

Twitter data puts music moguls back in the game

February 6 2014, by Brendan Keegan



Twitpic does all the hard work these days, so A&R men don't even have to leave the office. Credit: marfis75

Twitter has decided to woo the music industry with a promise to share data on up-and-coming artists in a deal that would whet the appetite of most music lovers. It makes sense for one of the largest social media organisations to set out its stall in the music market and early attempts have been [weak](#), at best.

Twitter has already signed deals to share its huge pot of data with [journalists](#) and now 300 Entertainment will develop its own software to mine [music](#)-related tweets from [@TwitterMusic](#). This will apparently include publicly available information such as posts from gig-goers but also data on their location and other variables that are not in the public domain.

The collaboration may pave the way for better promotion of music events but the really exciting prospect is what we can do with the valuable data built into the tweets that could be hoovered up in this venture.

Combining valuable insight from insider music company knowledge with the word of mouth from the front line at music venues around the world will make discovering new artists a very exciting prospect.

If you wanted to, you could already gather a lot of this type of information yourself. Follow [TwitterData](#), for example, and you can get information on which artists are being talked about on the site. It is particularly active around big events like award ceremonies.

The most-mentioned [#Grammys](#) artists on Twitter: 1. [@Lordemusic](#) 2. [@Beyonce](#) 3. [@taylorswift13](#)
<https://t.co/UCFlmx1vzj> pic.twitter.com/l6idinfVDV

— *Twitter Data (@TwitterData)* [January 27, 2014](#)

But using Twitter to cover the Grammys or the Golden globes is really just re-inventing the wheel. Television and online news have been doing it for years and it's hardly a revelation that people are talking about Beyoncé. When are people not talking about Beyoncé?

Twitter is a tool best used by the people, for the people and we need to

see this new venture operating at grassroots level. Social media is a great facilitator for community movements and enabling people to make their name. This was particularly true at the beginning of Twitter, when there was less noise and fewer users to compete with for attention.

TwitterMusic could make this an exciting prospect once again.

Imagine seeing your 16 year-old niece practising with her band in the garage. You record a short snippet on your phone and tweet it in a show of family pride. @TwitterMusic picks up your recording, sees value and retweets it. A Sony Music exec receives a notification and signs up the band. A record deal and world domination follow. A year later, you sit back, smugly toasting the band's success on your niece's yacht in the Carribean.

OK, that's possibly a bit far-fetched, but the connectedness that Twitter enables is one of its main advantages and one that can really drive the discovery of new talent. The queues for X-Factor are getting longer and the quality of talent is being diluted as a result. If Twitter and its music partners think you are big, based on retweets and existing followers, that surely has to be a better route to the charts.

If I were a high flying music executive, I would be a little wary of this latest development in crowdsourced talent. The industry is already changing and live-streaming, peer-to-peer file sharing, torrent downloads and the ability to record a live concert on your phone all already make for a daunting prospect for the industry.

Record companies have done a pretty bad job of adapting to these times so it's little wonder they are turning to Twitter for help. The industry isn't completely defunct, we are seeing the model adapting to the exciting world in which we live. Web 2.0 has put the consumer in the driving seat and we now have greater power with our tweets, updates, likes and dislikes than we ever did when we handed over money for a CD. The

Twitter deal might just be an example of the industry getting it right for a change and we could all benefit.

The freemium model – through which listeners pay to stream a service rather than buy music – appears to be working quite well for listeners but has faced criticism for making life hard on artists. Maybe the potential for use of big data to analyse tweets will unfurl a new golden era in music discovery and ultimately enhance all of our listening pleasure. We get better music and the artists get to listen to the sound of the Caribbean sea lapping against the side of their yacht.

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Source: The Conversation

Citation: Twitter data puts music moguls back in the game (2014, February 6) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-02-twitter-music-moguls-game.html>

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