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The Use of Social Media for Artist Marketing: Music Industry Perspectives and Consumer Motivations

JARI SALO and MIKKO LANKINEN
Oulu Business School, University of Oulu, Oulu, Finland

MATTI MÄNTYMÄKI
Turku School of Economics, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

This research addresses the question of why consumers use social media especially in relation to music consumption and how music industry companies could improve their social media efforts by matching company strategies with consumer motives. Four case studies and four focus groups with 28 participants were conducted. As a result, this study found five motives for social media participation: (1) access to content, (2) sense of affinity, (3) participation, (4) interaction, and (5) social identity, in decreasing order of effect. For managers this study set out a detailed social media strategy that corresponds with components of consumer motives for participation at decreasing levels of effect.

From a marketing point of view, the popularity of social media is intriguing, since users reveal detailed information about themselves in media like Facebook, Pinterest, and Foursquare. Yet academic research is limited on what drives people to use social media and how social media have been harnessed commercially in specific business environments. This research analyzes social media in the context of the music industry, as this is one of the fast adopters of new marketing channels and mediums.

Until very recently, record labels' knowledge about their customers has been limited. Questions have recently arisen about who is buying what music, in what format, and in which channel. Furthermore, record labels

Address correspondence to Jari Salo, Department of Marketing, Oulu Business School, University of Oulu, PO Box 4600, FIN-90014, Oulu, Finland. E-mail: jari.salo@oulu.fi

are increasingly interested in the most effective marketing vehicles to reach customers. Due to the digitization of music, emergence of social media technologies, and popularity of social media, marketers can now reach potential music consumers via social networks.

Previous academic research on social networking has focused on a number of research topics or contexts such as how online reviews evolve (Chen, Fay, & Wang, 2011), how consumers contribute to knowledge (Chai & Kim, 2012), how students and people use social networking sites like Facebook (Lin & Lu, 2011), and what the cultural differences are between social media use in the United States and China (Men & Tsai, 2012).

In addition, there are a relatively small number of academic studies on marketing and the digitization of the music industry. For example, Vaccaro and Cohn (2004) looked at the evolution of business models in the music industry, from traditional to renegade to new legitimate digital business models; they recommended that record companies needed to have a more service marketing and customer relationship marketing orientation. The increasing usage of social media by record companies and artists is an extension of promotion, services marketing, and customer relationship management strategies. Elberse (2010) depicted how revenues decrease significantly as digital downloading becomes more prevalent and also showed the impacts of bundling and unbundling of interesting and less interesting tracks.

Furthermore, there are only a "few" academic research studies that look at the combination of social networks and the music industry (boyd & Ellison, 2008), even though management practice is way ahead (Buskirk, 2009). Our study makes a valuable and unique contribution to the literature as we focus on interplay between consumer motivations and industry perspective by combining data from two distinct sources.

The main research question aims to answer following question: *What are the general motives for using social media and how are they related to music consumption*? This main research question is divided into two subquestions, the first of which aims to decipher how Finnish record labels view social media and networking services: *In what ways do Finnish record labels market their artists in social media*? The second subquestion intends to decipher how consumers perceive artist marketing and react to it: *How do consumers perceive artist marketing in social media?*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Types of Social Media Tools

When referring to the phenomenon of social media, many overlapping terms are used, such as social Internet, Web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2005), and virtual community (Armstrong & Hagel, 1995; Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Kozinets, 1999;

Porter, 2004). Web 2.0 and social media are thus a set of technologies as well as a new way of thinking that enables new imaginative operations and business models. The basis of social media is user-generated content and two-way interaction between users on the one hand, and users and companies on the other. Social media tools such as blogs, tweets, social networks (Shannon, 2008), communities, and forums enable content production and interaction (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008; Kozinets, 1999).

Constantinides and Fountain (2008) divide Web 2.0 tools (referred to in our study as types of social media) into five different categories: blogs, social networks, content communities, forums/bulletin boards, and content aggregators. Since there is an overlap within some of these categories (e.g. blogs can also be interpreted as a subtype of content communities), our current research presents social media tools as embodiments and features of various online communities.

Consumer Motives for Using Social Media

Dholakia et al. (2004, p. 245) suggest that using social media participation is motivated by individual and psychological needs. Dholakia et al. (2004, p. 242) adapted the term *social identity* to marketing and virtual communities from social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978). In this study "social identity" is defined as the psychological state conferring a shared or collective representation of one being part of some virtual community (Dholakia et al., 2004, p. 245).

Also, as part of a group, a person feels a strong *affinity* with other group members. An emotional bond is formed between the members, which in turn increases loyalty inside the group. In addition, belonging to a group fulfills important needs and membership is seen to bring clear benefits as it reinforces not only the identity of an individual but also that of the group. Lin and Lu (2011) found enjoyment is the most influential factor in people's continued use of social networking sites (SNS), followed by number of peers, and usefulness. User-generated content is an essential feature of social media. Social media tools, such as blogs, social networks, communities, and forums, attract a vast number of users who not only *participate and interact* but also create and share content (Näkki & Virtanen, 2007). Wunsch-Vincent and Vickery (2006, p. 8) argue that the phenomenon also involves users recommending and rating content. Participation refers to expressing opinions, while interaction refers to more clear interaction between two users; both may have an effect upon each other.

Furthermore, according to these authors three characteristics define user-generated material: The content is made publicly available over the Internet, it includes a certain amount of creative work, and it is created outside of professional routines and practices. In a recent study, Kim, Sohn, and

Choi (2011) found that major consumer motives for using social network sites included seeking friends, social support, entertainment, information, and convenience, which were similar cross-culturally for American and Korean college students, though the importance of the motives were weighted differently.

Thus, based upon the aforementioned literature review on social media studies, our current study suggests four consumer motives for using social media: (1) *reinforcement of social identity* of both individual and group, (2) *a sense of affinity*, (3) *participation* in the form of user-generated content, and (4) two-way *interaction* between the members of the group.

Community Typology

Virtual community types can be defined in multiple ways. Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002, p. 3) define virtual communities as mediated social spaces in the digital environment. This view is adopted here.

Communities can also be defined in terms of their focus: *Communities of interest* are based on topics of members' common interest. *Communities of relationships* center around intense life experiences and lead to personal bonding between members. In *communities of fantasy* users create new environments, personalities, stories, and role play in, for instance, multi-user dungeons (MUDs), whereas *communities of transaction* facilitate transactions of products and services and offer information related to these transactions (Armstrong & Hagel, 1995).

Other subtypes of social media include virtual worlds and content communities. Virtual worlds are simulated environments in which users communicate in real time through directly perceivable presences, that is, *avatars* (Mäntymäki & Salo, 2011). Content communities are websites that focus on distributing user-generated content, such as videos (YouTube, Vimeo, Hulu, Vevo), photos (Flickr), music playlists (Spotify, Pandora, Last.fm, Sky Songs), and text (blogs, wikis, forums). Table 1 presents one typology of virtual communities. Table 1 is used to illustrate different virtual communities; it is not intended here as grand typology of all communities but just to illustrate some of the similarities and differences.

Social networking sites (SNS) are Web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semipublic profile within a bounded system. Individuals can also articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and individuals can view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (boyd & Ellison, 2008). MySpace and LinkedIn are also used for making new friends and connections with people never met offline (Shuen, 2008, p. 92). Since these sites can serve a range of purposes and have numerous social media features, this research distinguishes them from other virtual community types dealt with above.

TABLE 1 Typology of Virtual Communities (Adapted From Armstrong & Hagel, 1995)

Type of community	Focus	Function and role	Subtypes and examples
Communities of interest	Members' common interest	Information exchange, social interaction, user-generated content	Networked communities (Amazon), brand communities (artist fan clubs, e.g., Syntymähäjyt), content communities (YouTube, Flickr, Wikipedia, Spotify, Last.fm, Pandora)
Communities of relationships	Life experiences	Personal bonding	Subgroup-based communities (Harley Owners Groups), brand communities (artist fan clubs, e.g., Syntymähäjyt)
Communities of fantasy	Fictional settings	Creation of new environments, personalities, stories and role-play	Multi-user dungeons (Red Dragon Inn)
Communities of transaction	Transaction of products and services	Intermediary	Digital music stores (iTunes)
Virtual worlds	Simulated environments with supernatural features	Real-time communication through avatars, user-generated content	Combat-focused games (EverQuest, Lineage, World of Warcraft), other virtual worlds (Second Life, Habbo)

Twitter is a microblogging service used for communication in the form of text-based "tweets"; users can broadcast status updates containing a very limited number of characters. Users can thus send messages of their own and "follow" other users by reading their messages. This service holds potential for artist marketing purposes, since artists can share information with followers, engage in two-way communication, and encourage real-time conversation in artist-related topics and events.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Our research posits social media as a platform for two-way communication between record labels, artists and consumers, and between consumers. As suggested earlier in this research, common consumer motives for using social media are: *reinforcement of social identity* of the individual and group, *sense of affinity*, *participation* in the form of user-generated content, and *two-way interaction* (Kozinets, 1999, p. 259; Dholakia et al., 2004, p. 245; Porter, 2004; O'Reilly, 2005). The developed framework is inspired by the work of Shannon (1948) on the communication framework where sender, receiver, and noise are present.
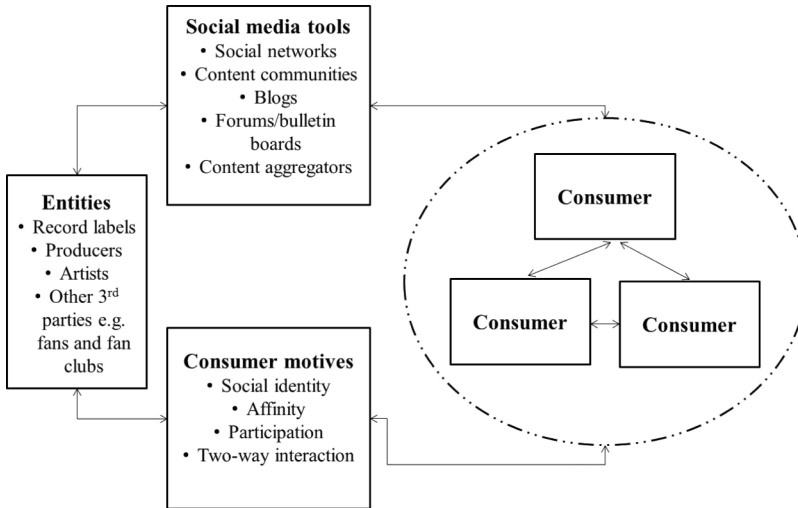
FIGURE 1 Framework of music industry entities, tools, and consumer motives for using social media.

Figure 1 depicts the developed framework, and it is used to identify the importance of each motive in relation to virtual communities, social networks, and social media tools used for music artist marketing.

METHODOLOGY

This research is an exploratory, multiple-case study (Yin, 1989, p. 16–19) that analyzes both selected record labels operating in Finland and Finnish consumer groups. There is plenty of advice in the academic literature on case selection. Here, cases are selected both for theoretical reasons where the object of interest is clearly observable (Patton, 1980), and due to access.

The primary data used in the empirical part of the research were collected with semistructured, record label face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews (Arksey & Knight, 1999), e-mail correspondence, and consumer focus-group discussions. Secondary data were also employed (websites, newspaper clips). Using multiple sources of evidence generally increases the validity of qualitative research (Yin, 1989, p. 40–42). Case studies can be used to understand complex social phenomena and they allow retaining the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 1989, p. 14).

Focus groups, in turn, are particularly useful for studying consumer attitudes and experiences about specific topics due to group interaction (Threlfall, 1999, p. 103–104). The empirical data are analyzed through the constructed theoretical framework by systematic combining (Dubois & Gadde, 2002) and thematic qualitative data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Empirical data consist of six semistructured interviews that were conducted with Finnish affiliates of two major record labels, one Finnish independent record label and one Finnish software music company where the interviewee is also familiar with marketing independent artists. All respondents hold executive positions in their companies and have several years of expertise in the music industry and artist marketing. Interviews were conducted between 2008 and 2010.

In addition to record label interviews, consumer data have been gathered by carrying out four focus-group discussions. Table 2 details the conducted focus groups conducted between 2008 and 2010.

As with company interviews, identities of consumer participants are kept anonymous and in the study they are referred to as focus groups A, B, C, and D. All the sessions were moderated and taped. One of the researchers was involved in the data collection, lasting from 2008 to 2010. Due to financial constraints data were not collected in 2009 and research was interrupted. One of the researchers has also been involved in the Finnish music industry as an artist performing in northern Finland during the data collection, while the other one has music industry experience from Finland as a disc jockey (DJ) some decades ago.

EMPIRICAL STUDY OF ARTIST MARKETING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Finnish Music Industry Perspectives on Social Media Usage in Artist Marketing

Common social networks used for artist marketing in Finland include Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and IRC Gallery. MySpace has become a certain de facto medium for artist presence although its popularity has been decreasing. Many consumers still consider it as the primary community for listening to new, fairly unknown artists. The advantage of MySpace is that as artist profiles are standardized, consumers have learned to navigate through them and know, for instance, where the music player is situated.

MySpace was originally developed into an open networking environment mainly for independent artists and bands (who are unsigned by record company labels and who distribute their own music sometimes on their own independent labels) and their fans (boyd & Ellison, 2008). Since the service still revolves strongly around music, its user base predominantly consists of consumers who hold passionate attitudes toward music. Arguably the reach of MySpace is therefore somewhat restricted.

> MySpace is strongly profiled toward music and this means that there are people who are passionate about music . . . probably people who will at any rate be the first ones finding the .. song when it's coming and they follow actively. (Respondent A)

TABLE 2 Focus-Group Data

Focus group	Age bracket	Type of participants	Total number of participants	Number of female participants	Number of male participants	Place of discussion	Date and duration of discussion
Focus group A	20–30	Students	6	0	6	Helsinki/FIN	April 20, 2010, 59 min
Focus group B	30–40	Students and at working life	7	3	4	Oulu/FIN	April 21, 2010, 33 min
Focus group C	20–30	Students and at working life	7	4	3	Oulu/FIN	April 22, 2010, 38 min
Focus group D	20–30	Students and at working life	8	4	4	Oulu/FIN	May 8, 2008, 34 min

Record labels have carried out album prelistening on MySpace; that is, consumers have had the option of listening to albums before official release dates. In addition, it has been considered to introduce Finns with a concept (already being used in the United States) called *Secret Shows*. The idea is to promote secret concerts via MySpace (Myspace.com, 2012), and performing acts are only announced at the concert venues. Tickets are exclusively available through MySpace. Compared with MySpace the target group of Facebook is wider, as through this service it is possible to reach people who are not music lovers by definition.

> On Facebook you can also hook people who would not necessarily set out to dig it [the song] but when the song is offered for them, they are like "hey what is this." . . . In a way the target group can be a bit wider on Facebook, while on MySpace it is really focused on music enthusiastics. (Respondent A)

Record company labels have created fan pages and groups for artists. Marketing actions mainly involve posting written and visual content that consumers may comment on. Although banner advertising is regarded as inefficient marketing, record labels have been using banners on Facebook.

Maintainers or administrators of fan pages and groups can create event invitations and send them to members. Invitation receivers may then choose to attend, maybe attend, or not attend. Arguably the number of people attending events through Facebook seems to be in line with people actually coming to the concert venue. This gives insight to how implications of marketing may be measured on Facebook by combining online and offline measures.

> On gigs I have noticed that they [event attending figures] match quite well . . . if there's an event on Facebook of some gig and there are say 150 attendants, I think quite many come for real . . . for example in the case of a record release gig last February there were some 300 to 400 attendants [on Facebook] and ticket sales were also between 300 and 400. (Respondent C)

Record labels have also advertised branded entertainment concepts on fan pages. An example of this is posting links to an Amnesty t-shirt collection exclusively designed for an artist. Respondents had not used Twitter to a great extent as Twitter is not used by the majority of Finns. IRC Gallery, a Finnish online community for teens, is considered an important Finnish community and is mainly used for following discussions centered on artists. In addition, one record label uses it for promoting new albums by advertising "releases of the week."

Content communities used for artist marketing include YouTube, Spotify, blogs, forums, and widgets. Record labels and independent artists upload artists' music videos and other audiovisual content to YouTube and share content links in other communities such as Facebook and artist websites. The advantage is communication with fans on a short-term frequency. Spotify (in the United States, Pandora) is mainly used for marketing albums but also concerts: Record labels have placed banners suggesting people listen to an album and then participate the next concert. The assumption is that when consumers become excited about something, they might also purchase albums. On the other hand, respondent D figures that people using Spotify never purchase music. Blogs and forums are used for following conversations, since many forums are good barometers of current topics in the music industry. Blogs often have gatekeepers who decide what content passes through. Widgets used for artist marketing purposes include music and video players that are offered for branded entertainment partners.

Street teams and mobile applications can be regarded as forms of brand communities, since they are based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand. Record labels arrange activities along with listening and *meet and greet* events in street team communities. Mobile applications refer to mobile software that enables interaction between artists and fans and between fans. Users can upload photo and video content to the community using their mobile phones.

There have been some experiments with virtual world advertising, for example, in the Habbo. Communities maintained by media have mainly been used for promoting new releases. Artist websites are considered communication channels for artists and consumers. Forums and blogs have been embedded in many sites, and features such as *like* buttons enable consumers to express contentment. Artists can blog on the actual websites or use mobile applications to upload photos and videos to them. Websites are often linked to social networks, as updates are transferred automatically to, for example, Facebook. Websites have also been used in an innovative fashion to trigger word of mouth (WOM):

> We shut down the website for a few weeks before the album release date . . . fans had got used to a pattern where information on the website increases as the release date approaches, and the band is always present answering questions and commenting this and that . . . it didn't cause chaos among fans but a lot of confusion like "what's happening" . . . after this we for example published the album cover with a track list in record stores and after ten minutes there were comments on the band's IRC Gallery forum . . . then we arranged the first air play with Radio Rock and as soon as they started promoting the broadcast a wave hit through the whole social media where it all began . . . "have you heard of this, did you know already." (Respondent C)

TABLE 3 Music Artist Marketing With Social Media During the Study

Type	Social media tool	Purpose
Social networks	MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, IRC Gallery	Distributing music, posting content, banner advertising, artist–fan communication, branded entertainment, using personal networks, following conversations
Content communities	YouTube, Spotify, blogs, forums, widgets	Uploading content, sharing links, marketing albums and concerts, following conversations, branded entertainment
Brand communities	Street teams, mobile applications	Activities and events, artist–fan communication, uploading content
Other virtual communities	Artist websites, media communities, virtual worlds	Promoting new releases, artist–fan communication, blogging, uploading content, linking with social networks, triggering WOM

Table 3 summarizes the music artist marketing efforts in social media.

Analysis of the Four Consumer Focus-Group Discussions

Social networks used by participants include MySpace and Facebook. A few participants have also experienced using Twitter. Some participants had used IRC Gallery when younger, but few had user profiles anymore. Participants use MySpace mainly for discovering both mainstream and independent artists. Due to a standardized music player, there seems to be a low threshold for listening to music. MySpace is used, for example, to scout artists before attending concerts and festivals.

> If I'm going for a gig and know say one band out of ten, I usually listen to the other bands through MySpace . . . are they worth hearing or should I for example go to the gig later. And the same thing belongs to my regular festival rituals. I start listening to bands a month or two before the festival and think what would be worth seeing. (Participant of focus group A)

MySpace use is rather infrequent due to weak sound quality, restricted content, and a confusing and complicated user interface. However, at the moment, several artists merely have a MySpace profile instead of a website, and thus participants are often forced to use MySpace. The complicated interface is perceived as a reason for why participants rarely familiarize with other content, such as artist blogs. In addition, video content is viewed at content communities such as YouTube rather than MySpace. On the other hand, participant of focus group C has discovered some artists on YouTube and has then navigated to MySpace in order to familiarize further with these artists.

MySpace is considered convenient for viewing artists' concert updates. One participant of focus group A figures that MySpace could bring added value for users if the search function mined data (e.g., using cookies of user profiles) and based on that listed concerts and events taking place in various geographical areas during a given time period. In general, the service's search function is not considered adequate but, on the other hand, MySpace profiles usually appear on Google search results.

Several participants have purchased albums based on music heard at MySpace. One participant of focus group A even claims that this service has had the most influential effect on purchases. Some participants have also prelistened to albums before official release dates and arguably the option to hear albums beforehand leads to a purchase decision, if the artist's music is convincing enough. Based on the focus-group discussions these campaigns may have a positive effect on consumers' purchase decisions.

Registered MySpace users may comment on other profiles, which brings interactivity to the service. A few participants have registered profiles at MySpace, and friend connections mainly include bands and musicians. One participant of focus group D is actively in contact with these MySpace friends. This supports the impression of an open networking environment for bands and their fans, as defined by boyd and Ellison (2008). Other profiles are usually commented on only when acquainted artists have added new music to their profiles. Some participants have also used the comment feature when arranging face-to-face meetings with acquaintances. Other registered users had no social network and merely used the service for listening to music, and some did not use their profiles actively at all. This implies that, in general, the level of interaction at MySpace is low among focus-group participants.

As a medium, MySpace is considered safe, because registered users can choose to remain anonymous. Thus, consumers may adjust the amount of publicly available information. On the other hand, perhaps due to anonymity, the sense of affinity is considered vague, as users are not connected with each other to the same extent as on Facebook.

Every participant in all focus groups had a Facebook profile and joined artist fan pages. These include fan pages of both friends' or acquaintances' bands and those of more famed artists. Participants not only search for fan pages of artists they like, but also join based on friends' invitations and recommendations, which suggests that WOM is influential on Facebook.

By joining fan pages of smaller music artists, participants usually signal support, whereas fan pages of artists already known for the public are considered an information channel, and participants genuinely like these artists. Several participants claim that the main motive for joining fan pages is really liking an artist rather than showing signs of support. Some participants also join fan pages to reinforce their own social identities; by belonging to fan pages, participants may signal other users what sort of music they listen to.

It seems that among focus-group participants the fan pages are mainly used as an information source rather than an interactive medium. In other words, many participants regularly follow what happens on fan pages but seldom produce content: "It's enough for me that I'm a fan or part of that group of people" (Participant of focus group C). Thus, consumers may enhance their sense of affinity by belonging to fan pages. Some participants of focus groups A and C have occasionally posted questions and comments on fan pages' walls and the community has responded rapidly. This implies that compared with MySpace, the level of interactivity on Facebook fan pages is higher.

Few artists have embedded music players on Facebook fan pages, implying that, compared with music-centred MySpace, the focus on Facebook fan pages are on different content. One participant in focus group C also prefers the MySpace music player, since it can be operated as a stand-alone player (i.e., it opens up in a new window and music is played on the background when navigating on different web pages).

There appears to be variation in the amount of content, insofar that some artists are more active than others in updating the fan pages. A distinction can be made between fan pages maintained by fans and official fan pages. In the first mentioned content is generated by fans, whereas artists also participate in creating content in the latter type.

Artists predominantly inform about available merchandise products and promote upcoming concerts. News updates usually include links to artists' official websites and other sites where the products are sold.

It is worth noting that many of the participants could consider buying music through Facebook if the service was secure and user-friendly, prices were low enough and supply was adequate. This is in line with earlier, more general recommendations on services marketing and the music industry (Vaccaro & Cohn, 2004). Participants have perceived that the news updates on artist websites are similar to those on Facebook. Users would like to see more differentiated and exclusive content on Facebook fan pages (e.g., exclusive interviews). This sort of content could be accessed only by fan-page members.

Most of the participants have reacted to event invitations by choosing to attend if they are certain of their participation. The alternative, maybe attending, is often chosen when participants are uncertain of participation. When consumers are certain that they will not participate, it is more common to ignore the invite rather than sign up as "not attending."

At any rate, like record label participant D, focus-group participants have noticed a correlation with the number of people attending events through Facebook and people actually coming to concert venues. This implies that in the case of Finnish consumers, event invitation data may be useful for measuring the implications of social media marketing. The events created on Facebook may have a significant effect on consumers' offline life and lead to participation:

> You go and see Facebook's event list: These are the ones I've participated
> this week and these are the ones I'm going to. Only then you realize what
> you're actually doing, meaning that I'm going to these since I've signed
> up as attending. You can't claim that it doesn't have an effect. I just
> realized it the other day. How is this possible? I use my Facebook page
> to see what I'm doing. (Participant of focus group A)

Participants argue that details, such as starting times, ticket prices, and age
limits, can be rapidly discovered from event invitations. It is possible to attach
a RSVP note to the invitation, in which case it appears on a user's homepage
until the event day. Users are then reminded of the event each time they log
in, and the threshold of participating is thus made lower. Event invitations
can also enhance a sense of affinity, since participants value the possibility
to see who else has received the invitation and follow in real time who is
attending.

The use of Facebook is considered personal, since users register to the
service with their own names. Hence, there is a desire is to control and define
profile information. Participants also generally regard Facebook applications
as irritating, since they decrease the perceived level of control and slow
down profiles.

A clear minority of participants have experienced with Twitter, and
based on discussions the common belief is that few Finns use it for the
time being. Twitter is regarded as a secondary service that can bring added
value when for example combined with a blog or Facebook page (i.e., the
content may be linked to other social media).

Content communities used by focus group participants include
YouTube, Spotify, blogs, and forums. YouTube is used for entertainment
purposes and viewed content often relates to music, sports, or humor. Music
content can be music videos, live performances, artists' backstage material,
or even plain songs whereupon video footage is secondary:

> It's more about the music than videos, since I don't use Spotify and
> haven't bothered to familiarize with MySpace. So if I want to listen to
> something, YouTube is the first place I search it for. Video doesn't really
> matter as long as the audio is there. (Participant of focus group B)

YouTube is also commonly used for searching content that cannot be found
in other places online (e.g., Spotify or Pandora). It can also be used for
downloading videos and songs to desktops or laptops rather than streaming
content online. Registered users rarely comment or rate videos, but some
participants have created own playlists and browse YouTube recommenda-
tions that are based on users' preferences, which, in turn, are determined
by browsing history. A few participants have posted video footage of their
own to the service, but in general, level of participation in the form of

user-generated content was rather low among focus group participants. One participant of focus group A follows some artists that post YouTube videos on a more regular basis. Although level of participation and interaction may be somewhat low, YouTube can be used to increase a given community's sense of affinity:

> Sometimes when we're starting the evening with friends we have these YouTube drills. . . . Everyone puts a song on in turns and then we listen to them. (Participant of focus group B)

It is also common to share YouTube links on Facebook. These are often videos with humor content that are intended to lighten days of friends and acquaintances. Few participants share Spotify content with other users, whereas many download and listen to other users' playlists. Some participants also use third-party applications such as ShareMyPlaylists.com. In general, Spotify is regarded as a good service for discovering new music and the sound quality is perceived as better compared with, for example, MySpace or YouTube:

> If I only know say a band's name, I instantly go there [Spotify] and listen to learn something. And it's good that when you search for some band, the service lists the hit songs and they appear first . . . I've discovered a lot of new artists there. (Participant of focus group C)

Focus-group participants also subscribe to music blogs and follow discussion forums. One participant in focus group B also occasionally reads tour diaries of friends' or acquaintances' bands. Blogs and forums are mainly used for searching information about artists and reading music-related news. One participant of focus group A also downloads songs from music blogs and often links them to Facebook. Other virtual communities mentioned by focus-group participants included Last.fm and ReverbNation. The first one is used for viewing friends' playlists and the latter is a networking service similar to MySpace. Table 4 presents a summary of different ways consumers are using social media.

RESULTS

The results of the current study show that common motives for using social media are a *sense of affinity, reinforcement of social identity* of both the individual and group, *participation* in the form of user-generated content, and *two-way interaction* between the members of the group. Additionally, *access to content* is an extremely important consumer motive for using social media in the music business. Record label respondents argue that good

TABLE 4 Consumers' Use of Social Media During the Studied Period

Social media	Purpose
Social networks	
MySpace	Discovering new artists by listening to music, familiarizing with artists prior to concerts and album purchases, viewing concert updates
Facebook	Joining artist fan pages, posting comments and questions to community, participating events
Twitter	Vocational information source, reading tweets of registered friends
Content communities	
YouTube	Viewing content (music videos, live performances, artists' backstage material, playing songs), searching content not found elsewhere, downloading content, creating playlists, browsing recommendations, sharing links
Spotify	Discovering new music, downloading playlists, browsing recommendations
Blogs and forums	Searching artist information, reading news, downloading music
Other virtual communities	
Last.fm, ReverbNation, artist websites	Searching for artist information, viewing friends' playlists

quality content is an essential element driving artist marketing in practice. The significance of this motive was also perceived in connection with all examined virtual communities and social media tools. At the time of the study in Finland, focus-group participants used MySpace for discovering new music, scouting artists before attending live events, and viewing artists' concert updates. Several participants have also purchased albums based on music heard in MySpace. Currently, this activity has to some degree moved to Facebook. Facebook fan pages are mainly used as an information source, and content includes photo and video material, information on merchandise products, and upcoming concerts and news updates. Yet compared with other media, participants would like to see more differentiated and exclusive content on fan pages. Table 5 summarizes the consumer motives for using social media related to the music industry that were found in this research. The authors have attempted to depict the degree of the motivation in relation to the music consumption by assigning low, moderate, or high to each cell.

CONCLUSIONS

This research was sets out to answer the following research question: *What are the general consumer motives for using social media and how are they related to music consumption?* This objective was addressed in Tables 4

TABLE 5 Consumer's Motives for Using Social Media During the Studied Time Span

	Social identity	Sense of affinity	Participation	Interaction	Access to content
MySpace	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Low	High
Facebook	Moderate	High	High	Moderate	High
Twitter	Low	Low	Low	Low	Moderate
YouTube	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
Spotify	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	High
Blogs and forums	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Other virtual communities (Last.fm, ReverbNation, artist websites)	Low	Low	Low	Low	High

TABLE 6 Strategies for Social Media Marketing

Aim	Method
Target group segmentation	Choosing appropriate social media tools and communities, defining their roles
Communication in terms of communities	Recognizing consumer needs, understanding dynamics and logic of communities
Support of interaction	Offering tools for communication and self-expression
Relevance of content	Involving artists in communication, generating WOM
Evaluation of strategy	Discovering WOM patterns, providing feedback loops, developing marketing strategy
Measurement	Employing channel-specific social media metrics and overall return on marketing investment (ROMI) metrics

and 5 where five motives were contrasted with different social media tools to evaluate their role in using social media.

This study has some limitations due to the qualitative methods used as it reduces generalizability (Patton, 1980, pp. 13–14) of findings. As this research was a qualitative case study with focus groups from Finland with consumer participants between ages 20–40 years, the research results cannot be generalized to other populations.

This study suggests some managerial implications for companies planning to engage, or are already engaged in social media marketing. Managerial implications are integrated into social media strategy guidelines presented in Table 6.

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