

How Social Networks change Fandom -

UK Music Artists on 

Dissertation

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the changes in fandom that have occurred since the launch of social media platforms. Focus is on the social network Twitter*, which saw its user base doubled in 2011 and has a large amount of celebrity users. Differences between Twitter and other social networks are pointed out and the significance of this newest site is illustrated by looking at academic work and press coverage. Research was done in different areas, including an online questionnaires and a focus group of 15-29 year-olds, an interview with a social media manager working for topcharted music artists, and an analysis of the Twitter use of the two top selling artists in the UK 2011. Results reveal common misconceptions about artists' use of Twitter, while showing a variety of participants' Twitter use. Overall, the project demonstrates that Twitter is the main platform fans use to connect with celebrities, as its setup makes them more accessible than other popular social media platforms.

* - Terms marked with an asterisk are explained in the Twitter Glossary within the Appendix

Introduction

The music industry has changed vastly all throughout the 21st century, and a lot of these changes have been due to the internet (Wilsdon 2001). While the focus of such changes has often been on negative aspects, such as illegal downloads and copyright issues (Anderson 2009, Gordon 2008, Keen 2007), the opportunities of the internet in perspectives on music marketing have only started to be discovered more recently (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel and Chowdry 2009). With the rise of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, there have been first steps towards using the internet as a platform to connect media with its audience.

Not only have social networks been discovered as a potential free marketing and advertising platform, television shows such as *Britain's Got Talent* have started showing Twitter-based hashtags* for each act to make it easier for viewers to have conversations about the program online. Other television shows, including *This Morning*, are encouraging their audience to voice their opinions about subjects discussed on the show on Twitter, which they then read out in newly pre-arranged slots throughout the show. Even throughout printed media, a change has been noticeable over the past few months. Josh Cantone (2008b) suggested in ‘The Rise of Twitter as a Platform for Serious Discourse’, just two years after its launch, that “Twitter will become an increasingly more important point for the distribution of breaking news” (Cantone 2008b). This was proven on the 23rd July 2011, the day Amy Winehouse was found dead. The news was on Twitter 20 minutes after she was discovered, and 40 minutes before it was reported on the mainstream news (Hart 2011). This and similar incidents have led many journalists to have their own Twitter account. Increasingly

more news articles contain quotes from Twitter, and journalists have their Twitter names listed next to their real name under articles.

Of course, those working in the music industry have also noticed and embraced the increasing use of social networks. With fandom being such an important part of the entertainment and celebrity business, making a celebrity attainable to fans is an important part of public relations (Bailey 2012). Social media is an easy, cheap way to portray an artist in accordance with the brand that management and PR have created. Instead of having to indulge the way in which media portray a celebrity, the celebrity now has the possibility to directly comment on any gossip or issues surrounding them. While this was possible beforehand, through websites and sometimes fan pages, the huge amount of Twitter and Facebook users dramatically increase the chance of such information being seen. Especially in the past two years, the number of Twitter and Facebook users has increased severely. The number of UK Facebook users increased from 23 million in January 2010 (see Gadsby 2010) to 38 million users in December 2012 (Claire 2011), showing a total increase of over 40 percent. UK Twitter user numbers went up as well, more than doubling from 12 million to 26 million just between May and December 2011 (Claire 2011). It is no wonder then, that the mass media market has embraced these online social networking platforms.

The success and great popularity of Twitter as a social network has already led to some academic work on the subject. From a critical analysis of Twitter's press coverage over the years (Arceneaux and Weiss 2010), over ways in which different ethnicities use Twitter and why (Hargittai and Litt 2011), to the potential of Twitter as a 'word of mouth' platform for marketing purposes (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel and Chowdry 2009). There is, however, a lack of academic research in the area of how fans connect

with celebrities via social networks. The aim of this dissertation is therefore to understand the ways in which social media is being used by fans and artists alike to establish a relationship between them. As the growth of Twitter, not only in users of the platform but also its use throughout the media, has been the most drastic, the focus will be on this particular social network. However, throughout my research differences between fans use with Twitter versus other social networking platforms will be discussed.

The object of analysis will be especially the Twitter accounts of the top ten bestselling artists in the UK from 2011, based on overall album sales that year. These artists are, in order of decreasing sales numbers: Adele, Rihanna, Michael Bublé, Bruno Mars, Coldplay, Lady Gaga, Jessie J, Ed Sheeran Amy Winehouse, and Olly Murs (Appendix 1: 44). The focus will be on the accounts of Adele (@OfficialAdele 2012) and Rihanna (@Rihanna 2012), as they are the top two bestselling artists and the variation of their Twitter use is the most diverse. With the help of Social Media Manager Heidi Boston's insights, artists' use of Twitter will be discussed and analysed. Information on the fans' Twitter use on the other hand will be obtained through researching a selection of Twitterers*, aged between 15 and 29 years. Through analysing the results of a questionnaire and the research done with the focus group, this dissertation aims to analyse the importance of celebrities in the participants' everyday life and throughout their use of Twitter. In order to get a more qualitative insight, the research will concentrate on the UK. All participants were UK residents and, as mentioned, the artists' accounts analysed are chosen based on UK album sales.

Overall findings will draw on theoretical paradigms in the field of fandom (Hills 2002; Bacon-Smith 1992; Baym 2000; Fiske 1992; Jenson 1992; Grossberg 1992), the

field of music industry changes since the rise of the internet (Anderson 2009; Gordon 2008; Keen 2007; Laughey 2007; Wilsdon 2001; Gauntlett 2004), as well as the already mentioned academic research on Twitter to date (Arceneaux and Weiss 2010; Hargittai and Litt 2011; Jansen, Zhang, Sobel and Chowdry 2009). This project aims to contribute to the field of internet fandom by showing the new possibilities and ways of being a fan via social networks.

Literature Review

While social networking services have been around since the 1990s, it was not until the 21st century that more user-friendly sites such as Friendster, MySpace, Facebook, and most recently Twitter were launched. More affordable computers, updated technology especially in Smartphones and increasing availability of the internet led to the great success of such pages. However, the fact that these developments have been so recent means that academic work on online social networking sites is limited, especially about the way in which those platforms have changed fandom. This dissertation will therefore include blog entries and journal articles, which have discussed this topic, and it will be built on academic work in the fields of fandom, changes of the music industry due to the internet, and the rise of social networks.

As the main aim of my research is to understand the changes in fandom due to social networking platforms such as Twitter, one first needs to look at traditional fandom and changes due to the Internet in general. The theorist Matt Hills defines a ‘fan’ in his book *Fan Cultures* as “somebody who can produce reams of information on their object of fandom, and can quote their favoured lines or lyrics, chapter and verse” (Hills 2002: IX). In ‘Fandom as Pathology: The Consequences of Characterization’, Joli Jensen (1992) further explores the ways in which fans have been defined not only in academic writings but also throughout the mass media. She points out the general conception that fans are “fanatic” and even those classed as ‘normal’ fans have the potential to become obsessive individuals and/or groups (see Jensen 1992). Especially the individual fan is often seen as compensating for something in their life by being a fan, however she believes that “fandom is an aspect of how we make sense of the world,

in relation to mass media, and in relation to our historical, social, cultural location” (Jenson 1992: 27).

Lawrence Grossberg (1992) states a similar view in ‘Is There a Fan in the House?: The Affective Sensibility of Fandom’. He states that “everyone is constantly a fan of various sorts of things, for one cannot exist in a world where nothing matters” (Grossberg 1992: 63). However, those labelled as fans are a smaller subgroup, which aims to find an identity by surrounding themselves with what they enjoy the most. Being a fan in general helps those individuals achieve “a certain amount of control over their affective life, which further enables them to invest in new forms of meaning, pleasure and identity” (Grossberg 1992: 64). They look at the cultural world and divide it into “Us” and “Them”, creating a community out of those like-minded. In ‘The Cultural Economy of Fandom’, John Fiske (1992) further explains that “fans often turn this semiotic productivity into some form of textual production that can circulate among – and thus help define – the fan community” (Fiske 1992: 30). As will be revealed later, these fan communities were built online, using social media platforms to share the ‘textual production’. He explains that while all audiences of mass culture choose certain aspects of the culture industries as their favourites, the difference between fans and the “ordinary audience” is simply in the degree of their likes. The fan market gets turned into a separate market compared to just the popular media market, as fans are willing to invest and buy different products than regular audiences. He believes that “fans are among the most discriminating and selective of all formations of the people and the cultural capital they produce is the most highly developed and visible of all” (Fiske 1992: 48). Being part of the community is therefore taken very seriously.

Before looking at internet fandom, we must first establish the rise of the internet and its economic role. The success of the internet was predicted early. Alex MacGillivray & David Boyle (2001) took an almost futuristic look at the internet in their article ‘Sink or Surf? Social Inclusion in the Digital Age’. They estimated that by 2010 only a small minority of about 10 percent of the UK population would not be using the Internet, mainly consisting of elderly and extremely disabled people, due to the UK government’s goal of ensuring easy and affordable access to the internet by 2005 (Compare MacGillivray and Boyle 2001: 118). Their estimate was not far off. According to information from the Office for National Statistics, only 16.3 percent of the UK population had never been online by the end of 2011, and the numbers are still declining. Just in 2011, the number decreased by 1.2 percent from the first to the final quarter (Office for National Statistics 2011 and 2012). This rise in internet users led to more and more people seeing the potential for marketing and sales online. Andrew Keen (2007) is one of the main critics of these new developments. In the chapter ‘The Day the Music Died’ of his book *The Cult of the Amateur*, Keen expresses his worries about what he believes to be a decrease in quality of music due to the internet. It is his belief that the demise of record stores “actually represents the end rather than the beginning of a long tail” (Keen 2007: 104). In his opinion, the increase in online music and the consequent shutting of independent labels and music stores will result in less consumer choice, ultimately leading to sales being more important than the music.

James Wilsdon (2001) speaks about the fears that social relationships will erode due to the internet, concluding however that “the trend is in the opposite direction, towards the creation of online communities as an addition to existing social networks” (Wilsdon 2001: 87). Looking at this point, the popularity of online social networks is

not surprising. The first theorist to discuss the way artists can use social networks was Steve Gordon (2008) in his book *The Future of the Music Business: How to Succeed with the New Digital Technologies*. He takes a look at the problems of ever decreasing offline music sales and advises professional musicians on how to make money in the ever-changing digital music industry. He mentions the social network platform MySpace, which was one of the first to be pursued by artists, big and small alike. While MySpace claimed to help more independent musicians to make music without a record label, Gordon points out that in fact MySpace itself makes far more money from their distribution charges than any artist would. However, he illustrates that there are ways online to stay away from record labels and make money anyway (compare Gordon 2008: 262). Tila Tequila, a MySpace celebrity in 2007, is an example he gives for an artist who used social networks to promote herself and make money at the same time by selling her music on iTunes (compare Gordon 2008: 263).

The opportunities for fans on the internet were discussed by Nancy Baym (2000) in *Tune in, Log on: Soaps, Fandom, and Online Community*. She discovered how even before social networks fans used the internet to create fan communities. In her research she discovered fans of soap operas creating online forums, providing “the potential for otherwise disconnected individual voices to establish a community” (Baym 2000: 14). Online they could voice and share their love and opinions much easier than through clubs and conventions. In an online overview called ‘Fandom and the Internet’ (2011), the authors give an outline of fandom on the internet from early fan forums to specific blogs. They conclude that “the arrival of the Internet and the spread of online communication had a profound and lasting impact on pre-internet types of fandom” (Fandom and the Internet 2011).

Dan Laughey (2007) looks more generally at how young consumers use the internet in their everyday life. In ‘Music Media in Young People’s Everyday Lives’, Laughey lists the different ways in which young audiences access music in their everyday life. The Internet has a sub-listing, “including MP3 file-sharing sites, fan sites, music news and band sites, and interactive discussion forums like MySpace” (Laughey 2007: 173) showing the variety of choices just online. However, the internet was not only used to access music, but “more so than any other medium, the Internet provided a resource for fans of particular performers or genres to update and hone their knowledge and tastes” (Laughey 2007: 179). The article was written during 2006 and 2007, showing MySpace as the most established social networking platform, as Facebook was still in its beginning stages and Twitter had only just launched. The potential of MySpace for fans was discovered early on, encouraging fans to use the platform’s message boards to exchange news and information about their selected artists (Gordon 2008).

Chris Anderson (2009) also discusses the success of MySpace in *The Longer Long Tail: How Endless Choice is Creating Unlimited Demand*. He argues that MySpace not only helped fans to connect but also facilitated a platform to share more obscure music with each other, which the individuals might not have come across otherwise (compare Anderson 2009: 149). After all, “we define our age by our celebrities and mass-market products – they are the connective tissue of our common experience” (Anderson 2009: 1). The internet gave a platform to discuss these celebrities, enabling opinions to be spread quicker and further. Especially social networks like MySpace and Facebook therefore have great potential to “create buzz or set trends” (Anderson 2009: 230). Although Anderson does not discuss Twitter, he

states that the site has trending topics* that change on a minute to second basis. These constant updates of what people are talking about online provides the ability “to measure the consumption patterns, inclinations, and tastes of an entire market of consumers in real time, and just as quickly adjust the market to reflect them” (Anderson 2009: 106-107).

These insights can be given on town, country or worldwide level. People all over the world are connected by the internet, giving an open platform to share interests and opinions with those like-minded. This especially includes fans, as being part of a community is a major part of fandom (Fiske 1992). However, David Gauntlett (2004) points out in ‘Web Studies: What’s New’ that “though the internet may have led fandom towards the mainstream, it has not necessarily created a single unified fan position or practice” (Gauntlett 2004: 90). The internet gives many people a voice, leading to many different opinions being discussed online. In the blog entry ‘Internet Fandom: Still Not Ready for Primetime’, Josh Cantone (2008a) states that “online tools have provided a way for a small group of impassioned people to make a lot of noise” (Cantone 2008a).

The focus of my research is the social networking platform Twitter, “the web 2.0 phenomenon that combines elements of blogging, text messaging and broadcasting” (Arceneaux and Weiss 2010: 1262). “Launched on July 13, 2006, Twitter is a microblogging service where users send updates (a.k.a., tweets*) to a network of associates (a.k.a., followers*) from a variety of devices” (Jansen, Zhang, Sobel and Chowdry 2009: 2172). In ‘Seems stupid until you try it: Press coverage of Twitter’, Noah Arceneaux and Amy Schmitz Weiss (2010) look at the general perception of Twitter by critically analysing its press coverage over the years. Their research showed

that most coverage was positive. Twitter's popularity kept growing as did the potential of Twitter as a marketing tool by being a platform to spread 'word of mouth', as stated by Bernard Jansen, Mimi Zhang, Kate Sobel and Abdur Chowdry (2009) in 'Twitter power: Tweets as electronic word of mouth'. It is no surprise, then, that this year *The Twitter Book* was published by Tim O'Reilly and Sarah Milstein (2012). The book gives a detailed insight into what Twitter is and how it aims to work, giving advice, tips and step-by-step help on how to use Twitter.

Eszter Hargittai and Eden Litt (2011) discuss the significance of Twitter and aims to find out who does and does not use it in their article 'The tweet smell of celebrity success: Explaining variation in Twitter adoption among a diverse group of young adults'. Their research "found that the top 20 list* titles included the following*: 'news', 'music', 'celeb', 'sports', 'celebrities', 'tech', 'media', 'entertainment', and 'politics' (in that order of popularity)." (Hargittai and Litt 2011: 828). These are titles for lists, which users can create on Twitter in order to keep accounts of a certain topic in one place. The results above therefore show that while finding out the news is one of the main uses, the rest of the information users are interested in knowing about on Twitter are celebrities and/or celebrity world related. Abrol Fairweather and Jodi Halpern (2010) discuss why others care to listen in 'Do Status Updates Have Any Value?'. While the chapter is about Facebook statuses, tweets have similar content. The authors state that "identifying with and sharing in the psychological perspective of other members of the species is a brute fact of how we operate" (Fairweather and Halpern 2010: 193).

Overall, it can be said, that there is still a lot more research to be done in the areas of fan's use of social networks, as the novelty of those platforms has not presented enough time for academic research in the field.

Hypothesis

The objective of this project is to demonstrate how social networks, with focus on Twitter, have changed fandom. The research aims to demonstrate the ways Twitter is used by artists and fans alike. As a social network, the aspiration of the platform is to connect individuals with each other. While social media platforms such as Friendster, Bebo, MySpace and Facebook had similar objectives before the launch of Twitter, the main difference is that those sites act on the assumption that those ‘adding’ each other are ‘friends’. Especially on Facebook, one cannot simply ‘add’ a celebrity. Those celebrities using Facebook have personal accounts, which they often like to keep personal. With added security options, such as making their profiles ‘unsearchable’ and prohibiting users to ‘request friendship’ unless the user has Facebook friends in common, attempting to connect with celebrities via Facebook is often more difficult than getting into a VIP party in Hollywood (Funny Status Updates 2011). On Twitter it is possible to have a private account* as well but none of the main celebrities looked at throughout this research use that possibility and instead have public profiles*. While the creation of Facebook pages has made it possible to ‘like’ artists and find out more information about them, it still does not give fans the same opportunity as Twitter. Following a celebrity on Twitter gives the opportunity of a more emotional connection, as the tweets that go out appear to be ‘from’ the celebrity, rather than ‘about’ the celebrity. Facebook’s latest feature, the “subscribe” button, launched in September 2011 (Murray 2011), allows users to watch the public posts of people without being “friends”. However, as will be discovered in my research, there are still significant differences between Facebook and Twitter.

Throughout my research, I expect to demonstrate the emotional connection fans are able to establish with their idols due to Twitter, as opposed to other social media platforms. The research will show how Twitter is used by celebrities and fans alike, and it will demonstrate a variation of the ways in which different artists use their Twitter accounts. Especially the Twitter use of Adele and Rihanna will be compared, as they are the two bestselling artists of 2011 (Appendix 1: 44), with huge success not only in Britain but worldwide. The research is expected to show how the branding surrounding their music and artist-persona greatly differs and how this difference is reflected in the information on Twitter.

Method

In order to prove my hypothesis, three different research methods were used. Two aimed to determine the way in which Twitter is used by those account holders identified as potential and existing fans, while the third method was a way to establish how artists use Twitter. The age group of participants for the fan-related methods was chosen according to that of BBC Radio 1, one of the biggest major radio stations in Britain. Radio 1 aims its service at 15 to 29 year olds in order “to entertain and engage a broad range of young listeners” (BBC Trust 2007). For this research, I looked at Twitter users in the same age group, as they are those individuals targeted by the music industry and therefore play a major role in establishing the bestselling artists. Geographically, the focus was on users from the United Kingdom in order to get a more specific insight in British fans, as opposed to a very broad insight into fans worldwide.

First, an online questionnaire (Appendix 3: 45) promoted through Twitter and Facebook, aimed to encourage personal Facebook friends and Twitter followers to pass it on. The aim was to get a broad group of people rather than simply those that are directly connected to me. The survey was also sent specially to those Twitterers mentioning they are fans of Rihanna or Adele in their name and/or description of their user profile. Questions were designed to give an insight into the individual’s use of Twitter with regards to celebrities, and later more specifically music artists. Most of the questions, especially those about the individual such as age and gender, as well as those about their personal usage of Twitter, were multiple-choice. The questions towards the end about their feelings when they did or did not get retweeted* were text answers, in order to give a better insight as well as to avoid leading those taking the questionnaire. A problem I encountered was that out of the 36 individuals who started the

questionnaire, only 26 completed it. This is likely to be due to the text answers at the end being more time consuming than the initial multiple choice answers. However, I believe it was worth losing those ten individuals in order to get more qualitative responses.

Second, out of those who had taken the online questionnaire, six were selected to participate in a focus group. Three questions were asked at the beginning, aiming to start a conversation amongst the group. Due to reoccurring issues of finding a time and place to meet, I eventually resorted to doing the focus group online via a group message on Facebook. The first message was by me, simply stating three questions to be discussed and to start the conversation, and encouraging those within the group to state their opinion on the three questions as well as to comment on the opinions given by others within the group. While this took a lot longer than a focus group in person would have taken due to people responding at different times, it was a good way to make sure all information was documented and confusion of misunderstanding one another was avoided as everything was written down.

Finally, I met up with Online Public Relations and Social Media Manager Heidi Boston and interviewed her about the use of Twitter at online branding and PR company All Leo. Being a professional working in the industry for artists such as Take That, she was able to give an expert insight into the way in which Twitter was used by artists. Five initial interview questions were prepared, allowing time for more follow-up questions throughout the interview. The interview was conducted on 10th April 2012 at the All Leo offices.

In addition, I analysed the Twitter accounts of the bestselling artists from 2011 by looking at the numbers of followers, following, and tweets. A particular focus was

put the Twitter use of Rihanna and Adele, in order to establish the different ways in which Twitter is operated by celebrities, especially when it comes to interacting with their fans.

The Study

Questionnaire Findings

The online questionnaire was completed by 26 individuals aged between 15 and 29. Over 80% of participants followed less than 300 Twitter accounts. Only two participants followed no celebrities, with a further five not following any musicians. Therefore, a total of 70.8% of the participants followed musicians. Eight participants listed Rihanna as one of the celebrities they followed most attentively. There were only two other musicians that were mentioned more than once, which were Jessie J and Katy Perry. The second most attentively followed celebrity with five mentions by participants was Stephen Fry. Three other comedians were mentioned more than once, Ricky Gervais, Jimmy Carr, Tim Minchin and Peter Serafinowicz (Appendix 4: 52-53).

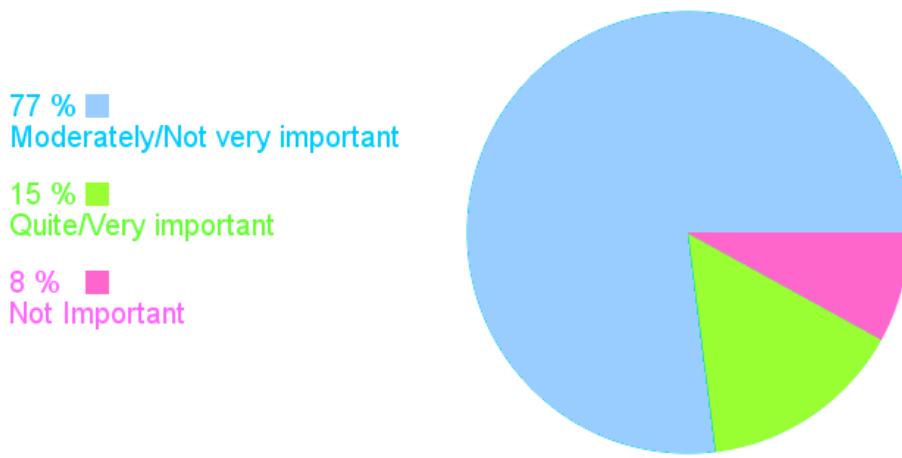
When looking at interaction with the artists, only a small minority of two participants said they would never tweet at or retweet a celebrity. Out of those who had already done so, 38% got a reply*. Comments on their feelings when they got a reply varied from “noticed” to “more than happy!!!!!!!!!!!!!!” and “Best feeling ever” (Appendix 4: 53-54). General feelings were very positive. On the other hand comments on their feelings if they did not get a reply were much more diverse, ranging from indifference and acceptance that replies are unlikely due to the amount of tweets the celebrities receive, over “A little disappointed, would have been exciting to get a reply”, to “very sad” (Appendix 4: 54-55).

When it came to the importance of celebrities to the individual, over 50% stated they liked the celebrities and followed them for their news. Over 42% said they either “really like” the celebrities and are interested in what they do, or even went as far as to say they “love” the celebrities they follow. Only 8% of participants said they did not

like the celebrities. When asked if the participants would meet the celebrity, if given the chance, 89% said yes, 7% said no because they would not know how to act around the celebrity, leaving a mere 4% saying they had no interest in meeting the celebrity at all (Appendix 4: 55 and Figure 1). However, when asked how important the celebrities were in the participant's everyday life, 77% of participants claimed the celebrities were simply "moderately" or even "not very" important to them. Only 15% said the celebrities life were "quite" or even "very" important. Just 8% stated they do not engage with celebrities at all (Appendix 4: 56 and Figure 2).



Would participant meet the celebrities they follow, if they were given the chance? [Figure 1](#)



How important are celebrities in your everyday life?

[Figure 2](#)

Focus Group Findings

Six participants joined a focus group, discussing their opinions on celebrities' use of Twitter. The participants seemed convinced that the majority of big celebrities did not actually tweet themselves, however they agreed that followers of those celebrities might feel closer to them nonetheless. One participant stated that while celebrities using social media "give the illusion that they are commenting directly to their fans through an unbiased means of communication (...) the majority of celebrities use ghost writers and it is a growing trend for celebrities to use Twitter as a means of advertising directly to their target audience" (Appendix 5: 60).

When asked if Twitter makes it easier to connect with celebrities, the general agreement was that the connection that was established with Twitter was only superficial and on the surface but not actually any deeper than the connection created through fan forums and fan mail. Most participants believed that the content of big artists on Twitter was mainly for marketing purposes as opposed to truly personal, with one participant stating outright that they did not believe "there are many celebrities that are genuinely themselves on Twitter just like any other site" (Appendix 5: 59).

In response to whether or not Twitter was a better platform to connect with celebrities than other social networking sites, the participants' opinions differed the most. While some participants believed Twitter was just like other social networks as the information posted was not personal but for marketing purposes, other participants believed Twitter made individuals feel closer to the celebrities. One participant stated he believed the verified accounts* of celebrities made followers feel closer to the artists, arguing that the reason "Twitter has become more popular than other platforms is because of this verification tool" (Appendix 5: 62) as it ruled out impersonification*.

Another participant said it depended on the way in which the celebrity used their Twitter accounts, stating that whether “the celebrity uses Twitter and Facebook personally or commercially would seem to be the difference” (Appendix 5: 61).

Interview Findings

During the interview with Social Media expert Heidi Boston, she stated that Facebook, Bebo, and MySpace were the social media networks she used when she first started at All Leo. She started using Twitter six months after it was initially introduced and it has since “become one of the main platforms that [All Leo] use[s] to get the message out there” (Appendix 6: 64). The most notable information she revealed was that while All Leo uses Twitter to help with marketing and sales messages, the majority of their artists tweet themselves as well. She said that “the majority of the time it’s totally them, which I don’t think a lot of people believe” (Appendix 6 : 66). When asked about how All Leo uses Twitter for the artists, she stated, “we do the majority of our posts in third person and we also do a little sign off (...) so fans can differentiate between their [meaning the artists’] posts and our posts” (Appendix 6: 66). With regards to the main difference between artists’ use of Facebook versus Twitter, Heidi argued that Facebook’s layout is not designed to encourage a lot of artist interaction. Multiple status updates would clog up fans timeline and could encourage Facebook users to “unlike” the artist’s page, while multiple tweets on Twitter are more acceptable. This enables conversations between fans and artists on Twitter, making the platform “a really great way of fans getting that little bit of contact with their superstar” (Appendix 6: 64).

Twitter Research Findings

While analyzing the Twitter accounts of the ten bestselling artists in the UK from 2011 it became clear that the number of Twitter followers did not equal the number of sales made (see Table 1 and 2).

Top 10 bestselling artists in the UK from 2011, based on album sales:

RANK	ARTIST'S NAME	NUMBER OF ALBUMS SOLD
01	ADELE	4,982,410 albums sold
02	RIHANNA	1,531,000 albums sold
03	MICHAEL BUBLE	1,292,000 albums sold
04	BRUNO MARS	1,214,420 albums sold
05	COLDPLAY	907,000 albums sold
06	LADY GAGA	821,000 albums sold
07	JESSIE J	805,000 albums sold
08	ED SHEERAN	791,000 albums sold
09	AMY WINEHOUSE	638,000 albums sold
10	OLLY MURS	597,000 albums sold

Table 1 - Source: <http://www.officialcharts.com/chart-news/the-top-20-biggest-selling-albums-of-2011-revealed/>

Twitter Statistics of 10 bestselling artists in the UK from 2011 on 07.04.2012:

Name	Twitter-Name	Verified	Tweets	Following	Followers	Member Since
Lady Gaga	@ladygaga	Yes	1,363	139,321	22,345,961	26.03.2008
Rihanna	@rihanna	Yes	4,770	771	16,407,179	02.10.2009
Bruno Mars	@brunomars	Yes	1,777	73	8,174,187	29.12.2009
Coldplay	@coldplay	Yes	1,673	2,446	6,327,931	11.01.2009
Adele	@officialadele	Yes	146	178	5,177,503	30.08.2010
Jessie J	@jessiejofficial	Yes	9,307	719	3,410,330	28.04.2009
Olly Murs	@ollyofficial	Yes	7,845	1,627	1,895,394	08.12.2009
Ed Sheeran	@edsheeran	Yes	22,754	350	1,835,220	26.10.2009
Michael Buble	@michaelbuble	Yes	456	15	843,179	31.03.2009
Amy Winehouse	@amywinehouse	Yes	111	7	564,283	21.09.2009

Table 2 - Source: <http://www.twitter.com>

The bestselling artist, Adele, only came fifth on the list of Twitter popularity, with just over five million followers. She only started tweeting herself on the 4th December 2011, where she sent a tweet saying “@OfficialAdele* Right! Its me! I will start tweeting if 10k of u start following@drop4drop &their trip to India this wk. Its a wonderful charity. Go! A xxx” (@OfficialAdele 2012). The tweets from her account before that day were all in third person and mainly simply had the first line of heading of her newest blog with a link to the website. Since she officially started tweeting herself, 18 tweets have been sent (based on analysis on 13th April 2012). Seven of those

were personal, some including pictures of her and one linking to a blog entry, four were about a charity, two were a thank you message to her fans for awards she won, and another two were promoting separate YouTube videos. All those tweets were in first person. Only three tweets were in third person and clearly marketing/sales related. She follows 178 people, only two of which mention Adele in their bio* on their profile.

Rihanna on the other hand has been active over the past couple of years and sends out multiple tweets on a daily basis. She regularly tweets and retweets her fans, leading to 393 out of the 771 users that she follows mentioning the name “Rihanna” either as part of their Twitter name or in their bio on their profile, where they state that Rihanna tweeted at them, sent them a direct message* and often also the date she started following them. Rihanna’s tweets often include swear words and colloquial language. She refers to her fans as “my bitches” on multiple occasions and often tweets about “loving” her fans. On the 15th April she reached 17 million followers and sent out the tweet “@rihanna 17 million #NAVYDEEP*! Thank you, and welcome to the fam”, thereby referring to her fan community as “family” (@Rihanna 2012). On the 16th January 2012, she sent a similar tweet stating “@rihanna I love u so much! Can’t believe we’re here already... #12Milli thank u”, as well as another tweet on the 12th February 2012 saying “@rihanna I have nothing, if I don’t have you”. (@Rihanna 2012)

Discussion

Throughout this study, one of the most reoccurring results was the assumption of who tweets from the Twitter accounts of celebrities. Many of the target audience seemed convinced that the tweets going out by famous A-list celebrities were not in fact by the account holders but instead planned out by marketing and management, however the interview with Heidi Boston showed this to be a popular misconception. While most celebrities have Social Media Managers send out promotional tweets before, during and after the launch of new products, most celebrities also have access to their Twitter accounts and send out many of the personal posts themselves. However, blog entries online, such as ‘Britney Spears Is Hiring An Online Media Manager’ (Tech Crunch 2009), undermine this fact and point out that some celebrities are openly hiring people to take care of their online presence. The article shows a screen shot of a job listing posted on a Harvard University-Only forum online, asking “for a Social Media guru to help manage Britney's network and other high profile branded networks” (Tech Crunch 2009). This creates more scepticism amongst Twitterers, leading them to believe that those hired “Social Media gurus” write the tweets while the celebrities take a backseat.

Another interesting result was that 72% of participants in the questionnaire who had tweeted at a celebrity stated they felt indifferent when they did not get a reply, with a further 53% of those participants declaring they did not expect a reply and understand the artists get many mentions on Twitter and are very “busy people” (Appendix 4: 54). Most of the remaining participants who had tweeted at celebrities stated they were “a little disappointed”, while only four participants stated they felt “sad/not good” or “ignored” (Appendix 4: 54-55). This shows, therefore, that while many Twitter users

mention* celebrities in their posts in the hope of a reply, very few actually expect one.

Those 38% who tweeted at celebrities and got a reply stated they felt anything from “appreciated/noticed” to “more than happy!!!!!!!!!!!!!!” (Appendix 4: 53-54).

Therefore, artists are in a win-win situation, as fans will happily give them free online promotion in form of tweeting about them without generally expecting anything in return. On the other hand, if they do take the time to reply to tweets, those fans getting the reply will be excited and those who did not might feel encouraged to keep trying in the hope that they will eventually get a reply as well. Twitter therefore gives artists a platform for free online promotion.

However, a certain level of activity on Twitter is necessary to make this promotion productive. Singer/Songwriter Adele, for example, has not actively tweeted for long. This led to people mentioning her by name, rather than by her Twitter name “@OfficialAdele”. Many users still seem unaware of Adele’s Twitter presence, including the artist Rihanna who tweeted on the 13th February 2012, the day after the Grammy Awards, “@rihanna Congratulations #RihannaNavy !!! Love u, Yall make me so proud, Every time!!! 2 more Grammys to add to our collection, Lol! Adele I love u!” (@Rihanna 2012). On the other hand, celebrities like Rihanna are a great example of effective ways to use Twitter as an artist. The study findings show that Rihanna is very prominent on Twitter, tweeting regularly and often. She frequently tweets that she “loves” her fans and follows more than four times as many Twitter accounts than Adele, most of which could be classified as “obsessive fans” (Jenson 1992). Those fans followed by Rihanna often mention the date Rihanna started following them, as well as dates and/or the amount of times they got a tweet or retweet by her (See Rihanna’s Twitter followers, @Rihanna 2012). Even when she gets offensive on Twitter and

personally attacks fans, she still has and keeps the support of most of her fans nonetheless. This was shown especially in February 2012, where Rihanna caused commotion when she talked back to a fan on Twitter by insulting her appearance based on her avatar*. The fan tweeted she had lost respect for Rihanna when she did a song with her ex-boyfriend, singer Chris Brown, who was convicted for physically assaulting her in 2009. An article about this occurrence stated that “it’s odd that Rihanna hasn’t yet deleted the tweets, which is usually what celebrity handlers make their charges do after they’ve tweeted something mean or overly dramatic” (International Business Times 2012). As pointed out by Heidi Boston in the interview, ultimately it is the celebrity’s personal account so the final decisions are left up to them. It can therefore be assumed that Rihanna did not feel the need to take down the tweets in which she insulted the physical appearance of the fan based on their Twitter profile picture. After all, many fans came to her defence and started joining in by insulting the fan as well and supporting Rihanna in her decision to attack the fan. While Colette Manson, a web expert, claimed that “a poorly judged tweet can mean instant downfall” (Willimott and Howard 2011), Rihanna’s case shows that if a fan-base of a particular celebrity is strong enough, the celebrity has free range on how they use their Twitter account. On the other hand, websites such as www.celebritytweet.com make it easy to access old tweets by celebrities from the past. Celebrities should therefore be careful about the information they put on Twitter, as it can come back to haunt them in the future.

Conclusion

The research showed that social networks have given fans a platform to feel closer and interact with their idols, and the more celebrities start using the platform, the more popular Twitter is bound to become. As the questionnaire results suggested, shown further in Figure 1 and Figure 2 (Appendix 4: 57), while many Twitterers* claim celebrities have low to moderate importance in their everyday life, many would however go out of their way to meet the celebrities they follow if given the chance.

In January 2009, Jack Schofield wrote a newspaper article in *The Guardian* titled ‘Celebrities on Twitter – Plus a few MPs and Porn Stars’ where he listed 67 Twitter accounts which he believed to be operated by celebrities and/or their staff. Only five of those accounts are by music artists, while most of the others are comedians, actors, politicians, professional athletes or even porn stars. The article pointed out that “there are, of course, large numbers of ‘celebrity fakers’ and fictional characters on Twitter as well” (Schofield 2009). This problem was solved just five months later, in June 2009, when Biz Stone, Co-Founder and Creative Director of Twitter, posted a blog in response to a lawsuit filed by Tony La Russa, former Major League Baseball Manager, who sued Twitter for a fake account made under his name. Together with a statement that Twitter would not settle or pay, the blog was saw Biz Stone announce the launch of ‘verified Twitter accounts’, which were initially a beta version for “public officials, public agencies, famous artists, athletes, and other well known individuals at risk of impersonation” (Stone 2009). Just over three years after Jack Schofield’s article named just 67 celebrity accounts, Twitter celebrated its sixth birthday with 140 million users, daily sending around 340 million tweets. More so, celebrity accounts have risen dramatically, now including a Twitter presence of “75 percent of the NBA, 50 percent

of the NFL, 82 percent of the US House and 85 percent of the Senate" (Red Herring 2012). As revealed by Heidi Boston in the interview, Twitter "crept its way in" and started being one of the main platforms used for fan interaction within just 6 months of its initial launch (Appendix 6: 64).

Anna Hart (2011) goes as far as to explain Twitter's success as being directly related to the celebrity presence on the platform. In her article 'How Twitter Broke the News' she states Twitter's popularity and success is partially "due to the fact that celebrities embraced Twitter in a way they never did with Facebook or MySpace - voicing their opinions, bad mouthing other stars, and announcing new projects" (Hart 2011: 45). Online marketing company Brand You Social (2012) more thoroughly discusses the main ways Twitter is used by celebrities in their blog 'Celebs on Social Media Take a Closer Look'. The first reason, as is possibly the most obvious, is Twitter's use to drive sales. By continuously tweeting about new projects, such as films, DVDs, albums, tours, shows, and the like; fans will get constant reminders. The questionnaire results showed that those tweets are often the reason fans follow the celebrities, as 53% of Twitterers stated their reason for following celebrity users was to find out about their news. A further 42% stating they "really liked" or even "loved" the celebrity, indicating that they would also be greatly interested in updates and news about the celebrities (Appendix 4: 55). Many celebrities also use Twitter in support of charities. Adele is a good example for charitable tweeting, as over 22% of her tweets so far have been promoting a charity. The final reason given for celebrity's Twitter use is in an "attempt to extend their 15 minutes of fame" (Brand You Social 2012).

In 'Social Networking or Celebrity Stalking?', Dolly Carvajal (2010) stated that "social networking has truly changed our way of life. It has made celebs more

accessible to their fans” (Carvajal 2010). While research carried out for this project showed that many Twitter users agree that social networking has made fans more accessible by effectively “remov[ing] the journalist middle man” and bringing fans information straight from the artist (Appendix 5: 61). However, fans on Twitter also showed a lot of scepticism about the authenticity of posts made by celebrities. Five out of six participants from the focus group stated their doubt that top celebrities tweet themselves, two of which declaring that only some celebrities “write their own tweets, and these make you feel much closer to them” (Appendix 5: 59).

Rima Mycynek (2011) gives great examples of such ‘real’ interaction with fans in her blog entry ‘Social Networking connects Celebrities and Fans’. She lists different instances in which certain celebrities used social networks to connect with their fans. The first is an example from her own life. After having sent out a tweet to comedian Michael Ian Black stating she hopes he will talk to her during the show, he came on stage with his smartphone in hand, asking for her based on the tweet. He included her in his act throughout the show, creating comedy due to having “broken down the fourth wall to bring a lowly fan up to his level as the show’s star” (Mycyne 2011). Another great example she names is Isaiah Mustafa’s YouTube campaign during which he recorded 150 short videos in the style of the Old Spice advertisements in which he stars. Each video was a personal reply addressing posts made by fans on either Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube (YouTube Playlist 2010). This and similar campaigns gives fans a reason to keep trying to reach celebrities via social networks. Throughout an interview with Steve Garfield, author of *Get Seen: Online Video Secrets to Building Your Business (New Rules Social Media Series)*, he examines that, “the internet and all these new-media and social-networking tools like Twitter have levelled the playing field

and made celebrities more accessible. With celebrities having millions of followers or fans, it sets the expectation that a famous person might not see your comments, but there's also the possibility that they will" (Mycynek 2011).

While the problem of fake celebrity accounts on Twitter has been solved with the help of verified accounts, more recently Twitter has been in the news due to the lack of restrictions online on the information going out on the platform. In an article from March 2011 about a Twitter account, which supposedly named super-injunctions about celebrities in *The Telegraph* newspaper, Tory MP Louise Bagshawe stated "you cannot keep things secret in this day and age because of Twitter and other social networking websites, which are outside the British jurisdiction" (Roberts 2011). In an article by *The Daily Mail* on the same subject, a Twitter spokesman added "on a practical level, we simply cannot review all (...) tweets created and subsequently delivered every day" (Greenwood 2011). Only a few months ago, in January 2012, Twitter's CEO Dick Costolo was interviewed in PC Magazine on new changes Twitter has made, including new country-specific filtering. Costolo claimed that this new system was not in aid of censoring but simply because such policies were necessary in order for Twitter to operate in certain countries. He points out the potential of Twitter, especially within the field of politics, and states that Twitter's management "are trying to build a decades-long, lasting business" (Moscaritolo 2012). Still, issues of privacy and restriction will have to stay at the forefront of Twitter's developers' mind, as especially privacy settings are still an issue for internet users. As Heidi Boston pointed out in the interview, after the announcement that Facebook bought Instagram, a social networking platform where users upload pictures from their daily life, many users "deleted their accounts because they were worried about Facebook's privacy settings" (Appendix 6: 65).

Overall, the rise and growth of social networks so far proves there is great potential for future success of Twitter and other social networking platforms. As stated by Heidi Boston, while “something new is always going to come along, every month or so, and try and push it out (...) it’s pretty stable now. (...) [I]t’s gotten quite massive, with such a massive celebrity following as well, that people just won’t stop using it” (Appendix 6: 65).

Further research in this field can be done in regards to whether musicians’ Twitter use influences sales figures/illegal downloads. The major differences between fan use of Facebook and Twitter could also be more thoroughly explored. However, this study confirmed that social media had an impact on fandom and fan behaviour. Especially through Twitter, fans are able to directly communicate with celebrities. Active Twitter use by celebrities can be the perquisite for an increase in fan support, as demonstrated in this study by Rihanna’s use of the platform. Even if tweets are sent by PR professionals as opposed to the celebrity, as often assumed by fans, Twitter still has a positive impact on the emotional connections fans are able to make with their aspired star.

* - terms marked with an asterisk are explained in the Twitter Glossary within the Appendix

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Appendix

Twitter Glossary

The Twitter Glossary contains lingo and vocabulary used frequently to talk about features and aspects of our service. Following each definition are links to related articles in our help center for further exploration of each term.

@

The @ sign is used to call out usernames in Tweets, like this: Hello @Twitter! When a username is preceded by the @ sign, it becomes a link to a Twitter profile. See also Replies and Mentions.

Activity

Lives in the "Connect" tab. Activity is a real-time dashboard to view what the users you're following are up to on Twitter. You can view Tweets they've favorited and discover other useful accounts to follow based on the accounts they've recently followed.

Avatar

The personal image uploaded to your Twitter profile in the Settings tab of your account. [Read about how to change your profile picture or avatar.](#)

Bio

A short personal description of 160 characters or fewer used to define who you are on Twitter.

Direct Message (DM)

Also called a DM and most recently called simply a "message," these Tweets are private between the sender and recipient. Tweets sent over SMS become DMs when they begin with "d username" to specify who the message is for. [Learn more about direct messages.](#)

Follow

To follow someone on Twitter is to subscribe to their Tweets or updates on the site.

Follow Count

The numbers that reflect how many people you follow, and how many people follow you. Found on your Twitter Profile.

Follower

A follower is another Twitter user who has followed you.

Following

Your following number reflects the quantity of other Twitter users you have chosen to follow on the site.

Hashtag (#)

The # symbol is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. It was created organically by Twitter users. [Read more about hashtags.](#)

Home

A real-time list of Tweets from those you follow. It appears on your Twitter home page.

Impersonation

To pretend to be someone on the internet that you are not. Impersonation that is intended to deceive is prohibited under the Twitter Rules. Parody accounts are allowed.

Listed

To be included in another Twitter user's list. Listed numbers and details appear in the statistics section of your profile.

Lists

Curated groups of other Twitter users. Used to tie specific individuals into a group on your Twitter account.

Mention

Mentioning another user in your Tweet by including the @ sign followed directly by their username is called a "mention". Also refers to Tweets in which your username was included.

Name

A name that can be different from your username and is used to locate you on Twitter. Must be 20-characters or fewer.

Profile

A Twitter page displaying information about a user, as well as all the Tweets they have posted from their account.

Protected/Private Accounts

Twitter accounts are public by default. Choosing to protect your account means that your Tweets will only be seen by approved followers and will not appear in search.

Reply

A Tweet posted in reply to another user's message, usually posted by clicking the "reply" button next to their Tweet in your timeline. Always begins with @username.

Retweet (noun)

A Tweet by another user, forwarded to you by someone you follow. Often used to spread news or share valuable findings on Twitter.

Retweet (verb)

To retweet, retweeting, retweeted. The act of forwarding another user's Tweet to all of your followers.

RT

Abbreviated version of "retweet." Placed before the retweeted text when users manually retweet a message. See also Retweet.

Timeline

A real-time list of Tweets on Twitter. See also Home Timeline.

Trending Topic

A subject algorithmically determined to be one of the most popular on Twitter at the moment.

Tweet (verb)

Tweet, tweeting, tweeted. The act of posting a message, often called a "Tweet", on Twitter.

Tweet (noun)

A message posted via Twitter containing 140 characters or fewer.

Tweet Button

A button anyone can add to their website. Clicking this button allows Twitter users to post a Tweet with a link to that site.

Tweeter

An account holder on Twitter who posts and reads Tweets. Also known as Twitterers.

Twitter

An information network made up of 140-character messages from all over the world.

Twitterer

An account holder on Twitter who posts and reads Tweets. Also known as "Twitter user".

Unfollow

To cease following another Twitter user. Their Tweets no longer show up in your home timeline.

Username

Also known as a Twitter handle. Must be unique and contain fewer than 15 characters. Is used to identify you on Twitter for replies and mentions.

Verification (Verified accounts)

A process whereby a user's Twitter account is stamped to show that a legitimate source is authoring the account's Tweets. Sometimes used for accounts who experience identity confusion on Twitter.

Source: <https://support.twitter.com/articles/166337-the-twitter-glossary>

Appendix 1**Top 10 bestselling artists in the UK from 2011, based on album sales:**

RANK	ARTIST'S NAME	NUMBER OF ALBUMS SOLD
01	ADELE	4,982,410 albums sold
02	RIHANNA	1,531,000 albums sold
03	MICHAEL BUBLE	1,292,000 albums sold
04	BRUNO MARS	1,214,420 albums sold
05	COLDPLAY	907,000 albums sold
06	LADY GAGA	821,000 albums sold
07	JESSIE J	805,000 albums sold
08	ED SHEERAN	791,000 albums sold
09	AMY WINEHOUSE	638,000 albums sold
10	OLLY MURS	597,000 albums sold

Source: <http://www.officialcharts.com/chart-news/the-top-20-biggest-selling-albums-of-2011-revealed/>

Appendix 2**Twitter Statistics of 10 bestselling artists in the UK from 2011 on 07.04.2012:**

Name	Twitter-Name	Verified	Tweets	Following	Followers	Member Since
Lady Gaga	@ladygaga	Yes	1,363	139,321	22,345,961	26.03.2008
Rihanna	@rihanna	Yes	4,770	771	16,407,179	02.10.2009
Bruno Mars	@brunomars	Yes	1,777	73	8,174,187	29.12.2009
Coldplay	@coldplay	Yes	1,673	2,446	6,327,931	11.01.2009
Adele	@officialadele	Yes	146	178	5,177,503	30.08.2010
Jessie J	@jessiejofficial	Yes	9,307	719	3,410,330	28.04.2009
Olly Murs	@ollyofficial	Yes	7,845	1,627	1,895,394	08.12.2009
Ed Sheeran	@edsheeran	Yes	22,754	350	1,835,220	26.10.2009
Michael Buble	@michaelbuble	Yes	456	15	843,179	31.03.2009
Amy Winehouse	@amywinehouse	Yes	111	7	564,283	21.09.2009

Source: <http://www.twitter.com>

Appendix 3Dissertation Questionnaire about Twitter

This questionnaire is for my dissertation. Please ONLY fill out the questionnaire if you have a Twitter account and are between the ages of 15 and 29.

Thank you in advance. =)

PS. There are only 6 pages, so PLEASE do it all!

*** What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to specify

*** What is your age group?**

- 15 – 18
- 19 – 21
- 22 – 25
- 25 – 29

*** What country do you live in?***** When did you sign up for Twitter?**

- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
- 2011
- 2012

* Since you joined Twitter, how many tweets have you posted?

- Less than 1 000
- 1 000 – 3 000
- 3 000 – 6 000
- 6 000 – 10 000
- 10 000 – 15 000
- More than 15 000

* How many Twitter accounts do you follow?

- Less than 50
- 50 – 100
- 100 – 300
- 300 – 500
- 500 – 1000
- Above 1000

"Celebrities" in this case can be anyone from actors, musicians, TV presenters, authors, politicians, etc. It's likely that if they have over 100,000 followers, they are bound to be a "celebrity" by this definition.

* Of the Twitter accounts you follow, how many of them are "celebrities" (please only include those with 100 000 + followers)?

- None
- About 10%
- About 25%
- About 50%
- About 75%
- (Almost) All of them

* Out of these celebrities, how many are musical artists (singers, musicians, band members, DJs, etc)?

- None
- About 10%
- About 25%
- About 50%
- About 75%
- (Almost) All of them

List the three celebrities you follow the most attentively (or put “n/a”):

*

* Have you retweeted any celebrities?

- Yes, all the time
- Yes, occasionally
- Yes, once
- No, but I would
- No, I never will

* Have you tweeted at, or replied to tweets from celebrities?

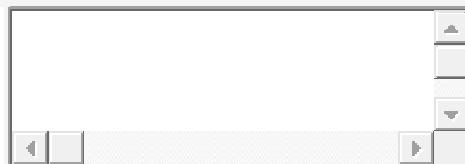
- Yes, all the time
- Yes, occasionally
- Yes, once
- No, but I would
- No, I never will

* If you have retweeted/tweeted at and/or replied to tweets from celebrities, have they ever sent a tweet back?

- Yes, more than 10 times
- Yes, up to 5 times
- Yes, once
- No

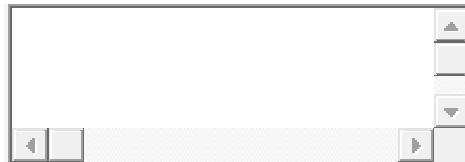
* If the celebrity did reply, how did that make you feel?

- Not Applicable
- Please Comment



* If the celebrity did not reply, how did that make you feel?

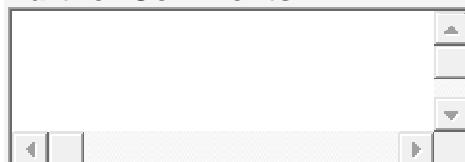
- Not Applicable
- Please Comment



* How close do you feel to the celebrities you follow?

- I love them, they are my life.
- I really like them, I'm interested in what they do.
- I like them and follow them to find out about their news.
- I don't like them and follow them to make fun of their posts.

Further Comments:



* If you had a chance to meet the celebrities you like, would you?

- Yes, definitely. I would do anything.
- Yes, if it was convenient.
- Yes, unless I had other things to do.
- No, because I wouldn't know how to act around them.
- No, because I don't care enough about them.
- Other (please comment)

* How important do you feel celebrities, celebrity gossip, celebrity news, interaction with celebrities (i.e. concerts, etc), and similar are in your daily life?

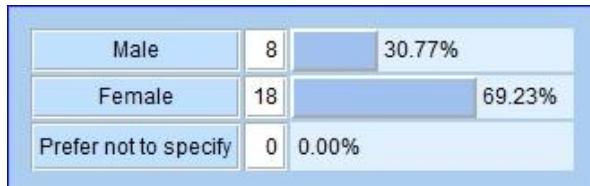
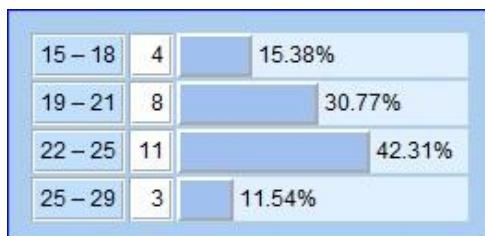
- Very important. I am constantly engaged with celebrities and their life.
- Quite important. I try to know as much about the celebrity world as possible.
- Moderately important. I don't go out of my way to find out about celebrities and their world, apart from very few celebrities I really like.
- Not very important. I might be curious about some celebrities but do not go out of my way to find out about them.
- Not important at all. I don't engage with celebrities at all
- Other (please comment)

If you have any further comments on your relationship/interaction with celebrities and/or Twitter, please do this here:

Thank you for taking part in my survey! I really appreciate you taking the time to help me out. =)

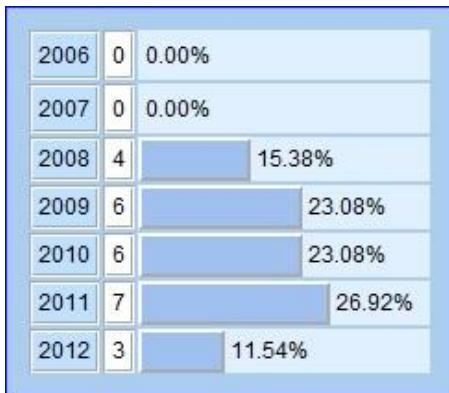
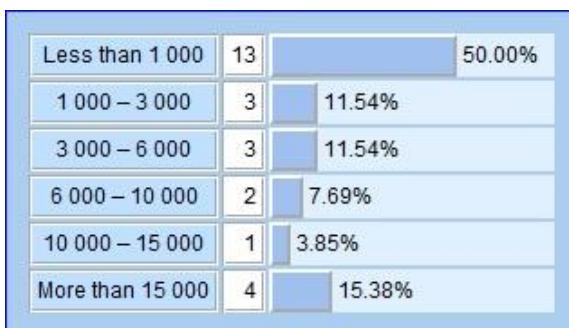
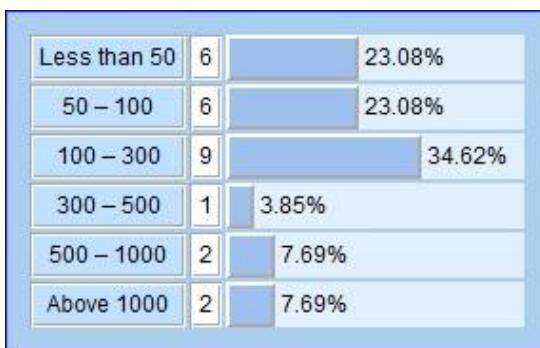
Appendix 4

Questionnaire Results – Total completed questionnaires: 26

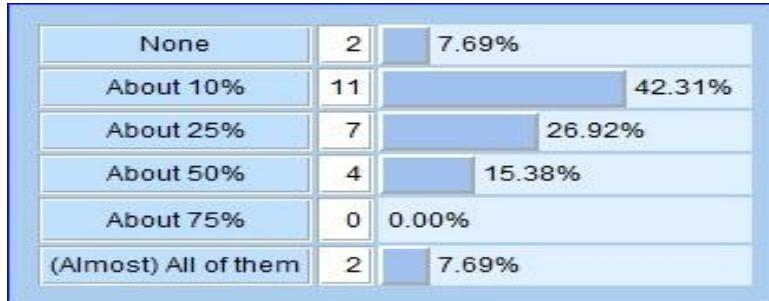
Question 1* - What is your gender?**Question 2* - What is your age group?****Question 3* - What country do you live in?**

ID	Text Answers (26)
11425786	UK
11426548	England
11427539	England
11482619	England
11482645	UK
11482727	England
11484332	England
11489741	UK
11492625	UK
11516439	England
11595874	England
11604509	England
11634744	England
11636784	Britain
11636990	England
11637401	Uk
11637803	United Kingdom
11638724	England
11639506	United Kingdom
11656384	England
11656386	England
11658637	UK
11658970	England

11659049	England
11659458	England
11661800	United Kingdom

Question 4* - When did you sign up for Twitter?**Question 5* - Since you joined Twitter, how many tweets have you posted?****Question 6* - How many Twitter accounts do you follow?**

Question 7* - Of the Twitter accounts you follow, how many of them are “celebrities” (please only include those with 100 000 + followers)?



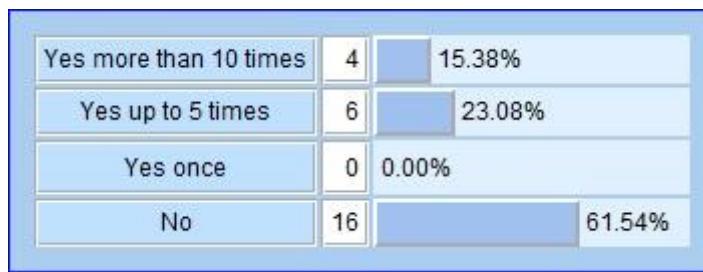
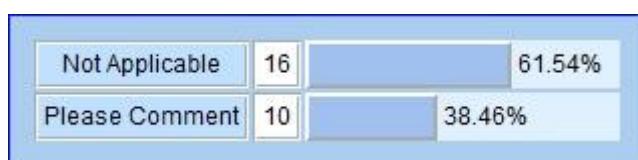
Question 8* - Out of these celebrities, how many are musical artists (singers, musicians, band members, DJs, etc)?



Question 9 - List the three celebrities you follow the most attentively:

Rihanna	Paramore	Tim Minchin
Jessie J	Professor Green	Rizzle Kicks
Stephen Fry	Ricky Gervais	Dutch Singer Tim Knol
Ricky Gervais	Rio Ferdinand	Stephen Fry
Ricky Gervais	Jimmy Carr	Alan Sugar
Rihanna	Kim Kardashian	Chris Brown
Dawn Porter	Russell Tovey	Jessie J
Kevin Spacey	n/a	n/a
n/a		
Miranda Hart	Stephen Fry	David Mitchell
The Feeling	Tim Minchin	Justin Bieber
n/a	n/a	n/a
Jimmy Carr	Brea Grant	Ricky Gervais
Peter serafinowicz	Stephen fry	Brandon boyd
simon pegg	gordon ramsay	thomas keller
Simon cowell	Beyonce	Jlo
Pink	Jessie J	Steven Fry
n/a		
Stephen Fry	Tim Minchin	Peter Serafinowicz

Rihanna	Katy Perry	Shontelle
Rihanna	Melissa Joan Hart	Katy Perry
Rihanna	Lady Gaga	Eminem
n/a		
Rihanna	Rihanna	Rihanna
Rihanna	Shakira	Nicole Scherzinger
Rihanna	demi lovato	cassie ventura

Question 10* - Have you retweeted any celebrities?**Question 11* - Have you tweeted at, or replied to tweets from celebrities?****Question 12* - If you have retweeted/tweeted at and/or replied to tweets from celebrities, have they ever sent a tweet back?****Question 13* - If the celebrity did reply, how did that make you feel?**

ID	Please Comment
11482619	Appreciative
11595874	noticed.
11636990	Appreciated
11656386	Special
11656384	Amazing!!
11658637	I was so happy, I couldn't believe
11658970	Acknowledged
11659049	more than happy!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
11659458	Amazing!
11661800	Best feeling ever

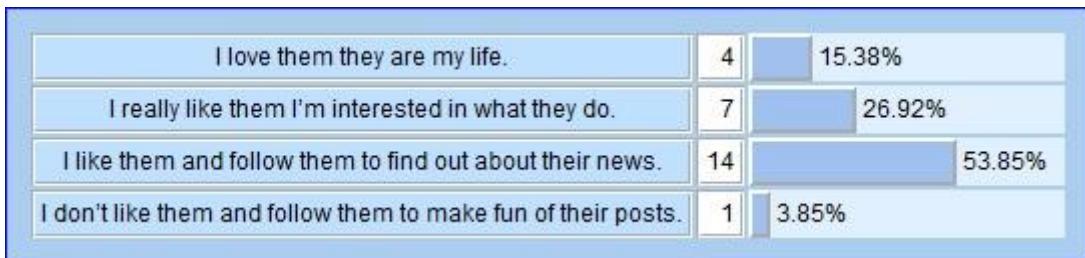
Question 14* - If the celebrity did not reply, how did that make you feel?



ID	Please Comment
11425786	A bit disappointed but I didn't really care.
11426548	Wasn't fussed, I wouldn't ask a question I just tag them when I'm going to their concert or something like that.
11482619	Indifferent
11482727	I didn't expect them to reply, so I didn't feel bad in anyway
11484332	A little disappointed, would have been exciting to get a reply.
11595874	doesn't bother me.
11604509	Indifferent, who would expect them to?
11634744	I didn't mind at all. I know they're busy people.
11636784	Completely unfussed
11637401	Sad and lonely. Like the gone off pineapple you forgot to eat.
11637803	A bit disappointed, you hear about them always tweeting their fans then you don't get a mention, is a little disappointing
11638724	Indifferent, I didn't expect it.
11639506	Wasn't too bothered, they must get bombarded with Tweets every second!

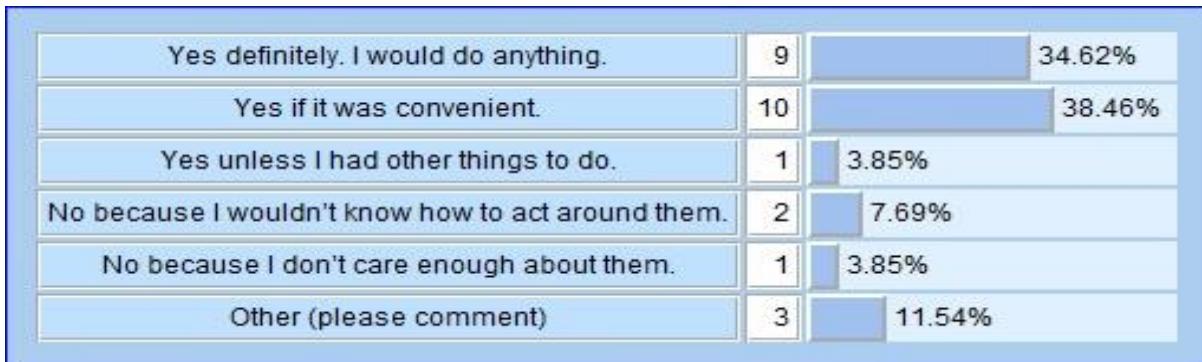
11656386	Ignored
11656384	Not good but can always try again
11658970	Understand that they cannot respond to all tweets.
11659049	very sad
11659458	They get millions of replies so I don't mind them not noticing me.

Question 15* - How close do you feel to the celebrities you follow?



ID	Further Comments:
11637401	I must admit i dont tweet often as alot of my closer friends dont use it but the celeb stuff can be jokes. Ftr, i dont follow the people i said specifically but you get the giist
11489741	I mainly follow organisations, generally it's quite impersonal
11659049	i love Rihanna

Question 16* - If you had a chance to meet the celebrities you like, would you?



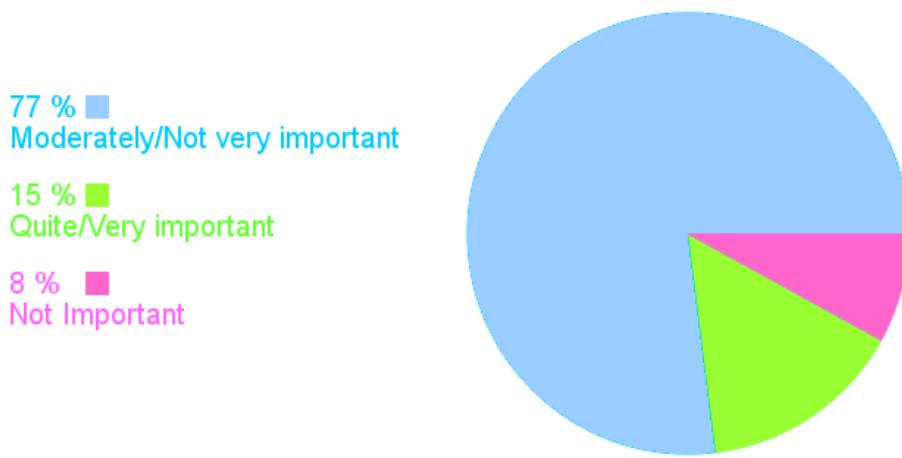
ID	Other (please comment)
11426548	Yes, if possible.
11637803	Yes I definitely would love to meet them but I wouldn't say Id do anything to meet them, if I got the chance then definitely
11659049	please help me meet rihanna!

Question 17* - How important do you feel celebrities, celebrity gossip, celebrity news, interaction with celebrities (i.e. concerts, etc), and similar are in your daily life?



Question 18 - If you have any further comments on your relationship/interaction with celebrities and/or Twitter, please do this here:

ID	Text Answers (3)
11489741	I follow select celebrities for their work, in the main I find the popularity of celebrity personal lives and gossip columns incredibly tedious.
11636990	It is important to me to follow the newest updates of celebrities whom I look up to, as they have the newest information in their field of work which then filters through to the people below. Certain pieces of information you will not find through other forms of media. Whether or not this information influences people can be viewed with discretion. Often contacting a celebrity can be difficult and with the aid of Twitter that contact can cut out the middle and legal people involved. I often see celebrities retweeting birthday messages and charitable tweets. Which is pretty cool for promoting those people which couldn't be done without the aid of such social network.
11659458	Rihanna follows me!

Figures - Questionnaire Results – Question 16 and 17**Would participant meet the celebrities they follow, if they were given the chance?**Figure 1**How important are celebrities in your everyday life?**Figure 2

Appendix 5**Focus Group****Initial Message:**

Hey everyone

As we have had so many problems agreeing on a time and place, here is the message we agreed on instead. I've spoken to some of you individually already, but here is what I need from you.

First off, read the three questions to start the conversation:

1. Do you feel Twitter makes celebrities more attainable?
2. Do you feel Twitter makes connecting with celebrities easier?
3. Do you believe Twitter makes you feel closer to a celebrity than other social media platforms, including Facebook, MySpace and YouTube?

Now if you could just voice your opinions on those questions and then (as this is a group message) if you see someone say something that you agree/disagree with, please comment on that too. I need some extended opinions I can use in my dissertation.

Everything will end up in the appendix of my dissertation and I might use quotes throughout my dissertation, however everything is anonymous so no names will be mentioned.

Already a massive thank you for helping me out with this.

Participant 1:

1. I don't quite understand this question - do you mean it makes it easier to become a celebrity? If so then yes, I do, since all you need to do is to post one or two popular tweets or tweet on a popular topic, get retweeted by someone already popular and you're already well on your way.
2. Superficially it does, however, I don't think it means you are any more connected than if you follow or comment on their blog or get an autograph from them. Some may feel closer since tweets are felt to be more personal and less organised by agents like features on Facebook or YouTube.
3. It does until you realise that many tweets that come from the accounts of famous people are not actually written by them, but by someone else, just like on Facebook or any other social media site. Take the example of Barack Obama - all of his tweets are written in the first person although they come from members of his team. There are only a few tweets that are specifically marked as being from him personally. The same

applies for his wife's new account. However, there are some like Stephen Fry who write their own tweets, and these make you feel much closer to them.

—
Me:

Clarification to question 1. I meant as in, does it feel more like the celebrity is just a normal person and you can have a conversation on Twitter and maybe become friends, like you would with other "normal" Twitter users. Sorry that wasn't clear.

—
Participant 1:

Cool, here's a new number 1 then

1. Nope, I have to say that to me, it just feels like another website where agents can spam followers with event notices and adverts and where tweets are regulated. I don't think there are many celebrities that are genuinely themselves on Twitter just like any other site. You very rarely find a personal profile anywhere - it's always sponsored pages or similar.

—
Participant 2:

I think [Participant 1] got it on point tbh. For question 1, as [Participant 1] said, you're gonna feel closer if u can tell it's written straight from their mouth. It depends on who the celeb is though, if it's like Beyonce obviously she's not gonna be writing it. One of her management are doing it.

2. Was well said and correct by [Participant 1].

3. In addition, it's like when a celebrity get their account verified. Then it turns out it was sum spotty dude locked in his room being an imposter. I guess it's down to everyone's level of trust, and how easily they are persuaded.

My space worked for a short time but then with most things the fad soon wore off. And too many people used the story "oh I was found via my space" drop me out!

—
Participant 1:

Yeah who uses MySpace these days? haha

—
Participant 2:

My point exactly.

Participant 3:

I do believe twitter makes celebrities appear more attainable to fans especially as it seems to be the main social network that celebrities use now. I also believe twitter makes connecting with celebrities easier as they are there to "follow" and to keep up with their daily lives, so there are not so many strict procedures that facebook and other social networking sites have. Same as fans may feel closer to celebrities due to the ability to retweet and be retweeted by the celebrities themselves. However, I do believe that twitter may in fact cause trouble for celebrities due to this as it allows for "fans" to become obsessed as a retweet to some may be taken on board as a direct acknowledgement of the person, and not the tweet itself.

Participant 4:

Social Media is just the 21st Century of things we always had in the past. Celebrities always spoke to the red top newspapers to give fans an insight of their lives. Unfortunately, that was tainted when their comments were freely edited without their knowledge. The celebrities who do the same on Social media site, give the illusion that they are commenting directly to their fans through an unbiased means of communication - however the majority of celebrities use ghost writers and it is a growing trend for celebrities to use Twitter as a means of advertising directly to their target audience.

On the rare occasion the celebrity responding to your comment it will definitely make you feel closer as the celebrity has actually acknowledged your response. Again, in the decades that passed we had fan mail, which was a much slower process of pretty much the same thing. This was tainted with rumours of ghost writers and same is bound to happen to Social Media sites.

With other forms of the media being slower and less direct approach to the celebrities we follow, social Media gives us a faster and possibly more detailed insight into the life of celebrities and does make them more attainable.

As for Twitter being compared to other form of social media, I personally do not think that Twitter offers anything that myspace or facebook did not but being the current trend it is more popular and could give fans an impression they are easier to access.

Participant 3:

I think twitter defo makes celebs more attainable, or at least it would make one feel so. Twitter is used to post random thoughts and happenings, so can give a fan the illusion of being closer to the celeb than they are.

Participant 5:**1. Do you feel Twitter makes celebrities more attainable?**

Yes, many celebrities update their statuses throughout the day with plenty of inane stuff so everyone can feel that they know the celebrity better because they know their day to day lives. They are also more attainable because, when a big event occurs, they will usually comment and people can have instant access to their opinions. It also removes the journalist middle man so enables people to read them in the first person rather than through a third person perspective, although this is somewhat undermined by the fact that big celebrities usually have somebody else controlling their social media.

2. Do you feel Twitter makes connecting with celebrities easier?

For reasons mentioned above, yes and no. I haven't ever tried to speak to a celebrity online but I don't imagine many of them personally respond, nor do I believe that they would actually check their feeds to see what you had been saying.

3. Do you believe Twitter makes you feel closer to a celebrity than other social media platforms, including Facebook, MySpace and YouTube?

More so than MySpace because that's often used for commercial purposes anyway, i.e. since it's become a social media space largely for music it is more a place to learn about an artist or band and listen to /download their music rather than learn about them as individuals. Communicating with a celebrity on YouTube creates a very different relationship, it might make you feel closer because you can see the celebrity and (if the video is a personal video) you can feel that they are addressing themselves directly to you. However, if it is a general or personal video your commenting on them does not make you feel as close as if you were to comment on Twitter or Facebook because you comment is more anonymous, there is no personal profile, profile picture and usernames are usually nicknames. The difference between Facebook and Twitter as ways to feel close to celebrities seems to depend on how they use the accounts, with both platforms they are able to update their thoughts and post things they find interesting which you can see directly, you are also capable of communicating things directly to them on both platforms. Whether the celebrity uses Twitter and Facebook personally or commercially would seem to be the difference.

Participant 6:**1. Do you feel Twitter makes celebrities more attainable?**

Yes, twitter makes some celebs seem more down to earth. The difference between normal media and twitter is the way twitter isn't edited like magazine articles or interviews are so it seems a lot more like its really them talking. However its more apparent with certain celebs for example less high status celebs because the some of the biggest celebs dont tweet themselves anyway (as someone else said) i find tweets from people like pro green and tyler the creator make you feel closer to them as real people in contrast to kanye and justin timberlake who never tweet themselves.

2. Do you feel Twitter makes connecting with celebrities easier?

Yes, it gives you a platform to contact them directly (if the celeb is in charge on their own twitter) plus when you see retweets from them then it makes you feel like they actually look at their mentions from fans. A good example is justin beiber as he retweets his fans a lot and he follows back a lot of them which is something celebs rarely do.

3. Do you believe Twitter makes you feel closer to a celebrity than other social media platforms, including Facebook, MySpace and YouTube?

Yes, I've kind of answered this in the other two questions but yes because for example with facebook there is no way to tell if it is the actual celeb or a fake which makes the verified tick on twitter a very good idea and a reason i think twitter has become more popular than other platforms is because of this verification tool. Also on twitter being able to reply directly to a celebs tweet makes you feel closer to them.

Appendix 6**Interview Transcript**

Interviewee: Heidi Boston - employee of All Leo – an online PR and social media company for artists of major labels, including Universal, EMI, and Sony BMG

Date: 10.04.2012

Place: All Leo offices – Barbican, London

Me: I only have five questions but then I might have more follow on questions to what you say. Right, first question is, how long have you worked in PR?

Heidi: I have worked, well I work predominantly in social media. I've worked for All Leo for about, coming up to three years now. Before that, I graduated from uni and I did various bits of work experience and went to work for Bliss Magazine. Ended up working in their editorial department, fashion department, then went on to online; discovered the wonderful world of online, and that's how I pretty much fell into it. And then I went to do some work experience at the Outside Organisation, which is one of the leading entertainment PR companies in the country. Did about a month work experience there and then went back to Bliss and then came back to All Leo. So yeah, I've been doing it for about three and a half years now in total.

Me: Do you prefer it being online rather than the more traditional offline PR?

Heidi: Yeah, I never thought I would. I kind of fell into it when I was doing experience at Bliss, and then also at Outside Organisation the more traditional side of things, I kind of felt more inclined to move towards the online kind of things. Maybe because it was moving at a lot quicker pace. Things were different every day. It just seemed a bit more exciting and different as well to what I've done before.

Me: Okay, so how long have you used social media platforms, especially Twitter?

Heidi: Social media platforms in general, I guess I started using the likes of MySpace about, oh god, ten years ago probably, and then moved on to Facebook while I was at university. Signed a petition to make sure that nobody else could use it other than students. That obviously didn't quite happen. (laughter) Twitter I've probably been using for about two years now. Not as long as I probably should have. I was kind of, not against it at first, but I think because I worked in it day to day, I didn't really want to be tweeting myself.

Me: So how long have you used the platforms within your work?

Heidi: Within the work place, probably for three years, coming up to three years now. Twitter came last, but yeah.

Me: Okay, so was Twitter sort of within the three years?

Heidi: It kind of crept its way in. I mean since I, when I first started working here we were using Facebook, Bebo, and MySpace. Those were the main platforms that we were getting the word out to. And then Twitter introduced itself and then probably six months later I started using that as well. It was just kind of on the side but now it's become one of the main platforms that we use to get the message out there.

Me: And how do you use Twitter for the artists you work for?

Heidi: We use it in various different ways. We use it just to promote sales-y messages. We also use it to keep the fans entertained and interact with them in between album releases or in downtime as well. To keep them talking, to keep them entertained, to know that they're still sitting there and they're active. So when you need them for an album release or a single release or an event or whatever, they're there. They know that you still care about them. They know that you're still talking about them. And you can activate them to do whatever you want really, if you ask for it. We use it - what else do we use it for? I'm trying to have a think. Mainly just for sales messaging, marketing messages, just interacting with the fans. Just so the fans have contact with their artist. A lot of our artists do tweet themselves. They're brilliant at it. A lot of them were a bit unsure about it at first. You help them set up a profile and they don't really know what to put. Just like we were, really, when we first started tweeting. You don't know who wants to know what, how much information you should put out there, who is going to be listening. And then once they've had a go a few times, and you've kind of given them a few little pointers, that's it. They're on their way. And they're brilliant. We sometimes can draft things for them and they can tweak it. But the majority of them do it themselves. It's just a really great way of fans getting that little bit of contact with their superstar really. So yeah.

Me: So, who decides what information does get published and what doesn't, on Twitter?

Heidi: For us, that would be the label, if it's on the marketing side, if it's focusing on the music. Anything else is really up to the artist. The artist would have the final say. Sometimes management step in. Depends what really they're talking about. If it's more the music marketing side of things it would be the label that has the final say, but at the end of the day it's the artist's personal account so they would get the final say.

Me: And do you feel that the fans and artists interaction is actually real, or do you think it is more creating a fantasy for the fans?

Heidi: I think increasingly it's becoming even more realistic. Well it is real. A lot of the artists I work with are actually brilliant at interacting with the fans. And I think a lot of them are sometimes a bit weary. I think, Paid Money, who we're working with at the moment, he'd - they'd go "Is that really him who's tweeting me". But as you're get to know his tweets, then you realise his personality is coming through and he's posting up Instagram photos, which he's brilliant at. They love it. And yeah, I think it really helps the artist as well to get their personality across.

Me: Do you think that with things such as Rihanna having a go at her fans, which happened beginning of this year, in February – I don't know if you heard about this - Basically a fan tweeted about Rihanna and Chris Brown doing a song together, and that she shouldn't have done that because she's a role model for young girls. And going back to someone that hit her is just unacceptable and she said she lost a lot of respect for her. Then Rihanna tweeted back saying "I'm getting cyberbullied by" and tagged this person and she said "shut up, this is my life". Do you feel like that is your work, if it was one of your artists, do you feel that it would be your responsibility to sort of clean up the mess after? Or do you think that is okay for the artist to do because obviously it is their personal account?

Heidi: I think at the end of the day, it is their personal account, so they have freedom of speech and they can say whatever they like. But there have been occasions when, yeah, we have had to step in for any kind of reason. Whether something's leaked in the press and there's a story that's going on about a member of Take That in the Sun and someone tweeted about it and all the fans are getting talking on Twitter and asking the artist, or maybe an artist has said something back, like Rihanna, where we do have to step in. And we have to kind of take the upper hand, to an extent, just to kind of calm things down and make sure it doesn't really go any further. Again, everything that we put up is generally approved by management and the label, so they would have the final say. We're here to advice really. We are the experts, we'd like to think, and we're here to advice what the best step to take is, really.

Me: Overall, do you think that Twitter is going to keep being used and getting more popular, or do you think it is going to die and something new is going to come along?

Heidi: I think something new is always going to come along, every month or so, and try and push it out. But I think it's pretty stable now. I think it's gotten quite massive, with such a massive celebrity following as well, that people just won't stop using it. If people keep, if celebrities especially, keep on tweeting, I think they're still going to have a following. Everybody wants to know, or wants to have a little bit of an access to their favourite musician or favourite act/actor's life. And that's how they get it. And I think if that's how their getting it, yes, it will continue. I think Facebook as well will keep getting stronger and stronger. If they don't mess up their privacy settings. They just bought out Instagram for a billion pounds. It came out yesterday on Mashbook, they bought it out for a billion dollars. Apparently a lot of fans went straight across to Instagram and just deleted their accounts because they were worried about Facebook's privacy settings, and them getting a hold of information that they shouldn't really be getting a hold of. But no, I think that Twitter will stick around. Definitely.

Me: And do you think Twitter is better for connecting with your favourite artist than Facebook?

Heidi: Yes, because it is more of an ongoing stream. On Facebook we don't really encourage, and we don't really do it ourselves, that much interaction between the artist and the fans. Just because, mainly because of the layout of Facebook as well. It would just fill everybody's newsfeed and that's not the point of Facebook. It would just encourage people to unlike your page, which you don't want. With Twitter, it's more of

an ongoing conversation and it's easier for artists to talk to their fans really. So I think it'll keep growing and growing.

Me: And do you use Twitter and Facebook in first person or third person? Like, do you talk about them or do you talk as if your them on Twitter and Facebook?

Heidi: A bit of both, really. It depends on what kind of artist your working with, how active they are on Twitter. If we need to post something on their behalf, like if they're really busy, then we will do it in first person. Or, we do the majority of our posts in third person and we also do a little sign off, whether it be Take That HQ, which we don't use, but just as an example. Or Team Take That or something. Just so fans can differentiate between their posts and our posts. Every now and again we will need to post in first person for them, but like I said, we are lucky that the majority of our acts tweet themselves and are brilliant at it. So yeah, we really just step in on the marketing side of things.

Me: So most of the personal tweets are actually personal from the artists themselves?

Heidi: Yeah, and we'll just step in if they're busy or if they have a busy promo week we'll draft messages in first person and if they're happy with it, we'll put them out. But yeah, the majority of the time it's totally them, which I don't think a lot of people believe, but yes.

Me: Okay, cool. I think that's all my questions. Thank you very much for your time.

Heidi: Cool. No problem.