

Research finds music choices change when published

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Credit: William Brawley

Revealing information on your music consumption publicly can change it.

A new study by a School of [Information](#) researcher finds that people are willing to put a lot of effort into maintaining a desirable public image of their music consumption. When information about [music listening](#) is published automatically, youth and young adults subtly manipulate the way they present themselves: rather than “cheating” digitally, they instead change the music they listen to.

Airi Lampinen, a visiting researcher at the I School, and her colleagues Suvi Silfverberg and Lassi A. Liikkanen from the Helsinki Institute for Information Technology studied the experience of maintaining a profile

in the online music service Last.fm. Twelve Finnish youth and young adults were interviewed on their use of this music-focused social network service and its extension, called “the scrobbler”, that publishes information of music listened to by service users.

The researchers found that people make active efforts to control the image their online profile gives of them, especially when their music listening is published automatically. While automated sharing of behavior information provides new opportunities for online music services, it also affects the people listening to [music](#).

“When an online service publishes behavioral information automatically, it is important to give users a chance to express and explain the meanings of their actions. Listening to a song doesn’t necessarily mean that one likes it — or wants to be known as the kind of person who does”, says Liikkanen.

More information: The study will be presented at the ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work this week in Hangzhou, China. An advance copy of the article is available online: [i.org.helsinki.fi/lassial/file ... will press play.pdf](http://i.org.helsinki.fi/lassial/file..._will_press_play.pdf)

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