



THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNET ON MUSIC

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Abstract

Technology affects all walks of life and art is no exception. One such domain in Art where technology has shown its crucial impact is Music. This paper deals with the impact of internet on music. It speaks of main ways in which internet has significantly and in a positive manner influenced music and they include mainly creating and storing music, reproducing and spreading music, popularizing music and teaching music in addition to other functions too. But internet has its side effects too, like regular violation of intellectual property rights, creativity pilferage, plagiarism and unauthorized copying. Whatever be the affairs, the fact remains that the music industry is undergoing a tremendous change due to internet.

Keywords: *Internet, Music, Social Media, plagiarism*

Introduction

It is a fact that technology affects all walks of life and with development of technology various aspects of life change. Art is no exception here. Technology has changed the way art is created, taught, reproduced and propagated. One such domain in Art where technology has shown its crucial impact is Music. The particular type of technological advancement -of information technology- has significantly and meaningfully altered the way music is played and taught and also the way it reaches masses. Popularization of internet in the last decades of 20th century has revolutionized music and its attributes. The Internet can be defined as a global network of networks (private, public, academic, business, and government) which are linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless, and optical networking technologies and which employ an Internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) to link devices worldwide. The Internet is a carrier of a vast range of information resources and services, such as the inter-linked text documents, images, email, voice and video calls and file sharing. Internet, initially introduced in 1960 as a network of computers, gained popularity and appeared in common use only in the last decade of 20th century and in the first decade of 21st century.

Music can be explained as an activity of sound organized in time having attributes like pitch, rhythm, dynamics such as loudness and softness and the sonic qualities of timbre and texture. Music is as old as nature itself. It is present in all actions and activities of life. Natural sound

like the sound of the falling rain, blowing wind, running water of streams and the rocking and resounding movement of waves at the sea shore have their distinctive qualities and they too create a music of their own type. Music in human context refers to the sounds created in an organized manner by human beings, with the help of general or specialized instruments. It is believed that man started creating music in the imitation of natural sounds and he developed special instruments eventually for achieving perfection in this field.

Influence of Internet on Music

Development of internet has significantly influenced music industry and that too largely on positive side. Internet has influenced music industry in four main ways:

1. Creating and Storing Music
2. Reproducing and Distributing Music
3. Popularizing Music
4. Teaching Music

In addition to this, it has influenced many other things like providing music artists exposure, establishing music as a profession in ways different than the previous ones. Following is the detailed discussion of these heads:

1. **Creating and Storing Music:** Traditionally, music has been created using musical instruments but in the internet age music can be created online using virtual musical instruments like virtual keyboards. There is variety of virtual musical instruments, instruments that exist actually in e-form rather than concrete form. Similarly, Music created can be stored on the internet in different formats. There was a time when music was stored in LP records and then in audio tapes. This was followed with recording and storage of music on audio CDs and DVDs and Hard Disks. The later age introduced USB devices which have now given way to online storage. Google Drive is one such drive where data can be stored and accessed online easily. Apart from this one can store music data in one's email accounts, though in a limited size.
2. **Reproducing and Distributing music:** Music industry has one great advantage of Internet and that is in reproducing and spreading Music. Music uploaded on various sites, or available online, can be downloaded infinitely, allowing its multiple or infinite copies. Various video sharing sites like www.youtube.com, www.dailymotion.com , facebook, twitter can host music composition in audio and video formats and these music compositions can be played in streaming mode as well and can also be shared. Online chatting and social media applications like whatsapp allow file sharing which also result in sharing of music data. Apples in 2013 announced that its iTunes digital music store

sold 25 billion songs. In 2012 at an average, over 800 million people visited youtube once a month, whereas youtube had 1 trillion views in 2011. This clearly shows the potential the internet has for reproducing and spreading music. With the arrival of smartphones the access of people to music creations has become easier and as a result, the spread and distribution of music is increasing considerably.

3. **Popularizing Music:** As the internet facilitates an easy access of the people to the resources, it has a large scope for popularizing music. It rather provides ample opportunities for the same. Websites like youtube.com act as platform where new albums are advertised and launched, thus providing them exposure to the public and all this is available for free. Similarly budding artists can launch themselves on facebook or youtube for no cost by simply creating their page or channel respectively and uploading their audio or video creations. The number of views and likes achieved by that particular musical item determine its popularity. These sites provide the artist or the uploader needed feedback also, that too quite instantly. Other media like TV or Radio may take some time to give airtime to the new artist but the internet based social media provide the latter a ready access to masses.
4. **Teaching Music :** Teaching of music has been revolutionized by the internet. Students of music today have access to online teaching modules, including audio video tutorials from where they can learn about the structure of musical instruments, how they are handled and how they are played. To a great extent, internet has taken up the traditional role of a guru. Resources like recordings of maestros are available online round the clock and they can be reproduced as well. The students of music can listen to these artists and practice accordingly. In the same way a student of Indian Classical music also has access to the music of North America which will be available to him online. Social media sites like facebook and twitter provide people an interactive platform to discuss their music related problems with experts of the field. Similarly a novice or a beginner in the field of music can practice his hands at virtual keyboards available online. There is a variety of learning resources available online. There are sites dealing with different musical instruments, have pages that deal with different music styles like, solos, scales, chords and techniques of playing musical instruments. Powerpoint presentations available online help teachers and students know things better. A good deal of research papers and books on music available on the internet help teachers and scholars of music understand the concepts easily, teach them effectively and carry research in music productively.

5. Providing exposure to artists : Internet with its social media and content sharing websites makes easy for rather new or unknown music artists to gain exposure for themselves which otherwise would be very difficult. Any artist who has recorded music piece of his- whether solo or in accompaniment of other musicians - can upload it on the social media sites and get the right access.
6. Establishing music as a profession in different ways: With the advent of technology and internet, music has not remained confined to playing music or teaching. It is more than that. One can be a music recordist or an editor as well and one can learn these things online too. One can also be reviewer of music.

Like anything internet too has its negative side, or rather , side effects. As so much of content is available on the web and that too is unprotected, it is very much possible to download it a number of times and thus unauthorized copying. According to the report (Digital Music Nation 2010) by the British Phonographic Industry (BPI), in 2010 around 1.2 billion tracks were downloaded illegally. This unauthorized downloading followed by illegal copying is directly a case of intellectual property rights violation. This unauthorized copying results in monetary loss to the uploader or the artist. In addition there is open pilferage as far as creativity is concerned. Musical composition by the artists always remain at a risk of pilferage. In addition, there are chances of plagiarism too as the content is freely available.

Conclusion

Internet is undeniably one of the greatest wonders of tewntieth century. It has altered the way people think and perceive things. On one hand the internet ensures easy availability of resources to the students and teachers of music, on the other hand it makes this wide range of available sources at risk of pilferage and plagiarism. It can be hoped that with the passage of time, it will be possible to check these threats but till then one has to protect ones' intellectual property oneself.

Select References

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