



LEEDS  
BECKETT  
UNIVERSITY

---

Citation:

Henderson, S and Spracklen, K (2017) 'Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose': Music Promoting, Digital Leisure, Social Media and Community. *Leisure Sciences*, 40 (4). pp. 239-250. ISSN 0149-0400 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2017.1378139>

Link to Leeds Beckett Repository record:

<https://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/4039/>

Document Version:

Article (Accepted Version)

---

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Leisure Sciences* on 21 November 2017, available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/01490400.2017.1378139>

The aim of the Leeds Beckett Repository is to provide open access to our research, as required by funder policies and permitted by publishers and copyright law.

The Leeds Beckett repository holds a wide range of publications, each of which has been checked for copyright and the relevant embargo period has been applied by the Research Services team.

We operate on a standard take-down policy. If you are the author or publisher of an output and you would like it removed from the repository, please [contact us](#) and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Each thesis in the repository has been cleared where necessary by the author for third party copyright. If you would like a thesis to be removed from the repository or believe there is an issue with copyright, please contact us on [openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk) and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

**'Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose': Music Promoting, Digital  
Leisure, Social Media and Community**

**Introduction**

Engagement with the idea of digital leisure in leisure studies and leisure sciences is both patchy and inconsistent (Spracklen, 2015). It is an engagement that switches between the fear of the impact of the internet and digital technologies (Brown, 2008; Rojek, 2005) and the excitement that digital leisure offers as a way to change the world for good (Bull, 2005; Crawford, Gosling & Light, 2013; McGillivray, 2014; Nimrod, 2014; Nimrod & Adoni, 2012). In this paper, we follow Spracklen (2015) in suggesting that digital leisure is neither morally good nor morally bad for leisure, or for humans, but it can be seen as an extension of existing forms of leisure. This definition of digital leisure comes from Spracklen's (2009, 2013, 2015) application of the work of Habermas (1984, 1987) to the paradox of leisure: how can leisure be free yet constrained? Habermas (1984, 1987) shows that we think and act in two different ways in the modern world in that when we think and act freely we do it through communicative rationality but that rationality is weakened by the development of instrumental thinking.

Communicative rationality is the free and equal exchange of ideas that construct what Habermas calls the life-world. This free and equal discourse is under threat from instrumental rationality: ways of thinking that reduce every thought and interaction to the bottom-line of cost or State power. Spracklen (2009) argues that leisure is free if it is communicative and constrained when it is instrumental.

Furthermore, it is argued that digital leisure can be explored and judged by the same criteria (Spracklen 2015). Here, our intention is to explore the context of music promotion as work and leisure to consider how digital spaces and

resources create both communicative and instrumental forms of rationality and leisure which mirror the work of music promotion in the non-digital world.

In order to create those 'great moments' of unforgettable live music experience that Cluley (2009) highlights, music promoters not only need venues available to them but also an audience that supports their artistic presentations. The closing of city venues due to the gentrification of inner cities (Gillett, 2015; Mayor of London, 2015; Pollock, 2015) adds pressure onto those promoters from one side. Meanwhile, on the other side, audiences are being overwhelmed by promotional material for music and other events as they go about their daily lives looking at both digital devices and the passing ephemera of their travels. O'Loughlin (2011) suggests that digital systems have resulted in these devices overloading their users with information whilst there are few paradigms that help to understand such digital systems. Furthermore, O'Loughlin (2011, p. 349) proposes that the root cause is the 'scales, velocities and characteristics of information.' All this is happening before an audience discovers the possibilities of digital engagement at the event itself (Walmsley, 2016).

Promoters seeking paradigms that might aid their effective and efficient communication with a potential audience may look to long established marketing concepts. However, as befits the suggestion of a lack of paradigms, concepts at the historical core of marketing are criticised for their lack of relevance in a digital age. Driven by the idea of numerous, temporary and fluid neo-tribes (Maffesoli, 1996), the established concept of defining and segmenting markets in order to identify homogenous target consumer groupings is being challenged (Cova & Cova, 2002). This tribal behaviour mirrors observations of the music world with the development of complex cultural omnivores whose taste ranges across different

music genres (Peterson, 1992). Building on notions of tribal attachment rather than individual consumption, Cova and Cova (2002, p. 595) propose that 'the future of marketing is in offering and supporting a renewed sense of community.'

As a result, the aim of this paper is to determine whether promoters perceive the development of a community as central to building their audiences in the way suggested by Cova and Cova (2002). In particular, given the problems around venues at the grass roots level noted above, promoters in relatively small city venues would seem likeliest to be keen to develop the live music community and thus attracted our attention. To achieve our aim, there is a need to determine how community is defined and understood by the promoters in this leisure context. There is also a requirement to consider whether the promoters are proactively building a community of music fans. Finally, it is important to discover how the promoters use the tools of the digital age to develop communities around a shared interest of live music performance. At this point, we feel it important to indicate that our research is not intended to consider these communities from the view of all participants. Whilst the latter is interesting and might be explored on another occasion, our focus here is on the promoters, their views of community and any intention to develop this.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Defining community and digital leisure***

The word 'community' is used in many ways and, as a result, has proved to be a term that is difficult to define. Researching in a similar area of festivals, Laing & Mair (2015) point to this difficulty and indicate a simple but clear definition from Liepins, (2000, p. 29) who suggests community is a 'social construct, one that is

created (and enacted) by people.' Whilst there is plenty of literature on the definition of community, here, we follow Liepins (2000) as this definition admits the constructed and negotiated dynamic of community formation. Within this paper, the community context may be simply viewed as one that involves the promoter who, to some extent, will have commercial objectives and the customers who enjoy music as a leisure pursuit central to the social construct. Of course, in the digital age, as Spracklen (2015) suggests, communities may be seen to develop in the traditional face to face manner and/or by the sharing of interests online.

There is a wealth of research on leisure, music and community. For some leisure scholars such as Lashua (2006, 2007, 2011, 2013), music spaces are by definition leisure spaces subject to contestation. For others, music-making and listening to music are significant serious leisure activities (Stebbins, 2013), or, if not serious, significant in the development of community and identity (Kumm, 2013; Lashua & Fox, 2007; Pate & Johnson, 2013). Leisure perspectives of music events tend to suggest either an individualistic pleasure or one driven by community benefit such as when Arai and Pedlar (2003, p. 191) define 'leisure as shared meaning ... woven into and ... inseparable from the practice of leisure in a community of celebration.' Sharpe (2008) points to music festivals offering a mechanism of community benefit in a political sense that demonstrates how both individual and community benefits may be satisfied within the one community. Such benefits are most obvious in the concept of a 'community of interest' defined by Armstrong and Hagel III (2011, p. 87) as bringing together 'participants who interact extensively with one another on specific topics.' This constructed and contested nature of community is present in the work of Dunlap (2009) and Dunlap and Johnson (2010), as well as in the work of those involved in exploring

music and leisure as community (Kumm & Johnson, 2014; Lashua, 2013; Spracklen, 2013).

Armstrong and Hagel III (2011) also suggest that there are communities of transaction based on buying and selling, communities of fantasy which act as routes of escapism and communities of life experiences where individuals share their feelings about significant experiences in their lives (e.g., dealing with alcoholism). This recent thinking on community has been driven by the development of the online world as a meeting place for individuals. Leisure online is researched in relation to the lives and experiences of particular individuals and social groups, for example, in the work of Bull (2005) and Garner (2014) on the iPod, or the work of Nimrod (2014) on seniors and digital leisure (see also Nimrod & Adoni, 2012). Most of this work on digital leisure assumes it possesses a transformative potential on social justice – that is, digital leisure spaces and communities are naively seen as being supportive of progress, freedom, and equality. In critiquing this utopian view, Spracklen (2015, pp 94-112) draws together several ideas about how online communities allow individuals to use such public spaces to develop social identity (Goffman, 1971) in an imagined community (Cohen, 1985) that is reflective of the ‘webs of significance’ in the thick networks of Geertz (1973). Spracklen (2015) defines digital leisure simply as the leisure spaces, forms and activities that are mediated by digital technologies. For Spracklen, digital leisure can be as good or bad as any other form of leisure in terms of offering a source of freedom and agency, or being a form of instrumental control by nation-states and capitalism. That is, digital leisure is not something that is essentially transformative or emancipatory, as suggested in the work of Nimrod and Adoni (2012). There is nothing that makes digital leisure a counter-

hegemonic space that allows social injustice in leisure and society to be fought and overcome and digital leisure is equally likely to promote, justify and maintain social injustice.

Elsewhere, Gallant et al (2013) recognise that serious leisure (Stebbins, 1982) is a context that allows community to develop when looking at volunteers across a number of sectors including arts and culture. Stebbins (2013) himself has explored how music-making is serious leisure. Gallant et al. (2013) observe that the individualism often associated with a progressing of skills within serious leisure can be seen alongside a collectivist view of shared values and goals. In addition, they suggest the possibility that a 'link between individualism and community is accompanied by a dampening of the relationship between sense of community and group goals and identity (collectivism)' (p. 332). Such a loosening of group goals has parallels with the tribal view of Maffesoli (1996) that sees individuals shifting between tribal communities with different goals.

Limited research has considered the development of community where leisure is juxtaposed with some kind of commercial intent. However, prior to the modern day development of online social network systems, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) began to consider the relationship between customers and their favoured brands whilst drawing on the tribal ideas of Maffesoli (1996). In doing so, they introduce the term 'brand community' noting that these communities 'exhibit three traditional markers of community: shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility' (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001, p412).

### ***Forming community***

Fournier and Lee (2009) suggest that such brand communities form in three different ways. Firstly, they propose that a community can form as a 'pool' where individuals have shared goals or values but have a loose association with each other. This could reflect the way a crowd at a music festival shares their experience of the event. Alternatively, a community could be a 'web' where individuals have very strong links to each other as well as needs that complement each other. Here, the folk music session where players come together to play for fun would seem typical. Finally, a community may be structured as a 'hub' where the community members have a central figure who they feel strongly connected to, yet, have weaker connections to other members of the community. This seems typical of the fan community that builds around particularly popular musicians. In the work of Lashua (2011, 2013), the mapping of music communities based on shared connections and contested spaces mirrors the different forms of brand community proposed by Fournier and Lee (2009) .

However, Palmer and Koenig-Lewis (2009) do not use the term 'brand community' but focus on how community forms between stakeholder groups. Their view is of an experience based relationship between producers (who reflect promoters), customers and the community where the latter is viewed in a general way akin to a potential market. In this way, the community cannot be simply observed as forming as a 'pool', 'web' or 'hub' because relationships vary between stakeholder groups and the community might reflect all three forms of structure.

This view of digital age communities is proposed to exist in different forms developed by the producer/promoter, the customers or a combination of the two. A dilemma presents itself to promoters that Palmer and Koenig-Lewis (2009, p. 163) describe as the choice of the producer to 'seek to control the communication



environment' or create 'a true social network .... members feeling a sense of ownership of the community.'

This concern is reflective of the work of Habermas (1984, 1987) where a communicative rationality suggests that the customer-led community should be self-selecting allowing non-customers to enter. On the other hand, a promoter-led community would seem more likely to have the instrumental rationality of Habermas (1984, 1987) as the discussion is more likely to focus around specific promotions (e.g., announcing tickets are on sale for a specific promotion).

Understanding the meaning and purpose of leisure using the work of Habermas is the key aim of the work of Spracklen (2009, 2013, 2015). Spracklen argues that communicative leisure is something constructed in the community of the Habermasian lifeworld, which is in danger of being colonised by the instrumentality of global capitalism. So, digital leisure for Spracklen (2013, 2015) is *equally* communicative and instrumental as the technology allows some leisure to be transformative and counter-hegemonic and also offers capitalism and nation-states the opportunity to control people's leisure lives.

Following these ideas of community and its formation, it is important to consider the role of the promoter. Vernuccio (2014) identifies different strategic roles adopted by digital age communicators of various nationalities from a range of industry sectors using a 2-D framework based on interactivity and openness: 'cautious beginners', 'selective strategists', 'rising stars' and 'confident communicators.' These differing roles reflect both the relative experience in digital communication and the degree of instrumentality seen within the approach of the communicators. In performing this research, Vernuccio (2014) probed six areas that are all of interest in this paper: communication strategy, the social media

deployed, the predominant theme of content, the predominant user motivation, the stakeholders in the conversation and the predominant type of interaction.

## **Methods**

Although the model for our data collection and data analysis is influenced by the work of Vernuccio (2014), we have been informed epistemologically by the work of Lashua (2011, 2013) and Spracklen (2013, 2015). From both of these sources, we understand our research as based in the ethics of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). We do not want to construct a positivist model of best practice, rather, we want to understand how and why promoters use online spaces and technologies so that we can understand it as digital leisure and explore the limits of digital leisure as a space for social justice. That is to say, we are interested in research as a political act of revealing and celebrating the lifeworlds and spaces the respondents create. Of course, this must be balanced against the need to provide theoretical frames through which the discussion and analysis can be constructed. Our research, then, was inductive in its approach in seeking to explore the nature of how promoters acted to develop or not live music communities. We wanted to know whether those promoters used digital leisure spaces in a way that was communicative, or instrumental, or a mixture of both.

Furthermore, we wanted to avoid guiding their responses to our questions and so we used a very loose, semi-structured interview approach with individual members of the music promoting community. We tried at every stage to involve the respondents in the process of data collection and interpretation in order to ensure that their contributions were fairly reflected in our work. This meant we checked that we had captured everything they wanted to say, our analysis was

fair and that the data presented in this paper was a reasonable representation of their views.

In line with our aim and objectives, the same approach adopted by Vernuccio (2014) was used in our interviews. The primary research questions sought to understand the music promoter's view of 'communication strategy, the social media deployed, the predominant theme of content, the predominant user motivation, the stakeholders in the conversation and the predominant type of interaction.' In order to get a sense of their influences, the interviews explored the promoter's individual background in live music before considering the central research themes.

Given the problems surrounding city centre venues noted at the start, we determined to interview promoters working in relatively small venues. Otherwise, we would include promoters already working with artists who had formed substantial brand communities structured with the artist at the centre of their 'hub.' The promoters we interviewed were typically promoting music concerts in venues of a capacity between 100 and 500 people in cities across the North of England. We managed to get easy access to the promoters as the first author of this paper is himself actively involved in live music promotion in the north of England having worked with and known of each of the respondents for several years.

The participants were given pseudonyms and consisted of five promoters based at a single venue, albeit some of them were promoting across other venues (Brian, Mick, Bill, Ronnie and Charlie); two independent promoters using a variety of venues who might be seen as focussed on certain genre(s) of music (Ian and Anita) and one promoter focussed on community events which encourage development of early career creativity in musicians (Keith). In researching live

music, we recognise that there is a wealth of information about these events which is publicly available. Hence, we have refrained from detailing the specific live music events and locality of the promoters which we recognise as a drawback to the discussion but would have made it difficult to preserve confidentiality.

The questions for interviewees and the analysis of responses were performed by drawing from the work of Vernuccio (2014) and the related literature above. Interviews were coded to reveal the key emergent points found in the research and related back to the literature and the objectives of our work. As well as interviewing the respondents, we explored the material they used online to corroborate their reflections on their digital lives. We applied for and received approval to undertake the research from the University's Research Ethics Sub-Committee and worked in line with the Leeds Beckett University's Research Ethics Policy.

## **Findings and discussion**

### ***Defining their live music community***

The majority of the interviewees indicated that they had fallen into their promoter roles by accident with some having volunteered to work at venues and others having arrived from related roles like Bill whose background was in writing about live music. Based on this experience, Bill ventured the view that 'there isn't really a formula to enter this industry'. Similarly, Mick suggested that he and other promoters did not learn from shadowing someone else working in the role before becoming promoters.

None of the promoters indicated that they had had any formal training or education in their role as promoters though some had studied business in college.

Learning was something that came about by making friends with others active in the live music community who could offer advice on how to approach any particular problem. This view of a loose association amongst those with shared values in live music fits with the notion of the promoter as part of a community formed as a 'pool' of loose association (Fournier & Lee, 2009). It also fits the music-leisure-community model described in the work of Kumm (2013), Lashua (2011, 2013) and Pate and Johnson (2013). Yet, when Mick talked about the need to develop relationships with the agents who booked out artists as well as, sometimes, the artists themselves, it suggested more of a 'web' based community (Fournier & Lee, 2009) where strong links might be developed because of complementary needs. In a further contrast, those promoters working in venues were clear that establishing a good reputation with agents and artists for the venue was central to their approach in being able to attract suitable music to promote. In other words, these venue-based promoters felt the venue itself ought to be seen as the centre of the live music community 'hub' (Fournier & Lee, 2009).

The interaction between stakeholder groups did not stop at promoters, agents and artists. On any single event, Keith was using multiple venues across a town and eager to point out the importance of relationships within the local council for his organisation's promotions. Indeed, every interviewee interacted with a range of stakeholder groups and had established networks of differing nature that helped them put together those 'great moments' for live music fans suggested by Cluley (2009).

Clearly, the view of community from the promoters does not simply shape around producers, customers and community as proposed by Palmer and Koenig-Lewis (2009). Whilst the 'pool', 'web' or 'hub' structures proposed by Fournier and

Lee (2009) for brand communities based on customers has some validity, it is apparent that such a concept becomes more nuanced when looking at a community that involves other stakeholder groups.

When specifically asked about customer communities, most of the promoters pointed to there being several communities, usually, based on music genre. So, for example, Charlie pointed to some narrow distinctions based on loyalty to specific art forms amongst his customer community and suggested 'audiences that like Celtic folk (music) don't overlap with audiences that like English folk (music) .... Audiences that like female singer-songwriters aren't necessarily coming (to see) male singer-songwriters.' Here, we can think about communicative or instrumental leisure (Spracklen, 2009, 2013, 2015), and the tension in trying to resolve the two incommensurable rationalities that underpin the two forms (Habermas, 1984, 1987). In acting instrumentally to fill their venues, the promoters would try to avoid appealing to the same genre-based community in any specific period as they recognised that disposable income puts a natural limit on the potential to sell tickets for their live music promotion.

Though such music genre-based views of communities indicate that the communities of interest (Armstrong & Hagel III, 2011) can be quite narrow in definition, Charlie wanted to make clear that there was always some overlap in these groupings with certain live music fans attracted to a number of different music genres (as suggested in Lashua, 2011, 2013). Whilst our data from the interviews doesn't allow us to explore the detail of this overlap, it should be noted that the suggestion of a limited overlap from the promoters tends to conflict with the idea of fluidity between neo-tribes

put forward by Maffesoli (1996) and adds to the debate around the concept of music omnivores put forward by Peterson (1992).

### ***Communicative and Instrumental behaviour in the live music community***

As discussed above, using the theory of competing rationalities from Habermas (1984, 1987) has enabled us to identify that behaviour within a live music community can be communicative or instrumental in nature. As Palmer and Koenig-Lewis (2009, p. 163) indicate, there is also a dilemma for the promoter in terms of whether they determine to control the online community and its discussion by their own involvement and choice of platform. As Spracklen (2015) shows, digital leisure is equally communicative and instrumental in its potential, and in its practice, despite the utopian claims that leisure spaces online offer a space for social justice and counter-hegemonic resistance (Bull, 2005; Crawford, Gosling & Light, 2013; McGillivray, 2014; Nimrod, 2014; Nimrod & Adoni, 2012).

Looking at involvement, the promoters were all involved to a greater or lesser extent in communicating about their live music events. This variable behaviour tended to be driven across three factors: their choice in terms of communicative or instrumental behaviour, the resources available to them and their role in relation to the venue. A number of the promoters were consciously aiming at being communicative in their approach. This was best summarised by Ronnie who wanted to make sure the approach to promotions was 'audience first, not programme first.' Part of the way this was achieved was by producing an emailed newsletter on the music genre favoured by specific communities of interest which included news stories where the organisation had minimal or no instrumental, financial relationship with the topic (e.g., interviews with artists of interest not

planned to appear at that point). In this way, the promoter was focussed on a community of both interest (in the music genre) and transaction (via links to ticket purchase) highlighting that the community definitions of Armstrong and Hagel III (2011) are not mutually exclusive when seen in practice as both communicative and instrumental elements occur in the interactions between the different actors in the community.

Other promoters were less focussed on managing the instrumental and communicative balance in the content shared for discussion with the community members and concentrated more on community relationships. For Brian, it was important to develop a 'loyal following' that had an 'affinity' with a 'trustworthy' venue and its related live music promotions. As a result, this promoter was happy to engage in communicative discussions on anything from the latest music releases to the overnight accommodation found close to the venue. Of course, this isn't to suggest that Brian never acted in an instrumental way to advise about the venue's promotions (ticket sales, availability, etc.) but, the overall emphasis was 'not to bombard' the audience with communication that focussed on those latter aspects.

Ronnie and Brian clearly took different views on how to engage with their particular live music communities in terms of the communicative and instrumental balance. However, Mick found that his limited resources meant he had less time to dedicate to the community and was also cautious about a proactive, instrumental approach of engagement based around questions to the community about which artists might be booked, what songs should an upcoming artist play, etc. He was quite animated about this aspect in his statement: 'I hate that as, then, I become like a moderator. Also, I think there is something really calculating



about doing that.' Nevertheless, with more resources in terms of managing online communications, Mick felt that more could be done to engage with his live music community in a way that encouraged the community to discuss their experiences amongst themselves.

It was noticeable that the promoters associated with venues tended to feel that they had a role in terms of developing or, at least, being proactive in live music communities in a way that Palmer and Koenig-Lewis (2009) describe as a producer-led approach (cf. Lashua, 2011, 2013). Yet, Anita felt that community builds naturally around the artist rather than the promoter and suggested that the role of the promoter was more that of a (live music) organiser. These ideas may have been driven by the fact that her role as an independent promoter meant she had no allegiance to a specific venue. She also highlighted the importance of community in shaping its own behaviour using an example of the community's response to a complaint on Twitter that tickets for a specific concert by an artist were too expensive. The online discussion summarised as 'a bunch of people jumped in and said it's not expensive. She's a legend and it's well worth the money..... I just sat back and didn't write anything.'

Whilst the promoters revealed differences in behaviour based on their approach to communication, available resources and roles in relation to the venue, each of them might be categorised in the terms of Vernuccio (2014) using the attributes of interactivity and openness as 'cautious beginners', 'selective strategists', 'rising stars' or 'confident communicators'. There were clear differences in their relative knowledge of how the digital world worked in practice and a tension between their communicative and instrumental behaviours.

### ***Use of social media platforms to develop community***

The discussion above shows that the promoters all wish to be engaged with their online live music community. Brian's more communicative approach of providing a personalised online relationship with the community rather than presenting as a faceless, impersonal organisation was central to the venue's image. However, this came at a cost in terms of commitment from the promoter in a way that was time consuming and encroached on personal life. Indeed, several promoters commented on the intrusiveness of social media, especially, if just one individual was responsible for its management and there were various social media platforms to address. Hence, the choice of platforms was a key decision for the promoters we interviewed even if only because it created significant demands in terms of time and effort.

The interviewees suggested that their decision on platform adoption was driven by not only the resources required but the ability to communicate on a specific platform with those people who were interested in live music and basing this around three factors: community preferences, the features allowing communication on the platform and the ability to gather data for instrumental purposes. The promoters used a variety of digital platforms with Facebook, Twitter and Instagram being dominant in their choices on where to communicate. Just as in times prior to the digital age when promoters might seek to advertise in print media that was read by those interested in live music, the promoters sought out social media platforms where the community gathers to share their interest.

Anita pointed to the fact that there was a need for promoters to recognise the preferences of the community and the related influence of demographics where 'different generations communicate in different ways and have a preferred

method.' This was supported by Bill who talked of it being easier to reach the 18 to 30 year olds online but that success with one particular artist whose appeal was more for a 40 to 50 year old age group required a campaign to place posters in outlying towns to be able to reach them. Such traditional methods like the use of posters, flyers and print advertising were used by most of the promoters. Whilst these may be seen as one-way communications between the promoter and members of the live music community, it was clear that they added to the word of mouth between individuals whether this occurred digitally or in other personal communications. Effectively, the promoters were providing content via traditional methods that would add to both the offline and online discussions around the shared interest of the community.

Returning to the discussion of platform adoption, a number of the promoters pointed to the monetisation of social media platforms as a problem to communications within their following community. Mostly, this related to Facebook which can require payment from an organisation to ensure its messages reach those who have 'liked' their profile. Charlie suggested Facebook's monetisation was also seen to have reduced the number of active customer-led communities (Palmer & Koenig-Lewis, 2009) on the platform.

As a consequence, a number of the promoters commented that the monetisation of Facebook was driving up the importance of direct email to their promotional activities. Monetisation is an example of the instrumental rationality at work in digital leisure (Spracklen, 2015) with the commodification of a communicative leisure space and the constraints imposed on promoters. However, Bill suggested that reacting by the specific adoption of direct mail and its one to many basis of communication was less successful in developing

community because the individual recipients of mails would be unaware of each other. In other words, noticeably, Bill's perception of community is one where all the members are able to communicate with one another. In order to adopt these direct mail approaches, most of the promoters were instrumentally active in gathering data from their audience (email addresses, tickets bought, etc.). This process might occur by the simple physical collection of personal data at their music events as both Anita and Ian emphasised, or, for larger organisations, collecting data through digitised ticket selling systems.

## **Conclusions**

We can see that music promoters have exploited digital spaces to enhance their work, enabling the leisure of others in making and enjoying music. These promoters have, in other words, extended their forms of leisure into what Spracklen (2015) calls digital leisure by their involvement in online community communication. On the other hand, the extent to which they have embraced the opportunities of the internet and social media is mixed. Their digital leisure practices are still modified by what they believe works in their music promoting activities and the existence of a secure and sustained sense of community online seems problematic. The music promoters see their role as being communicative rather than instrumental and they want to assist and promote the interests of a particular music community. However, in doing so, they must be interested in ticket sales, profit and loss in order to make the community sustainable in a form that suits their activities. These digital spaces offer opportunities to build community and communicative leisure but they are bound by the same instrumental constraints that control off-line leisure (Spracklen, 2009, 2013, 2015).

The day to day realities of instrumentality rooted in individual need limits communicatively leisured community development whether offline or online – plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

The starting point for this research was that Cova and Cova (2002, p. 595) propose 'the future of marketing is in offering and supporting a renewed sense of community.' For the promoters in this study, their roles brought them into contact with a wide range of stakeholder groups that make up their live music community. Firstly, there is what might be called a corporate community of agents, local councils, etc. that was at the heart of their development of a cultural production. Secondly, their live music community breaks into different sub-communities based around music genre that have only some overlapping interest.

Looking at these communities holistically, each promoter's music community can be seen as an individual combination of stakeholder groups in a more complex combination than that proposed by Palmer and Koenig-Lewis (2009). These stakeholder groups are connected in different ways using the 'pools', 'webs', 'hubs' of Fournier and Lee (2009) but the form adopted depends on their individual relationships with the promoter. The latter being eager to build any related brand (such as the venue) into a form of brand community (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) that is attractive to those who make available the performing artists.

This leisure space provides a sense of authentic, existential belonging for the community (Dunlap & Johnson, 2010). However, the relationships within the community are affected by the communication between its members and whether this is largely instrumental or includes communicative elements. The research has highlighted that different promoters will act in diverse ways when choosing

whether to lean towards being communicative or instrumental as they engage with the live music community. Our research endorses the claim that music-making and music-listening construct a sense of belonging, and a sense of community and identity (Kumm, 2013; Lashua, 2011, 2013; Pate & Johnson, 2013).

Finally, it can be concluded that the promoters tend to operate in a social construct that can be seen as communities of transaction (Armstrong & Hagel III, 2011) with an underlying instrumental approach. The customer/audience elements of their community tend to be individualist and reflect a 'dampening of the relationship between sense of community and group goals and identity' (Gallant et al, 2013, p. 332). That is to say, while music can provide community, solidarity and transformative purpose, it is also a business transaction. In our research, promoters have to balance the desire to be curators of taste and leaders of community with the need to not lose their livelihoods and their homes. The switch to online spaces to promote live music does not reduce the instrumental nature of the business. What this means is that the idea that digital leisure is likely to be a transformative space for social justice is, in this research at least, questionable.

## **References**

- Arai, S. & Pedlar, A. (2003). Moving beyond individualism in leisure theory: A critical analysis of concepts of community and social engagement. *Leisure Studies*, 22, 185-202.
- Armstrong, A. & Hagel III, J. (2011). In Lesser, E.L., Fontaine, M.A., Slusher, J.A. (2011) *Knowledge and communities*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Brown, J.J. (2008). From Friday to Sunday: The hacker ethic and shifting notions of labour, leisure and intellectual property. *Leisure Studies*, 27, 395-409.

- Bull, M. (2005). No dead air! The iPod and the culture of mobile listening. *Leisure Studies*, 24(4), 343-355.
- Charmaz, C. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. London: Sage.
- Cohen, A.P. (1985). *The symbolic construction of community*. London: Tavistock.
- Cova, B. & Cova, V. (2002). Tribal marketing: The tribalisation of society and its impact on the conduct of marketing. *European Journal of Marketing*, 36(5/6), 595-620.
- Cluley, R. (2009). Engineering great moments: The production of live music. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 12(4), 373-388.
- Crawford, G., Gosling, V.K. & Light, B. (eds) (2013). *Online gaming in context: The social and cultural significance of online games*. New York: Routledge.
- Dunlap, R. (2009). Taking Aunt Kathy to dinner: Family dinner as a focal practice. *Leisure Sciences*, 31(5), 417-433.
- Dunlap, R. & Johnson, C. W. (2010). Creating community at the farm: A contested concept. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 42(2), 221.
- Fournier, S. & Lee, L. (2009). Getting brand communities right. *Harvard Business Review*. April, 105-111.
- Gallant, K., Arai, S. & Smale, B. (2013). Serious leisure as an avenue for nurturing community. *Leisure Sciences*, 35, 320–336.
- Garner, B. R. (2014). iPod use and the perception of social introversion. *Leisure Studies*, 33(1), 22-31.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic.
- Gillett, E. (2015). The near-death of raves: The fate of independent music venues in 2015. Retrieved from <http://thequietus.com/articles/19444-venue-closure-london-pop-up-summerland>.

- Goffman, E. (1971). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action, volume one*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Habermas, J. (1987). *The theory of communicative action, volume two*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Kumm, B. E. (2013). Finding healing through songwriting: A song for Nicolette. *International Journal of Community Music*, 6(2), 205-217.
- Kumm, B. E. & Johnson, C. W. (2014). Becoming-shaman, becoming-Sherpa, becoming-healer: leisure as becoming. *Leisure/Loisir*, 38(2), 103-118.
- Laing, J. & Mair, J. (2015). Music festivals and social inclusion: The festival organizers' perspective. *Leisure Sciences*, 37, 252-268.
- Lashua, B.D. (2006). 'Just another Native'? Soundscapes, chorasters, and borderlands in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, 6(3), 391-410.
- Lashua, B.D. (2007). Making an album: Rap performance and a CD track listing as performance writing in The Beat of Boyle Street music programme. *Leisure Studies*, 26(4), 429-445.
- Lashua, B.D. (2011). An atlas of musical memory: Maps, leisure and urban change in Liverpool. *Leisure/Loisir: The Journal of the Canadian Association of Leisure Studies*, 35(2), 133–152.
- Lashua, B.D. (2013). Community music and urban leisure: The Liverpool One project. *International Journal of Community Music*, 6(2), 235-251.
- Lashua, B.D. & Fox, K.M. (2007). Defining the groove: From remix to research in The Beat of Boyle Street. *Leisure Sciences*, 29(2), 143-158.



- Liepins, R. (2000). New energies for an old idea: Reworking approaches to 'community' in contemporary rural studies. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 16, 23–35.
- Maffesoli, M. (1996). *The time of the tribes*. London: Sage.
- McGillivray, D. (2014). Digital cultures, acceleration and mega sporting event narratives. *Leisure Studies*, 33, 96-109.
- Mayor of London (2015). Mayor's music venues taskforce. Retrieved from <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/music/mayors-music-venues-taskforce>.
- Muniz, A.M. & O'Guinn, T.C. (2001). Brand community. *Journal of Consumer Research*. 27(4), 412-32.
- Nimrod, G. (2014). The benefits of and constraints to participation in seniors' online communities. *Leisure Studies*, 33(3), 247-266.
- Nimrod, G., & Adoni, H. (2012). Conceptualizing e-leisure. *Loisir et Société/Society and Leisure*, 35(1), 31-56.
- O'Loughlin, B. (2011). Information overload, paradigm underload? The internet and political disruption. *Global Policy*. 2(3), 349–351.
- Palmer, A. & Koenig-Lewis, N. (2009). An experiential, social network-based approach to direct marketing. *Direct Marketing: An International Journal*. 3(3), 62-176.
- Pate, J. A., & Johnson, C. W. (2013). Sympathetic chords: Reverberating connection through the lived leisure experiences of music listening. *International Journal of Community Music*, 6(2), 189-203.
- Peterson, R. (1992). Understanding audience segmentation: From elite and mass to omnivore and univore. *Poetics*. 21(4), 243–258.

- Pollock, D. (2015) The slow death of music venues in cities. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/sep/09/the-slow-death-of-music-venues-in-cities>.
- Rojek, C. (2005). P2P leisure exchange: Net banditry and the policing of intellectual property. *Leisure Studies*, 24, 357-369.
- Sharpe, E. (2008). Festivals and social change: Intersections of pleasure and politics at a community music festival. *Leisure Sciences*, 30, 217–234.
- Spracklen, K. (2009). *The meaning and purpose of leisure: habermas and leisure at the end of modernity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Spracklen, K. (2013). Nazi punks folk off: Leisure, nationalism, cultural identity and the consumption of metal and folk music. *Leisure Studies*, 32(4): 415-428.
- Spracklen, K. (2015). *Digital leisure, the internet and popular culture: Communities and identities in a digital age*. Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan.
- Stebbins, R. A. (1982). Serious leisure: A conceptual statement. *Pacific Sociological Review*, 25, 251-272.
- Stebbins, R. A. (2013). From dabbler to serious amateur musician and beyond: Clarifying a crucial step. *International Journal of Community Music*, 6(2), 141-152.
- Vernuccio, M. (2014). Communicating corporate brands through social media: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Business Communication*. 51(3), 211–233.
- Walmsley, B. (2016). From arts marketing to audience enrichment: How digital engagement can deepen and democratize artistic exchange with audiences. *Poetics*, 58, 66-78.