created, some of the earliest were started in 2002, with Fluxblog which was started that year, being cited as one of the first and most influential (Alden, 2005). The number of MP3 blogs has grown greatly since then. Although the number is difficult to pinpoint, Elbows, a MP3 blog dashboard, links to more than 600 different blogs encompassing various languages and musical genres (elbo.ws, 2005).

The number of visitors that MP3 blogs receive is not well known, but some of the most popular of the blogs claim they receive between four and five thousand visitors a day (Wolk, 2005). But part of the culture of these blogs is that they are updated regularly, some posting multiple times a day, and most only leave songs online for a limited period of time which encourages users to visit regularly.

One issue that has yet to be resolved with these types of blogs is their legality, which some have called a grey area (Alden, 2005). In some cases the songs available for download are legal and provided by record companies to the bloggers hoping to they will spread the message about a given band. In other instances though, bloggers post songs that violate copyright laws. These bloggers seem to be working under the idea that it is easier to ask for forgiveness than permission (Wolk, 2005).

As of early 2006, neither the record companies nor the RIAA have focused their attention on prosecuting bloggers and none have been sued. The only legal action has come from the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) against the blog Moistworks. The blog was sent a cease-and-desist order after it posted songs by
Public Enemy and the Stone Roses and immediately took them down. Although the IPFI notes that posting an MP3 is illegal, the music industry has focused its time fighting large file sharing networks, similar to Napster, that circulate large catalogs of music to millions of users (Wolk, 2005).

Part of the culture of MP3 blogs is that the bloggers, who often run the sites by themselves because they love music and for no financial gain, want to share music with their readers, but not take away income sources from the bands. Many of the blogs have disclaimers saying that if the owner of an MP3 would like it taken down to contact the site and it can be removed easily. These disclaimers also note that the MP3s posted are for sampling purposes only, and encourage visitors to buy the album if they like the songs they hear.

MP3 bloggers also pride themselves on finding new music and only making a few songs available for download. When one site recently posted multiple songs from an upcoming album from a well-known band, other blogs criticized that site harshly for breaking a sort of social contract (Wolk, 2005). For most MP3 blogs, songs are only available for download for a limited time, usually 7 to 10 days. This gives the blogs a greater level of protection from possible litigation, but also functions to cut back on bandwidth used by each MP3 (Alden, 2005).

Some record labels and artists have started to see the positive aspects of their songs being posted on these blogs and bloggers. They realize that they are getting honest feedback from people who are passionate about music, buy records and talk to their friends about what they like (Canadian Press, 2005). Bloggers have begun to receive exclusive songs or albums from artists hoping to get mentioned on their sites. Bloggers rarely feature music from bands and write negative reviews, so when an artist or song is featured it generally leads to positive exposure (Alden, 2005).

**Scholarly Research:**

Little scholarly research has been completed regarding either online music or blogs. Using a large European cross-sample from 2001, Zentner (2003) found that using file-sharing reduces the probability of purchasing music by 30%, and that number was higher for downloaders using broadband connections.
Bhattacharjee et al., (2002) examined models to enhance revenues from online sales, and found that strategies to enhance revenue did not necessarily have to include strategies to eliminate online music piracy. They concluded that the two were separate. They proposed finding alternative pricing and providing special services to improve online sales.

A survey by McGuire and Slater (2005) of self-described early adopters of digital media, showed that the ability to share and sample music along with others’ recommendations is an important factor in purchased music. One-tenth of those surveyed said they bought music based on recommendations, including information found in MP3 blogs or playlists. A paper predicts that by 2010, “25 percent of online music store transactions will be driven directly from consumer-to-consumer taste-sharing applications (McGuire and Slater, 2005, p.1).” The authors note that music labels should find ways to harness this power for their own promotional strategies.

**Theoretical Constructs:**

Diffusion of Innovation explains the process of how a new innovation is diffused through certain channels over time to members of a social system (Rogers, p.11). With Diffusion of Innovation, the innovation, which can be an idea, practice, or object, is spread among a group of people along an S-shaped curve. In the case of MP3 blogs, MP3 blogs are the innovation and the social system includes anyone who has access to the World Wide Web, but more specifically Internet users who are music fans and download music that represent a sub-curve of Internet users.

Along the “S-shaped” curve, each innovation has its own rate of adoption, but as the innovation progresses through time and is adopted by more users, adopters are classified into one of five adopter categories depending on when they adopt the innovation. The five categories of adopters are innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards (Rogers, p. 280). Once an innovation has moved along the curve far enough and been adopted by enough users it reaches critical mass, “which occurs at the point which enough individuals have adopted an innovation that the innovation’s further rate of adoption becomes self-sustaining” (Rogers, p.343).
MP3 blogs are an innovation that is dependent on the adoption of other innovations in order for them to be accessible. The first of these innovations is the Internet. All blogs can only be accessed through the Internet, which makes them an innovation within an innovation, and they are diffused along a sub-curve. The World Wide Web, which became available to the public in the mid-1990’s, and is now used by more than two-thirds of the American adult population (Rainie, 2005 A) has clearly reached a point where it has reached critical mass. MP3 blogs also rely on the adoption of MP3 players, including software such as Winamp and iTunes, but also portable players like the iPod. Since the release of Winamp in 1998, MP3 players have become ubiquitous among computer users.

MP3 blogs make up a very small subset of the total number of blogs on the World Wide Web. As a whole, blogs have also likely reached the point of critical mass. Although some Internet users may not be aware of blogs, the sheer number of blogs and their rapid growth rate indicates that blogs will become a common part of the Internet landscape and will continue to grow in importance. Advertising dollars spent on blogs supports this idea; currently advertising on blogs makes up around 2% of online ad budgets, but the number of dollars spent is expected to grow by 43% (Loechner, 2006). MP3 blogs though, have only begun their ascent up the curve and are likely still in the innovator or early adopter stages. With the most popular of these sites only getting a few thousand hits a day, they have a far way to go before a large portion of Internet users are reading or creating their own MP3 blogs.

With Diffusion of Innovations there are characteristics that are applied to early adopters. Assuming that MP3 blogs are still in the early adoption stage then these characteristics should be applicable to them as well. Rogers states that early adopters have more formal education, a greater degree of upward social mobility, and more intelligence than later adopters. Also they have more social participation, are highly connected through interpersonal networks and have great knowledge of innovations (Rogers, p.290). A Pew Internet survey from early 2005 found that bloggers did have many of these characteristics (Rainie, 2005a). This also makes this audience very attractive to marketers.
Diffusion also addresses the idea that if interpersonal networks that would diffuse an innovation are too similar, or homophilous, they can slow the rate of diffusion (Rogers, p.307). In the case of MP3 blogs the type of music that is usually featured only appeals to a small segment of the online music audience. It is possible that the content of MP3 blogs will not appeal to the mass audience and will not encourage many new users.

The uses and gratifications (U&G) approach developed as an alternative model to view media use; whereas early researchers often tried to find what effects media had on its audience, uses and gratifications looks at what the audience does with the medium. As described by Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, uses and gratifications researchers “are concerned with: (1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones.” (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1973, p. 510).

Uses and gratifications researchers assume that audience members choose media actively with the goal of satisfying certain psychological or social needs, as opposed to earlier beliefs that the a passive audience simply received media messages. Uses and gratifications approach does assume that (1) the audience is active and goal directed, (2) the audience member takes the initiative of linking need gratification and media choice, (3) there are multiple sources for needs gratification and media competes with itself and other non-mass communication alternatives to satisfy needs, (4) audience members can self-report their goals in using the media, and (5) gratification obtained have their roots in the media content, exposure to media, and the social situation in which exposure takes place (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1973; Rayburn, 1996).

Traditionally uses and gratifications research was applied to mass media, in particular television use, but much research in the past years has been using U&G to study Internet use. Combining the two makes sense; the amount of information available on the web allows for the fulfillment of multiples needs, and the two-way nature of many Internet technologies such as email, chat rooms and bulletin boards forces the user to be active (Kaye and Johnson, 2002). Multiple uses for the Internet have been described in past research. Stafford, Stafford and Schkade (2004) identified social gratification,
learning and information as well as entertainment as uses of the Internet. In their study of political websites Kaye and Johnson (2002) added guidance, surveillance and social utility. McClung (2001), in a study of college radio websites, found entertainment and social integration as main uses for media-based Web sites. LaRose and Eastin (2004) identified habit and social status as being important factors in Internet usage.

Stafford (2003) combined U&G with diffusion theory and found some key differences in how different adopter groups used the Internet. Innovators had much higher social gratification than did laggards and appeared to be highly motivated by social needs. Innovators also had higher content gratification than laggards.

**Research Questions:**

Since the spread of the World Wide Web in the early 1990’s there has been an explosion of new innovations. Two of these innovation, weblogs and online music in the form of MP3s, have each grown in importance and popularity. The combination of these two innovations has created a new and exciting niche market on the Web. This study will examine the efficacy of blogs and online music as a marketing tool, and will approach the technology by asking three broad research questions.

**R1** - Who uses MP3 blogs?

**R2** – What are the uses of MP3 blogs?

**R3** - What are their possible marketing uses?
CHAPTER 2
METHODOLOGY

In order to collect data, an online survey was developed. The survey attempted to answer a number of questions stemming from the research questions. The first of these is who are individuals using MP3 blogs. Demographic questions were asked to help answer this question. A series of demographic questions provide some basic information on the blog users, but also provide information as to whether or not the bloggers and users fit the description of early adopters provided by Rogers in *Diffusion of Innovations*.

The second set of questions asks why users patronize the sites. This question will be answered by using a battery of questions focusing on five possible reasons for using blogs: convenience, cost or economics, curiosity, music-library building and being involved in the culture and community of blogs. This set of questions was based on two past surveys on uses and gratifications developed by Rubin (1983) and Rubin and Bantz (1987).

The third research area examines the usage of MP3 blogs. How often are they checked and how many songs are downloaded. It also looks at how that usage affects music purchases. Another set of questions looks at the use of advertising on MP3 blogs. Is the advertising successful and where do the users see similar ads? A final set of questions looks at the culture surrounding blogs and indie, or independent, music. Many indie music fans have disdain for popular music, and relish listening to music that only a select few know about. The answers also help shed light on whether blogs that feature mostly independent music will be able to grow to a larger audience without alienating the original audience.

It was decided that the best way to collect information from MP3 blog users would be to post links to the survey on multiple MP3 blogs. This served to ensure that only readers of MP3 blogs would take the survey, as opposed to a larger Internet population that would likely not read MP3 blogs. To boost response rates an incentive that one respondent would win a $50 iTunes gift card was added. This is an incentive that most of the desired population would find attractive.
A series of emails were sent to MP3 bloggers introducing the study and requesting the blogger place a button with a link to the survey on their site or mention and provide a link to the survey in a post. The list of blogs was developed from a list of links found on the MP3 blog My Old Kentucky Blog (http://myoldkyhome.blogspot.com), chosen for its extensive, unbiased and regularly updated list. The only criteria for a blog to be sent a request was that it posted MP3 files available for download and an email address for the blogger or the blog could be identified. Sixty-five usable blogs were identified, which included a wide range of musical genres and multiple countries of origin. In total, three rounds of emails requesting assistance were sent to the sixty-five blogs, with 9 posting some sort of link to the survey. The following blogs participated (see Appendix C for sample pages):

- You Ain’t No Picasso  
  [http://youaintnopicasso.blogspot.com/](http://youaintnopicasso.blogspot.com/)
- Muzzle of Bees  
- An Aquarium Drunkard  
  [http://aquariumdrunk.blogspot.com/](http://aquariumdrunk.blogspot.com/)
- Bows + Arrows  
  [http://bowsplusarrows.blogspot.com/](http://bowsplusarrows.blogspot.com/)
- My Ex-Best Friend  
  [http://myexbestfriend.blogspot.com/](http://myexbestfriend.blogspot.com/)
- Come Pick Me Up  
- But She’s On Fire  
  [http://bsof.blogspot.com/](http://bsof.blogspot.com/)
- I Am Fuel, You Are Friends  
  [http://fuelfriends.blogspot.com/](http://fuelfriends.blogspot.com/)
- TMWSIY  

The first set of emails was sent out on February 1, 2006 and the survey was available online until March 13, 2006. In total 250, unique, completed usable surveys were submitted.
R1 - Who uses MP3 blogs?

Of the 250 MP3 blog users surveyed, 60% were male, and more than 8 out of 10 (82.4%) were between the ages of 18-34, although 8% fell between the ages of 35-40. Blog readers also tend to be well educated, more than one-half (58.4%) have completed some college or have a Bachelor’s degree, and 13.2% have a Master’s degree. The vast majority (80%) of the blog users identified themselves as Caucasian.

The respondents also showed that their musical tastes, although slightly outside the mainstream, are not completely averse to mainstream music or artists signed to major labels. On a five point Likert scale (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree) respondents slightly disagreed (M=2.72, SD=1.00) with the statement “It is important that a band is on an independent label.” There was slight agreement (M=3.50, SD=1.173) with the statement “I dislike most mainstream music” and similar numbers (M=3.41, SD=1.186) with the statement “Mainstream music is not as good as independent music.”

R2 – What are the uses of MP3 blogs?

A series of 15 quantitative questions were asked on a seven point Likert-type scale about why the respondents read and downloaded songs from MP3 blogs. A factor analysis revealed four reasons as to why an individual would use an MP3 blog: save money/free music, learn about new music, be in on the buzz, and library building. For a question to be included in a factor, the minimum factor loading coefficient was set at 0.6. The four factors explained 67.2% of variance, with factor number 1, “Save money,” explaining 32.6% of variance with an Eigenvalue of 4.886. Table 1 displays the factor analysis.
Table 1: Factor analysis of reasons to use music blogs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Component 1</th>
<th>Component 2</th>
<th>Component 3</th>
<th>Component 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can learn about a band and listen to their music simultaneously.</td>
<td>-.137</td>
<td>.706</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is an easy way to hear new music.</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>.816</td>
<td>.156</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can quickly download songs.</td>
<td>.538</td>
<td>.544</td>
<td>.195</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can hear a band without purchasing their album.</td>
<td>.741</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td>.088</td>
<td>.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can save money by getting the songs for free.</td>
<td>.874</td>
<td>-.110</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can get music at no cost to me.</td>
<td>.854</td>
<td>-.109</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to listen to bands other people are talking about.</td>
<td>.300</td>
<td>.214</td>
<td>.762</td>
<td>-.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to know what bands are generating buzz.</td>
<td>.226</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>.858</td>
<td>-.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can hear music I've never heard before.</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.794</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a good way to build my music library.</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to download many different types of music.</td>
<td>.310</td>
<td>.439</td>
<td>-.031</td>
<td>.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to have as much music as possible.</td>
<td>.233</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>.807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to listen to bands that only a few people know about.</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.442</td>
<td>.623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to be a part of the music community.</td>
<td>-.119</td>
<td>.242</td>
<td>.611</td>
<td>.374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a good way to learn about bands before they become popular.</td>
<td>-.064</td>
<td>.198</td>
<td>.681</td>
<td>.455</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.
The first factor, “Save money,” which has a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.849, includes statements regarding getting music for free:

“I can hear a band without purchasing their album.”
“I can save money by getting the songs for free.”
“I can get music at not cost to me.”

The second factor, “Learn about new music,” accounts for 16.3% of variance, has an Eiganvalue of 2.446 and Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.759. Factor 2 includes statements about learning about and hearing music from bands previously unknown to the respondent:

“I can learn about a band and listen to their music simultaneously.”
“It is an easy way to hear new music.”
“I can hear music I’ve never heard before.”

“Be in on the buzz,” is the third factor that was identified. It accounts for 10.0% of variance, has an Eiganvalue of 1.504 and a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.804. It deals with statements that cover wanting to know what bands are currently popular among the bloggers, often before the bands become well-known or popular:

“I like to listen to bands other people are talking about.”
“I like to know what bands are generating buzz.”
“It is a good way to learn about bands before they become popular.”
“I like to be a part of the music community.”

The final factor, “Library building,” deals with the respondents wanting to develop a large catalog of music. It accounts for 8.3% of variance, has an Eiganvalue of 1.238 and a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.682:

“I want to have as much music as possible.”
“I want to have as much music as possible.”
“I like to listen to bands that only a few people know about.”

R3-What are their possible marketing uses?

MP3 blog readers are an active online group. The average respondent visits more than fourteen music blogs in a week (M=14.61, SD=13.62, range=83) and spend over five hours a week reading them (M=5.62, SD=5.195, range=40). This leads to the downloading of more than 27 songs a week (M=27.79, SD=40.600, range=399). A large majority of respondents (69.2%) said they did not download music from peer-to-peer file-
sharing networks such as Grokster and Limewire, using only music blogs or online music stores.

The respondents purchased more than five albums a month (M=5.12, SD=5.227) and attribute just more than one-half (M=2.75, SD=2.876) to purchases made because of songs downloaded from blogs. They also attend almost two (M=1.95, SD=2.272) concerts a month and spend almost $80.00 on music and music-related items, M=78.27, SD=75.213.

When respondents were asked where they got their information about music, the number one response was music blogs (99%), followed by music websites (86%), word of mouth (80%) and magazines (62%).

On a five point Likert scale (1 Never to 5 Always) MP3 blog users occasionally pay attention to the ads featured on blogs (M=2.37, SD=0.953) but are not likely to click on an ad (M=1.92, SD=0.854) and even less likely to make a purchase because of that ad, M=1.48, SD=0.712.

From the four factors that explain why respondents use MP3 blogs that were derived from the factor analysis, multiple regressions were run to see which factors were predictors of dependent variables. The first regression ($R^2=0.070$, adjusted $R^2=0.052$, $\beta=-0.251$, $F=0.004$) shows that the independent variable of “Free Music” is a predictor of purchasing less albums a month, as seen below in Tables 2.1-2.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Change Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.26$^a$</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>4.931</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ Predictors: (Constant), Factor 1 - Free Music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>392.354</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>98.088</td>
<td>4.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>5250.988</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>24.310</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5643.342</td>
<td>220</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ Predictors: (Constant), Factor 1 - Free Music

$^b$ Dependent Variable: How many albums do you regularly purchase in a month?
The second regression examines the dependent variable “How many albums do you regularly purchase in a month because of songs downloaded from blogs?” As seen below in Tables 3.1-3.3, using blogs for the purpose of downloading “Free music” is a predictor or purchasing less albums ($R^2 = 0.111$, $adj \ R^2 = 0.095$, $\beta = -0.305$, $F=0.000$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.131</td>
<td>2.274</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.257</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 1- Free Music</td>
<td>-.754</td>
<td>.224</td>
<td>-.251</td>
<td>-3.368</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: How many albums do you regularly purchase in a month?

Table 3.1 Model Summary for Regression 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>R Square Change</th>
<th>F Change</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.334</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>6.776</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Factor 1- Free Music

Table 3.2 AVOVA for Regression 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>199.426</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>49.857</td>
<td>6.776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>1589.323</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>7.358</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1788.749</td>
<td>220</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Factor 1- Free Music
b. Dependent Variable: How many albums do you regularly purchase in a month because of songs downloaded from blogs?
Table 3.3 Predictor for Albums Regularly Purchased Because of Downloads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>1.581</td>
<td>1.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 1 - Free Music</td>
<td>-0.518</td>
<td>.123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: How many albums do you regularly purchase in a month because of songs downloaded from blogs?

The third regression examined the variable “On average, how many songs do you download from music blogs in a week?” Using the blogs for the purpose of “Library Building” ($R^2=0.059$, adjusted $R^2=0.042$, $\beta=0.189$, $F=0.009$) is a predictor of downloading songs. See Tables 4.1-4.3 below.

Table 4.1 Model Summary for Regression 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Change Statistics</th>
<th>F Change</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.242</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>32.136</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>3.478</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Factor 4 - Library Building.

Table 4.2 AVOVA for Regression 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3591.844</td>
<td>3.478</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>230300.500</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>1032.738</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>244667.877</td>
<td>227</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Factor 4 - Library Building
b. Dependent Variable: On average, how many songs do you download from music blogs in a week?

Table 4.3 Predictor for Number of Songs Downloaded in a Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-10.118</td>
<td>14.708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor 4 - Library Building</td>
<td>4.127</td>
<td>1.751</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: On average, how many songs do you download from music blogs in a week?
In their own words:

To ensure that the survey did not inadvertently miss any information, two qualitative open-ended questions were placed towards the end of the survey. The first of these questions asked: “What do you like best about music blogs?” This question yielded answers that were classified into five different categories; information gathering/learn about new music, convenience, cost/free music, music-library building, and blog culture and community. Often one answer provided multiple themes that were counted in more than one category.

The most prevalent answer, with 121 responses, was that users enjoyed music blogs as a way to gather information, particularly to learn about new artists or music.

“Being able to hr (sic) a huge diversity of music, some of which you may love, some of which you may not. But just being exposed to all this music, especially from new although not necessarily ‘buzz’ bands is amazing.”

“Exposure for band I wouldn’t hear about otherwise—my interest in music was declining until I discovered them. They’ve proved an entirely new avenue for educating myself.”

“Chance to discover new music.”

“Introduction to music I wouldn’t otherwise hear.”

“How quickly they can spread the word about a new band, or a new record. It makes it much easier to find out about interesting music.”

The second most mentioned category, with 77 responses, dealt with the community of MP3 blogs and the culture that exists in that community. Respondents spoke about the voice of the writer and the individuality of the blogs.

“Music is posted that someone genuinely likes and wants to share.”

“Its like having a friend with the same tastes as you always letting you know about cool new bands daily and letting you listen to them. Each blog has its own personality and you get to know the writing styles of each one.”

“…music blogs are written by true music fans, writing about the things they are passionate about- for no other reason than to share something they love.”

“I like the community feel.”
“I like the fact that you get to hear about bands from “real” people, not a publicist or media source that is paid to slant their opinion a certain way.”

Convenience, with 27 mentions, was also a reason respondents said they liked music blogs. They allow readers to download what they want and are very easy to use.

“Freedom to choose and read what I want when I want.”

“Everything is easily accessible and very informative.”

“It’s the most convenient way of getting music.”

“They give you samples of the bands, so you can hear the bands as you read about them, rather than trying to imagine them.”

The fact that downloading music from blogs is done at no cost and allows the user to sample music without purchasing was another popular answer, with 24 mentions.

“As a college student, I don’t have a lot of disposable income, so this is a great way to find out if I should spend $15 on that new CD or if it’s not worth it.”

“Allows me to listen to a song for awhile which lets me determine whether I really like it enough to buy the album or if it’s just a passing phase.”

“Opportunity to hear a couple of songs from a new band without having to buy cd.”

Music-library building, or the chance to find rare music from artists was another category that emerged, with 25 mentions. The variety of music available also added to this category.

“The rare unreleased tracks, the live recordings…”

“Almost all the songs I download are from live shows, not easily accessible from other sources.”

“Discovering new bands or rarities from favourite bands.”

“I like the variety of music available.”

A second open-ended question gave the respondents one final chance to voice their opinions. The question, “Is there anything else you’d like to add?” received only a few substantial answers, but of those twelve respondents noted that for them
Downloading music, although possibly illegal, led to purchasing music or spending money to support the bands.

“I don’t just go to blogs to download free music. I go to test out music so that I can make an informed decision about buying.”

“If I download a song from a music blog, and I really like it, I’ll check out the band, and probably buy the CD. So even if it is a technically illegal download, eventually the artist/label gets paid when I buy the merchandise.”

“Finding new bands on mp3 blogs helps fuel my support/spending on music, it doesn’t make me spend less, just smarter.”

“As an independent musician I love the idea of MP3 blogs. There is a fine grey line between how these blogs are handled though by the public. If you use a blog to find new music I think they can be a great thing but if it’s just a way for people to avoid supporting an artist then it falls into damaging for the artist.”

“I do like the fact that most of the blogs encourage downloaders to support the artist by buying their cd and going to shows. I’m going to a show this week that I had never heard of before until I read about it on a blog and downloaded a couple songs.”

“Music blogs are addicting!”

“Because commercial radio is so uniform and vapid and uninteresting, it’s nearly impossible to discover something new by listening to the radio. With blogs I’m always finding out about music and developing attachments, expanding and refining my musical tastes.”
CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION

This study set out to learn about MP3 blog users, who they are and why they read and download from music blogs. It also examined how effective these blogs could be as a marketing tool to help musicians and their labels sell music.

In the past few years blogs have emerged as an important and exciting innovation on the World Wide Web. They have become the most effective way for an individual (or group of individuals) to make his or her thoughts heard around the world. No matter what the topic; it could be politics, social commentary, personal reflection or music, a blog gives anyone the chance to write about their passion. But unlike a website, or for that matter any type of printed publication, blogs can be run for little to no cost, and it is not necessary to have special skills or expensive computer software. Blogs make it possible for anyone to share their thoughts and find like-minded people who are interested in what they have to say.

MP3 blogs have become a way for hardcore music fans to share the music they love, as well as give new, unsigned or cutting edge artists a chance to have their music heard. They have attracted an audience that is diverse in many ways. Although most music blog readers are Caucasian and well educated, both men and women covering a wide age range are avid readers. The number one thing that MP3 blog readers have in common is that they are passionate about music.

There are a variety of reasons that individuals read music blogs, although it is most likely a combination of these factors that drive an individual to regularly visit them. The most popular reason is the chance to download free music. By visiting blogs and downloading songs music fans have the chance to hear music with no risk. If they like what they hear they can choose to find more songs to download or purchase an album. If they do not like what they hear they can simple delete the file from their hard drive and not worry about it again.

Other reasons individuals use blogs is to learn about new music, be in on the buzz and build their music library. All three of these reasons are rooted in the fact that
the individuals that are using music blogs genuinely love music, in many cases to the point of obsession. For these individuals there is a constant drive to find the next great band, know what others are listening to and amass as much music as possible. The individuals that read blogs download a large amount of songs, purchase a lot of records and go to concerts. They are not satisfied to learn about bands by simply listening to the radio or watching MTV, they take the initiative to find the music they crave, and once they discover music blogs they become the primary method of fulfilling those needs.

A final reason for visiting blogs, which was not evident in the factor analysis but became clear through qualitative responses, was the chance to be a part of the culture and community of the blogs. One of the core features of any blog is that there are links to other websites, and music blogs are no exception. MP3 blogs regularly cross-reference and link to each other by sharing MP3s, mentioning who has what new song available or congratulating each other on having an interesting post. There is truly an online community of music bloggers, and regular blog users feel like they become a part of that community.

Regularly reading a blog also helps discover the voice of the blogger. Readers not only learn about the musical taste of the blogger, but often learn about the writer’s life. The blogger is not simply a faceless reporter providing information, but individual sharing opinions, making suggestions and revealing tidbits about his or her life. Respondents noted that getting information from a favorite blog was like getting information from a trusted friend.

The combination of several factors makes the current readers of music blogs an attractive target audience to musicians, record labels and marketers trying to sell music. The blog readers actively seek out new music and are willing to spend money to support the artists whose music they enjoy. But, simply because blog readers love music, does not also mean that they are going to run out and buy everything they hear. It seems that these individuals enjoy getting music for free just as much as anyone else, and MP3 blogs may be their preferred method of obtaining it.

Regressions were run from factors developed through a series of questions about why individuals used music blogs, and this data shows that music blogs are not a very strong marketing tool. For both regression one and two, the only factor that emerged as a
significant predictor to the questions “How many albums do you regularly purchase in a month?” and “How many albums do you regularly purchase in a month because of songs downloaded from blogs?” was “Free Music.” In both cases though, reading blogs for the purpose of downloading free songs demonstrated a negative relationship. Individuals that use blogs so they can download free music, which was the number one reason blogs are used, purchase fewer albums regularly in a month. No reason for using blogs predicts that a user will purchase more albums.

The third regression shows that individuals that are downloading from blogs for the purpose of library building is a predictor that these individuals download a large number of songs. This is a logical conclusion, if a user’s goal is to have a large quantity of songs on his computer or iPod the best way to do it would be to download as many songs as possible.

This data demonstrates that downloading music from a blog does not mean that the downloader is going to go out and purchase the downloaded artist’s album; it might actually make them less likely. These blog readers are still die-hard music fans, and still purchase more albums than casual music-listener, but through blogs are exposed to a huge catalog of music for free and the amount of music they are exposed to do not translate to the same size increase in purchases.

This does not mean that blogs are completely ineffective as a marketing tool. Blogs have been given at least partial credit for the success of such bands as Franz Ferdinand, M.I.A, the Arctic Monkeys and Gnarls Barkley, but these bands are also the exceptions. For the hundreds of bands that are featured and have free songs available for download, only a few have reached success on a larger scale. It might be more beneficial to look at blogs as a promotional tool as compared to a marketing one.

Sales promotions can take many different shapes, their goal is to motivate the consumer to make a purchase, but a promotion is done with the knowledge that the promotion comes at an initial cost to the supplier. Receiving a free trial of shampoo in the mail or tasting a new soft drink at your grocery store are both examples of a sales promotion. Once trying the product and company is hoping that the consumer will go out and purchase it themselves or tell a friend, although there is no obligation. From the perspective of a musician, having songs available to download on a blog is the same
thing. In most cases a song being downloaded will not lead to a purchase, but in a few it might.

Sales promotions can also backfire for a company, or in this case, an artist. Making a product available for free can cheapen its value. For musicians having too much music available for free can make purchasing an album unnecessary. If an individual can easily find half of the songs from an album on blogs, why go out and purchase the whole thing? Many bloggers make it a policy to only make a song or two available, but if different blogs are providing different songs then that policy becomes ineffective.

For the bands that did find success stemming from songs being downloaded off blogs the promotion was a success. These success stories can also be viewed from the Diffusion of Innovations perspective as well. Blog readers are part of the early adopter crowd for music blogs, and by extension, often new music. Many bands may become popular among music-loving blog readers, but never diffuse to the much larger casual music audience. This could be attributed to Rogers’ explanation from Diffusion of Innovations that overly homophilious groups will slow diffusion of an innovation (Rogers, p.307). For the artists that originally generated buzz and started in the blogs and became successful, the amount of chatter may have leaked to casual fans and helped diffuse their music to a much larger audience, which leads to much greater sales.

**Limitations:**

This study does contain some limitations that should be taken into consideration. The primary limitation is that the survey did not contain a random sample. The sample was purposely taken from the small readership of music blogs to learn about their specific behaviors. In this way the study is representative of that group, but cannot be generalized to a larger population. All the findings in this study can only be applied to this group of individuals, who are unlike the general population in many ways, especially in their music-related actions.

MP3 blogs are still very low on the Diffusion S-curve and if they continue to grow and become adopted by a more mainstream audience there may be a change in how
the blogs are utilized. Although music blogs are not currently a very effective marketing tool, that may change if they are adopted by a larger audience.

**Future Research:**

Future research on music blogs should examine some factors that this study neglected. Questions regarding the purchasing habits of blog readers should be considered. Where is music purchased? Is it primarily from online music stores or in brick-and-mortar stores? Also, what percentage of music comes directly from friends or acquaintances in the form of copied albums?

It would also be advisable to obtain more qualitative data. Qualitative data provided some of the strongest insights in this study, and more could lead to a stronger understanding of motivations for music blog use. It could also lead to a greater understanding of what blog readers are looking for when using blogs.

Finally an attempt to survey the music bloggers themselves could give musicians and marketers the chance to know first-hand the decision-process bloggers use when featuring a artist or choosing to not feature one.
**APPENDIX A: Copy of Survey Instrument**

Hello, we are researchers at Florida State University. Please take a few minutes and complete our survey. Participation is voluntary, and all results are confidential to the extent allowed by the law. The survey should take under five minutes to complete. The purpose of this survey is to learn about the users and uses of music blogs. Completion of the questionnaire is implied consent to use the data you have provided. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate. The data will be stored under lock and key on file on campus until one year after the study has been completed. All e-mail correspondence will be kept confidential and will be destroyed one year after the study has been completed. If you have any questions, please contact Patrick O’Donnell at pwo9140@fsu.edu or The Florida State University IRB at 850.644.8633 located at the Office of Research, Innovation Park, 210 Levy Ave, Suite 276, Tallahassee, FL, 32306-2742. Thank you for your participation.

Please answer the following questions about why you download MP3s from music blogs.

### I download music because...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I can learn about a band and listen to their music simultaneously. *</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It is an easy way to hear new music. *</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I can quickly download songs. *</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I can hear a band without purchasing their album. *</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I can save money by getting the songs for free. *</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I can get music at no cost to me. *</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I like to listen to bands other people are talking about. *</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I like to know what bands are generating buzz. *</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I can hear music I've never heard before. *</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. It is a good way to build my music library. *

11. I am able to download many different types of music. *

12. I want to have as much music as possible. *

13. I like to listen to bands that only a few people know about. *

14. I like to be a part of the music community. *

15. It is a good way to learn about bands before they become popular. *

16. How many separate music blogs do you regularly visit in a week? *

17. How much time do you spend reading music blogs in a week (in hours)? *

18. On average, how many songs do you download from music blogs in a week? *

19. How many albums do you regularly purchase in a month? *

20. How many albums do you regularly purchase in a month because of songs downloaded from blogs? *

Please answer the following questions using the scale below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

21. How often do you pay attention to ads on music blogs. *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
22. How often do you click on ads on music blogs? *

23. How often do you purchase items from ads found on music blogs? *

24. Where else do you see the ads you see on music blogs?
Check all that apply

☐ Sponsorships
☐ Television
☐ Newspapers
☐ Music magazines
☐ Non-music magazines
☐ Other websites
☐ Music-related websites (not blogs)
☐ Non-music blogs

25. Do you download music from peer-to-peer file sharing networks (i.e. LimeWire, Grokster)?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Please read each statement and identify how you feel about how you feel about it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26. It is important a band is on an independent label. *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 27. It is important that I am one of the first people to hear about a band. * |
| ☐                  | ☐        | ☐                         | ☐     | ☐             |

| 28. It is important a band has only a small group of dedicated listeners. * |
| ☐                  | ☐        | ☐                         | ☐     | ☐             |
29. Finding bands early makes me feel closer to the band. *
   -

30. I dislike most mainstream music. *
   -

31. Mainstream music is not as good as independent music. *
   -

32. Approximately how many concerts do you attend in a month? *

33. Approximately how much money do you spend on music and music-related items in a month?

34. Approximately how much time do you spend reading and gathering music information in a given week? (please respond in hours)

35. Where do you get information about music? (Check all that apply)
   - Music blogs
   - Music websites
   - Magazines
   - Word-of-mouth
   - Television
   - Radio
   - Newspapers

36. What do you like best about music blogs?
37. Is there anything you'd like to add?

Please tell us a little about yourself.
38. What is your gender? *

- Male
- Female

39. What is your age? *

-- Select --

40. Please indicate the highest level of education you have completed. *

- Grammar school
- High school
- Vocational or technical (2 year) school
- Some college
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree (other than professional degree)
- Professional degree (JD, MD, etc.)
- Doctorate
- Other (Please Specify)
41. Which category best represents your annual household income?

☐ Less than $10,000
☐ $10,001 to $20,000
☐ $20,001 to $30,000
☐ $30,001 to $40,000
☐ $40,001 to $50,000
☐ $50,001 to $75,000
☐ $75,001 to $100,000
☐ More than $100,000
☐ I'd rather not say

42. What is your race? *

☐ African-American (Black)
☐ Asian
☐ Caucasian (White)
☐ Hawaiian Native
☐ Hispanic
☐ Multi-Race
☐ Native American
☐ I'd rather not say

One respondent will win a $50 iTunes gift card, awarded at random. If you wish to enter yourself, please enter your email address. It will be completely confidential and not used for any other purpose than to notify a winner.

Please enter your email address.

Thank you for your participation. Please contact pwo9140@fsu.edu if you have any questions regarding this survey.
Hello,

My name is Patrick O'Donnell and I am a graduate student at Florida State University. I am currently working on my graduate thesis about MP3 blogs. The purpose of the thesis is to see why people use MP3 blogs, how they use them, and how successful MP3 blogs work as marketing tools for bands.

I have a special interest in this topic because I am a regular reader of multiple MP3 blogs and love music.

To collect data for my thesis I am using an online survey and want my respondents to be MP3 blog readers. If you could post a link to my survey on your site and possibly mention the survey in one of your posts I would be very thankful. I am willing to share any information that I receive with you and I will not be profiting from this work in any way. I am also offering an incentive of a $50 iTunes gift card to be given at random to one respondent, and the survey should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete.

Here is the link to the survey:

http://www.surveypro.com/TakeSurvey?id=18605

If you are willing to participate, please respond to this email and I can send you some extra instructions and a button that can link from your blog to the survey. I can also answer any questions or respond to any worries you might have. Thank you for even considering this, it would be extremely helpful to me.

If you have no interest in taking part, if you could email me back and just put no in the subject line it would help me out too.

Thank you again,
Patrick O'Donnell
Florida State University
pwo9140@fsu.edu

The link again: http://www.surveypro.com/TakeSurvey?id=18605
APPENDIX C: Sample of blogs with survey link.
Everybody Cares
Fifteen Minutes To Listen
Fluffing
Funtime OK
Golden Fiddle
Gorilla vs. Bear
Hello Gina
Hickory Wind
I Guess I’m Floating
I Heart Music
I Rock It Roll
In House Radio
India For Dummies
India Interviews
IndieBlubheaven
Indie Fireworks
Information Leabibiner
Large Hearted Boy
Live Music Blog
Lonesome Music
Lost Bands of...
Marathon Packs
Medication
More Gould
Moroccan Role
Motel de Moka
mp33pm
Music For Robots
Muzzle Of Bees
My Audioscrobbler
My Ex Best Friend
My Old Kentucky Blog

DOWNLOAD:

MP3: Josh Rose is: My Love Has Gone
MP3: Josh Rose is: Woman In The Background
MP3: Josh Rose is: Streetslights
MP3: Josh Rose is: "His Time"
MP3: Josh Rose is: Music School Flowers
MP3: Josh Rose is: "Self Eyes"
MP3: Josh Rose is: For The Turbulences (Ned Young)

www.joshrose.com **Audioblog from saygHbworlds

**Use the Nettis 10 Free MP3 offer and download Josh Rose's catalog. Click here

Also: A graduate student contacted me who is doing his thesis on MP3 blog readers, and has composed a brief survey. It sounds like an interesting idea...check it out. MP3 Blog Survey Winner gets $150 in iTunes cash.
18 FEBRUARY, 2004

breaking news: The Walkmen

ABOUT ME
TEAM OF SCIENTISTS
EDINBURGH / BANUS / GOLETA

FEATURES
Get To Know Bows & Arrows!
Help a brother out! A grad student is doing a thesis on music blogging, and has a survey you can take to help him out. Interesting idea, this is, to give him a minute. Win $50 on iTunes if you’re lucky!

The Danielsson Amalgamation have a movie coming out, check out the trailer (via LRB)! Yeah, Sufjan’s in there too. Looking sneaky, I might add.

Listen to new song “Did I Step On Your Trumpet?” on the MySpace.

MySpace MySpace MySpace, enough already!

Ever wondered what it would be like to work at the local strip joint? With your mother? No? Fair enough, but Ms. Sweeney’s has an interview with someone who has.
Zach Braff Digs Joshua Radin (& So Does MEBF)

A band I'm really getting into recently is **Kite Flying Society**. Some of my favorite blogs have featured them and I've found myself hooked. If you're not familiar with KFS, stop by **You Ain't No Picasso** and **Cable And Toast** to find out more and grab a few of their mp3s. Great stuff. Great sound.

12:47 AM EST:

I ran a post the other day featuring **Mute Math Here**, Linocut at **Ciname Pick Me Up** has more additional Mute Math tracks posted today and they are all worth grabbing! **Read here**.

*Posted by L.A. Bound at 1:34 AM 0 DIS OR DIS MY EXBST!*
REFERENCES


Oser, K. (2004, June 14) B. Nike assays blog as marketing tool; Art of Speed microsite tests medium’s ability to reach key influences. *Advertising Age, p 26.*


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Patrick O’Donnell was born on July 4, 1982 in Memphis, TN to Dr. Thomas and Susan O’Donnell. Thomas soon joined the Air Force which led to the family moving regularly. Patrick graduated from Fairborn High School in Fairborn, OH in 2000 and decided to attend Florida State University. At FSU Patrick majored in Communication with an emphasis in Public Relations and graduated Magna Cum Laude in the Spring of 2004. After graduating Patrick worked for the FSU International Program in London before returning to FSU to receive his Master of Science degree in Integrated Marketing Communication.