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**Celebrity and Fandom on Twitter:
Examining Electronic Dance Music in the Digital Age**

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by

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Thesis

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Dedication

To G&C and my twin.

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Abstract

Celebrity and Fandom on Twitter: Examining Electronic Dance Music in the Digital Age

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This thesis looks at electronic dance music (EDM) celebrity and fandom through the eyes of four producers on Twitter. Twitter was initially designed as a conversation platform, loosely based on the idea of instant-messaging but emerged in its current form as a micro-blog social network in 2009. EDM artists count on the website to promote their music, engage with fans, discover new songs, and contact each other. More specifically, Twitter is an extension of a celebrity's private life, as most celebrities access Twitter from their cellphones and personal computers, cutting out gatekeepers from controlling their image.

Four power player producers in EDM are used as case studies for analysis of the intimacy and reach Twitter provides. Chosen because of their visibility, style, and recognition, Deadmau5, Diplo, Skrillex, and Tiësto represent different EDM subgenres, run their own record labels, have dedicated fans, and are accessible through social media.

All use Twitter to announce shows, interact with fans, promote contests and merchandise, and share stories and pictures of their personal lives with their fan followers. Tweets are a direct line for fans to communicate with these celebrities through the reply, retweet (RT), and mention functions on Twitter. Fan tweets to and from these EDM celebrities are also examined by looking at celebrity-fan encounters in the cyber world and the real world, aftereffects of celebrity RTs, and engagement with said celebrities.

The internet is the lifeline for this subculture as it changed the way EDM is shared, promoted, and packaged. Twitter and other social media sites give producers the exposure they never experienced with traditional media and allow fans to participate in a global subculture. To sum up, this is a study on how Twitter influenced EDM and personalized the relationship between producers and fans.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Literature Review and Theory	4
Method	10
Outline of Chapters	11
Chapter 2: History	12
Where it all Began	17
How to Dress Like a Raver	22
Where it is Now	27
Chapter 3: EDM Celebrity	29
Twitter	32
Celebrities on Twitter	34
Conclusion	38
Chapter 4: Fandom.....	40
Fan Identification	41
Fan-Celebrity Encounters	43
Fan Behaviors	47
Conclusion	49
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	51
Bibliography	56

List of Figures

Figure 2.1: Skrillex performs at Electric Daisy Carnival Las Vegas 2011	15
Figure 2.2: The Marlboro Experience at Nocturnal Wonderland Texas 2012.	21
Figure 2.3: DIY style at Ultra Music Festival Miami 2011	24
Figure 2.4: How to Dress Like an EDM Producer.....	25
Figure 2.5: NYT LYF advertisement in a Miami shopping mall 2012.	26
Figure 4.1: Fans run into Skrillex during Miami Music Week 2011.....	46

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Are you ready for the ruff neck bass?” are the only words heard in “Ruffneck (FULL Flex)” the second single from American electronic dance music (EDM or rave music) producer Skrillex’s third album More Monsters and Sprites. The hook repeats for several lines before hardcore electronic wobbles with hard-hitting syncopated drum patterns come blaring into your eardrums at 140 beats per minute (bpm). LA-native Skrillex is a five-time GRAMMY nominee and is credited with popularizing and commodifying the black British dubstep sound to predominantly white audiences in North America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand.

Although a portion of his popularity stems from his former band, From First to Last, most of Skrillex’s fans know Sonny Moore by his pseudonym. His EDM career began when he uploaded his debut album My Name is Skrillex onto his MySpace page in early 2010, launching him to internet stardom. At twenty-four-years old, Skrillex has been immensely popular since his second album’s release two years ago. He stays busy with world tours, award shows, festival appearances, and EP releases.

What made Skrillex’s three GRAMMY wins in 2012 noteworthy was that he was the first American dance producer to win not only one but both awards for Best Dance Recording and Best Dance/Electronic Album for his second release Scary Monsters and Nice Sprites. He is also the first EDM artist to be nominated for Best New Artist. These wins affirmed that the Recording Academy figured out what EDM was. The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) certified the lead single “Scary Monsters and Nice Sprites” Gold on December 9, 2011, meaning it sold more than five hundred thousand copies in America. Skrillex was also nominated for Best New Artist.

For the song to sell enough copies to become Gold is a huge achievement because dubstep and its variants were not seen as radio-friendly or commercial as were some types of house music and for the most part stayed in clubs and festivals. Most EDM songs are heard on SiriusXM or discovered on YouTube as radio and television seldom carry EDM songs on rotation. As of this writing, the original “Scary Monsters and Nice Sprites” YouTube upload from Skrillex’s official account has over 110 million views, among the most viewed videos of all time, fifty-second most discussed video of all time, seventy-third most-liked and top favorite video of all time. The video views on his official YouTube page total almost 775 million, which does not include repeat viewings (TheOfficialSkrillex). His success at the GRAMMYs, RIAA certification, online popularity, and international fan base helped bring EDM from obscurity to fame.

“Skrillex wasn’t the only EDM artist to rack up several nominations” in 2012 (Chloe 2011). Canadian producer Deadmau5, née Joel Zimmerman, earned three nominations for Best Dance Recording, Best Dance/Electronica Album, and Best Remixed Recording, Non-Classical, but lost to Skrillex in all categories. He performed his nominated song “Raise Your Weapon” in a music medley with fellow producer David Guetta, rockers Foo Fighters, and rappers Lil Wayne and Chris Brown. Besides this medley performance, the only other EDM act to perform during a GRAMMY live show was French house duo Daft Punk as part of a surprise performance with Kanye West at the 50th GRAMMY Awards in 2008. Deadmau5 had previously been nominated in 2009 for Best Remixed Recording, Non-Classical.

Philadelphia-based Diplo is another EDM producer who has worked with West and also was nominated for a GRAMMY Award in 2009.¹ Diplo, born Thomas Wesley

¹ His collaboration “Paper Planes” with British Sri Lankan rapper M.I.A. sold three million copies in the US and was nominated for Record of the Year in 2009. At the awards, M.I.A. performed “Paper Planes” as well as the remix “Swagga Like Us” with rappers T.I., Jay-Z, Lil Wayne, and Kanye West.

Pentz, produces for superstars like Beyoncé, Chris Brown, No Doubt, Usher, Justin Bieber, and other famous groups from Korea, England, and South Africa. His productions for big name artists sell millions of copies and receive substantial radio play compared to that of Skrillex, Deadmau5, and most other EDM producers while his own music keeps him in the international underground scene. He is everywhere and nowhere simultaneously.

One DJ-turned-producer maintained his reign as the highest paid and most well known EDM musician by staying in the forefront of the latest technological innovations and social media trends. Dutch producer Tijs Michiel Verwest began as a nightclub DJ in his hometown but emerged as Tiësto in the late 1990s after several name changes and collaborations. His 2000 remix of Delerium's "Silence" was a huge success as it "was the first house track ever broadcast on daytime radio in North America" (Ultra Records), and brought him international stardom, spurred countless other remixes, and is still popular today. His third studio album *Elements of Life* was nominated for Best Electronic/Dance Album in 2008. Over the last decade, Tiësto brought electronic music out of the clubs and warehouses and into sold out arenas and stadiums. One of his most famous and memorable performances was the Opening Ceremony of the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece, which marked the first time an electronic producer headlined such a mainstream, mammoth event.² He made the technological transition from turntable to laptop, expanded his brand with new ventures and endorsements, performed for millions of people around the world, and helped influence a new generation of producers on the internet through social media.

² Deadmau5 performed at two Olympics-affiliated events at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver but not the Opening or Closing Ceremony.

These and other musicians are the younger generation of EDM producers: “Millennials” who grew up with the internet, watched MTV, created music on computers, bought music online, and restyled earlier EDM sounds. Unlike their predecessors, Skrillex, Deadmau5, Diplo, and Tiësto had better access to media (traditional, new, and social) and fans—especially younger fans who have a hard time listening to new songs and musicians performing in age-restricted nightclubs and raves. Social media is “just the way the world is . . . it’s kind of the norm now,” Skrillex asserts, “It’s definitely important in the sense that it’s a very basic tool that everybody uses” (Francis 2011). These producers and others use Twitter to promote their music, engage with fans, discover new songs, and contact each other. This thesis's research question considers how EDM producers and fans have used Twitter.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

Although there is no consensus on what social media is, it is “often used to describe the collection of software that enables individuals and communities to gather, communicate, share, and in some cases collaborate or play” (Boyd 2009). Social media semi-overlaps web 2.0 and social network websites in that it is a creative medium where users can meet and collaborate together to produce and share user-generated content. It also includes online multiplayer computer games like League of Legends and micro-blogging platforms like Twitter. These examples, a virtual game world and social networking site or social network service (SNS), are two of the six categories of social media Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, 59) list and who also include collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, and virtual social worlds. SNSs are “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse

their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (Boyd and Ellison 2007, 211). In other words, social media is a virtual community where users can update, follow, or collaborate with others.

Sixty-nine percent of all online adults in America use social networks (Politics + Internet/Tech: Our Research 2012), but the bulk of users are below thirty years of age: ninety-two percent of Americans between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine (Politics + Internet/Tech: Our Research 2012) and eighty percent of teens use social media networks (Lenhart et al. 2011). Social media websites like Twitter are available through the internet as well as mobile applications ready for download on smartphones. This makes posting, viewing, and searching for updates from friends or others immediate and easily accessible—tweeters could tweet anytime and anywhere.

Twitter began as a free, instant-messaging platform for all ages when it was launched on July 15, 2006, but has been further developed and utilized as an SNS and micro-blogging website that allows users to post a short update on a cyber platform via instant message (IM), short message service (SMS or text message), e-mail, or blog.³ Unlike other SNS relationships, Twitter is not reciprocal meaning that “if member A chooses to follow member B, this does not entail that member B will automatically gain access to member A's profile information” (Page 2012, 183).

Fifteen percent of adults and sixteen percent of teens use Twitter (Lenhart et al. 2011) compared with thirty-two percent of adults between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine (Smith and Brenner 2012). In a 2011 PEW Research poll, twenty-five percent of respondents used any kind of social media for “Reading comments by celebrities, athletes, or politicians” and thirty-one percent of these users use Twitter to do

³ Shortening of the word weblog.

so (Smith 2011). The PEW study also discovered that these tweeters⁴ are more interested in connecting with public figures than other social media users who do not use Twitter (Smith 2011). Pop culture and its stars are frequently among the most followed and talked about subjects on Twitter. For example, over seventy-five thousand tweets were about the 2012 GRAMMY Awards, making it the most popular subject on the website and becoming a trending topic.

Tweeters used the denotation #grammys to express their opinions on Skrillex winning Best New Artist, follow him during the award show, or talk about anything else related to the ceremony. This # symbol, called a hashtag, links keywords and topics to help create what former Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey calls “massively shared experiences” (Sarno 2009). Almost 200 million active users are on twitter, and with around thirty-three percent of tweeters using the website daily, close to sixty-six million people login everyday (Rainie et al. 2011). It is the eighth most popular site in the world and tenth most popular site in the United States (Alexa 2012). With an audience this large, other celebrities like “politicians, artists, scientists and health experts, academics, industrialists, theologians, and public figures” who are less perceptible in traditional media dominated by entertainers (Sternheimer 2011, 2) are able to have a significant presence on Twitter. EDM producers like Deadmau5, Diplo, Skrillex, and Tiësto can easily promote themselves, share music, and develop and maintain their fan base. Twitter is also an extension of representing a celebrity’s private life and a direct line for communication with celebrities because most tweet from their cellphones and computers. Tiësto tweets on his phone when he is bored, “When you travel a lot, sometimes you have half an hour

⁴ An account holder on Twitter who posts and reads tweets. Also known as twitterers or twitter users.

here or there in the airport when you're waiting" (Mason 2012) and frequently responds to tweets from his followers.

This thesis is an examination of Twitter's use by EDM celebrities and fans. The available literature on celebrity and fandom is indeed extensive, spanning almost half a century, and mainly focused on film stars or A-list entertainers. Fortunately, most of this available literature is applicable to EDM producers as they are "watched, noticed, and known by a critical mass of strangers" (Sternheimer 2011, 2). The specific goal of this literature review section is to summarize what the published literature is and why it is relevant to EDM. In sum, this is an exploration into the relationship of EDM celebrities and fans on Twitter to show how the internet has helped this subculture in America.

Celebrities are "people well-known for their well-knownness" (Boorstin 1967, 57) and are significant, created, and have a private and public construct. They must also be famous, what Chris Rojek dubs "renown," or "the informal attribution of distinction on an individual within a given social network" (2001, 12). Without renown, Diplo is just another "white dude from Florida" (Pytlik 2005). However, not many dudes or Floridians are friends with and date celebrities, are power players within international music scenes, and have endorsements with BlackBerry and Alexander Wang. Diplo stands out because of what he does on a daily basis, his creative talents and larger than life persona (Rojek 2001, 12). Similar to the Bruce Springsteen fans Daniel Cavicchi discusses in his book, Tramps Like Us: Music and Meaning Among Springsteen Fans, fans of Diplo admire him because of his "qualities opposed to the typical rock star" and, like Springsteen, he appears "more down-to-earth" than other musicians (Cavicchi 1998, 65). Fans form an emotional connection with celebrities "despite the absence of direct, personal reciprocity" (Rojek 2001, 12), and their ability to be seen as a real person on Twitter leads to their authenticity (Cavicchi 1998).

To differentiate between a well-known or (in)famous person, Larry Z. Leslie lists six distinct features to define a celebrity (2011):

leads a public life (is involved in work or activity in some area of the public sphere), has accomplishments of interest and importance to the general public, is well known or famous (usually because of those accomplishments), seeks to become a celebrity by finding ways to be regularly seen and heard, thus maintaining status as a well-known, famous individual, is highly visible in the media, connects with the public on a subconscious level, embodying its dreams and desires.

Additionally, the celebrity image is in reality composed of four faces: the public persona, the performer, the worker, and the private self (Staiger 2005, 116; Dyer 1979). Fans most often see the public persona, performer, and worker sides of an EDM celebrity through promotional appearances, performances, interviews, and social media like Twitter.

But celebrities need an audience to sell their image and products to, and “fans genuinely make people famous” (Cashmore 2006, 66). There are several definitions of what a fan is, from the shortening of fanatic from the Latin *fanaticus*, to a zealot for baseball *kranks* during the nineteenth century (Reisman 1950), patrons of prize-fighting (Cashmore 2006, 79), an obsessed individual or hysterical crowd (Jensen 1992, 9), “a person who has a strong interest in or admiration for a particular sport, art form, or famous person” (New Oxford American Dictionary), or “forming a connection” (Cavicchi 1998, 41) and having an ongoing shared relationship with an artist. Jackie Stacey researched female film fans in Britain who described their pleasures in Hollywood stars in terms of their “identification” (1998, 127) with different actresses. Like the word fan, identification had several definitions and described different interpretations. Stacey

expands "identification" as "sympathizing or engaging with a character" (136), watching a film from a character's "point of view" (136), negotiating between "the self and the ideal other" (128), experiencing recognition (128), or enjoying an emotional tie (130).

Stacey's nine identificatory fantasies and practices (1994) are also applicable to EDM producers on Twitter where fans engage with both the celebrity text (tweets) and product (music). When fans listen to music, they become more self aware (Cavicchi 1998, 139) of the subconscious experience and may identify with the producer through song lyrics or live performances. Fans would tweet about their discovery of EDM, then their first listens or favorite songs, then their anticipation of raves, and then proclaiming their place as an EDM fan. At this point, fans would seek out a retweet (RT), a sort of digital autograph, as a form of trophy (Ferris 2011) or souvenir (Cavicchi 1998) for their dedication. "☑ Discovered @tiesto ☑ Fall in love with #EDM ☑ Listen to him LIVE. ☑ Went to a concert twice ☑ Get a signed CD ☑ Get a RT ☐ Meet him" (@santicanglada 2012). These RTs are a digital interaction with a celebrity and a symbol of fan devotion (Stacey 1998).

However, a live performance provides the ultimate connection for a spectator and "represents a powerful meeting of the various forces and people and ideas involved in their participation in musical life" (Cavicchi 1998, 35). There is a ritual involved with attending raves; each one is planned out accordingly, a process for fans known as "adoption" (Jenkins 1992). On Twitter, fans tweet about the concert, discuss when the tickets go on sale, countdown until the performance, broadcast which songs they are looking forward to hearing, and even tweet during the show and talk about it afterward to

their followers or celebrities themselves. Fans are able to create an alternative social community (Jenkins 1992) and make associative relationships (Cavicchi 1998) on Twitter though the use of hashtag keywords in their tweets. “#EDCOrlando was freaking amazing! Thanks @MarkusSchulz @porterrobinson @Tiësto @RealCosmicGate for the best 6 hours of my life!” (@L2RF 2012). Now, any tweeter or non-registered user is able to see a list of the tweets talking about #EDCOrlando, and the fans who went to Electric Daisy Carnival Orlando Fans feel a sense of belonging together or sharing a “communal experience” (Elba 2012) by reading other fans’ tweets of their experience.

METHOD

Because I am asking how EDM producers and fans are using Twitter, I investigate four EDM producers using theory on celebrity culture, fandom, and subcultures to explore their relationship with fans and celebrity images as portrayed on Twitter. I chose these celebrities as research subjects because of their internet presence, musical styles, name recognition, entrepreneurship, nationality, age, ability to generate trends, and frequent interaction with fans.

Tweets from each of the four producers and their fans were compiled from March to November 2012 and recorded in SPSS to determine if Twitter impacted the relationship between celebrity and fan. In order to stay intimate and personal, I have kept examples of tweets in their original format from when they were posted; any grammatical, punctual, or spelling errors are maintained and denoted with “[sic].” The date, time, and uniform resource locator (URL) of each tweet are included in the Bibliography. Tweets that have since been deleted from initial publication are still

available as cache memory on websites⁵ but without a time stamp and URL. Fans are important for entertainment celebrities. Without fans celebrities may have more difficulty making money. Twitter's layout excels in social connectivity because of its concise message requirement and ease of logging in. For three years or more, all the aforementioned producers have performed their distinct internet personalities with their Twitter followers who vary from seven hundred thousand to two-and-a-half million.

The internet is the bloodline for this subculture as it changed the way EDM is shared, promoted, and packaged. Because of this, the majority of the material in this thesis is heavily internet-based, including interviews, videos, pictures, and songs from the artists, fans, and second parties like bloggers and journalists. Some of these visuals and articles are from established music magazines like SPIN and Rolling Stone, but the electronic versions were used instead of the hard copies. The main text analyzed in this paper is the social media site Twitter which provided data for defining what celebrity means in EDM. The heterogeneity of these materials support the notion that EDM was built from a wide range of influences into a global music culture, each participant adding and taking something from it.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This thesis is divided into five chapters, beginning with a general overview of the history of EDM in Chapter 2, then describing what Twitter is and how EDM producers use it in Chapter 3, and ending with EDM fans on Twitter in Chapter 4. The conclusion of this thesis looks at the future of Twitter as a celebrity text and platform for fans to engage with and also reviews the findings from the rest of the chapters.

⁵ Topsy.com was used for this thesis.

Chapter 2: History

Even if I'm a black kid making Baltimore club music, I can use a little bit of gay house music, or techno, or a little bit of dubstep or a rock riff—there's really no holds barred in the way we're producing now. All that matters is that it sounds good, has a big drop, and gets people to go crazy. It doesn't matter if it's fucking cool, or if it's underground, or if it's commercial. We can throw a little bit of everything in there. (Diplo in Van Buskirk 2010)

Electronic dance music (EDM) and the producer are not a new phenomenon. What originated four decades ago with disc jockeys (DJ) mixing music with a turntable transformed over the past two decades into creating music with a computer. When Dutch EDM producer Tiësto started out in the 1980s, he relied on vinyl records to play his sets. As technology advanced and changed, so did the medium for producing music. The two turntables and a mixer have fallen out of favor to a computer with the latest music production software. Instead of a turntable and mixer of days gone by, imagine a laptop or desktop computer with Deckadance, Traktor, Ableton Live, or Fruity Loops Studio. The instruments needed to create a song are included in this software and allow producers to manipulate and mash together different sounds and noises. "It's so easy to make music nowadays with inexpensive software," Tiësto says. "That's a great way to start producing your own tunes . . . you don't need to have a fancy, expensive studio anymore" (Guitar Center 2012).

Tiësto began his musical career in the Netherlands as a DJ playing predominantly house music in clubs; Diplo started in a similar way DJing at parties during college in Philadelphia. Both later dropped the 'DJ' from their musical aliases and began referring to themselves as producers when they started creating songs, not merely playing or remixing them. Producers will DJ their live set at a concert or rave, but a DJ does not produce. Skrillex and Deadmau5 create and remix; therefore, they are considered

producers not DJs. A “DJ” does not refer to spinning vinyl records like it meant in the early days of hip-hop. To complicate things further, records are obsolete as compact discs (CDs) or secure digital (SD) cards are coupled with computers (mostly Apple MacBook Pro) as the medium of choice during live performances. “Technology has changed a lot over the last ten years,” Tiësto explains, “new equipment . . . has made DJing so much more accessible for everybody. Electronic music has become bigger than ever worldwide. I think that’s because the music and technology is now easier to access than ever” (Guitar Center 2012).

The shift to computers has made recording and distribution easier as well. Recording songs can be done in state-of-the-art studio facilities or in bedrooms, then emailed to a record label (if the producer is signed) or uploaded on music-sharing sites like Soundcloud (if looking to be signed) or even YouTube. Uploaded songs can be listened to and downloaded by almost anyone, including record labels and producers who can feature them in their live set, radio show, or online podcast. With the internet, producers can even email half-finished songs to other producers or singers who add their finishing touches to the track before it is ready for distribution. For those who are on tour 300+ days a year, this is the most viable option as no date needs to be set to meet in a studio to co-produce music together.

Additionally, songs and sets can be tweaked minutes before a performance: most noteworthy was Skrillex’s November 28, 2011, appearance at the Leadmill in Sheffield, England, where he debuted his remix for Avicii’s hit single “Levels.” When he appeared on stage to begin his performance, he explained he was late because he “was upstairs finishing this new song, [and] you’re the first to hear it” (Teh1337NoScoper 2011).⁶

⁶ The noticeable difference between the live version and the released version is the use of vocals—the later version featured the original vocals from “Levels,” whereas the live version has no vocals. As of November 2012, the remix had over thirty million views on YouTube.

Unlike other parts in the world, American television and radio did not embrace EDM: few channels and stations were dedicated to the genre and even fewer songs appeared. Record companies distributed records and promoters organized raves although these were almost exclusively in major cities and only the big-name producers performed. Ultra Records is considered the premiere American EDM label and has almost two billion video views on YouTube, making it the twelfth most popular channel on the website and showing the presence in cyberspace (Vidstatsx 2012). Ultra Records not only signs American artists but also licenses foreign songs for American distribution and organizes large-scale music festivals. The first Ultra Music Festival (UMF) was held in Miami as a one-day festival in 1999 and has grown into a six-day (two three-day weekends held in March every year) global dance event that is held annually in five additional countries. American promotional company Insomniac Events currently operates over twelve major festivals every year, including Electric Daisy Carnival, and promotes other raves across the country.

The internet was the main source of communication for spreading the word, sharing the moments, and reliving the experiences of raves, which attracted an interest for potential fans and opened the door to cyber socializing. Music festivals like Creamfields (held in nineteen countries), The Big Chill, Glastonbury Festival, Stereosonic Australia, Coachella, and Global Gathering (held in seven countries) serve as more large platforms for artists to share their music. The festival circuit became the spot for EDM performances instead of underground clubs or raves in secret locations.

When EDM moved out of small places, it created a boundary between the performers and audiences—putting the DJs on a pedestal. The DJs became the conductor for those wanting to escape from reality and become lost in the music, giving the DJs sway over a sea of festivalgoers. And they were paid well: the allure of money and

worldwide acceptance makes the job appealing, and with the latest advances in audio production available on any computer, anyone from any socio-economic background can become a superstar overnight.

The October 2011 issue of SPIN magazine was dedicated to the history of EDM and featured Skrillex on the cover. The articles chronicle several prominent artists at the annual Electric Daisy Carnival music festival held in Las Vegas for three nights in the middle of the summer. One photo, fig. 2.1 below, summarized the EDM phenomenon by showing twenty-four-year old Skrillex in front of a crowd of 200,000, with the caption “The Church of Oh My Gosh! Skrillex raises up his flock” (Sherburne 2011, 45).



Figure 2.1: Skrillex performs at Electric Daisy Carnival Las Vegas 2011.

To cash in on the EDM craze, major record labels have started their own subsidiary labels that focus only on signing upcoming producers. Many successful artists have formed their own labels as well. Diplo has long been associated with promoting obscure music genres and creating a variety of styles. A “curator amongst the world’s

most cutting edge DJs, producers, and musical movements,” his record label Mad Decent is the most eclectic out of the four record labels started by each producer (Mad Decent 2010). Tiësto’s Musical Freedom signs electro artists from all corners of the globe; Skrillex started electro and dubstep heavy OWSLA Recordings; and Deadmau5’s Mau5trap Records focuses on electro and progressive artists. Mad Decent’s sub-label, The Jeffrees, also plugs little known genres and offers free downloads of songs from up-and-coming producers of moombahton, bounce, dubstep, juke, hip-hop, trap, and bass music.

EDM producers use all forms of media when sharing their music. Some songs are featured in video games or mobile applications, most make weekly podcasts that are broadcasted on SiriusXM, and Mad Decent’s The Jeffrees offers free downloads. Since most consumers buy digitally, or pirate from Torrent websites, the vast majority of EDM songs and albums are available for purchase and download on Beatport or, to a lesser extent, iTunes. Beatport offers a more extensive catalogue than iTunes and also offers contests for up-and-coming producers to enter. Tiësto, Diplo, Deadmau5, and Skrillex have all collaborated with the website in these contests, Skrillex actually signing two-time winner ZEDD to his OWSLA label. Beatport specializes in selling worldwide electronic acts and represents the genre’s unofficial Billboard chart. Most producers treat Beatport as the Recording Academy for EDM and strive to have their music chart or win a Beatport Music Award.

Having a website and online portal dedicated to EDM lets enthusiasts search and explore new sounds with ease. The EDM subculture is fluid and fragmented; hybrids allow evolutions and alterations for different loyalties. “Instead of making a firm set of stylistic commitments, most youngsters have instead cruised across a range of affiliations, constantly forming and reforming their identities according to a social

context” (Osgerby 1998, 204). This fluidity permits youth the free reign to keep adjusting themselves to reflect the changes of the scene, new dimensions, and societal issues: reggae, dub, jungle, trip hop, garage, grime, dubstep, and beyond. Although jungle, dubstep, grime, and garage were once considered shocking subcultures, like punk, they have transitioned into the mainstream because of their own blending of culture(s) that do not see race, class, or gender.

What began as a music subculture for urban youths in the 1970s became a universal culture for all ages in the 2000s. Producers became celebrities; managers, publicists, and security teams were hired; promoters marketed raves as large-scale music festivals or brought talent to upscale clubs; record labels turned international; songs became soundtracks for commercials, TV shows, videogames, in-flight entertainment, internet memes, and movies; private planes, lavish cars, and helicopters were within reach; fans were hooked and craved more. Now, more than ever, EDM was “Harder Better Faster Stronger,” to quote the 2001 song from French house innovators Daft Punk. Artists became legitimate global influence, starting record labels and signing lucrative endorsement deals.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Like disco and hip-hop before it, EDM was an underground movement confined to a particular space that eventually found its way into some mainstream channels courtesy of the internet. These two American music genres from the 1970s launched a DIY, hands-on approach to music and supplied the soundtrack to a global dance floor made up of mega clubs like Ushuaia and Space in Ibiza, music institutions like Ministry of Sound and Fabric in London (Elba 2012), underground techno clubs in Berlin, full-

moon psychedelic trance raves in Goa, to luxury hotel nightclubs and upscale pool parties of Las Vegas and Miami.

“To understand how club culture has become so ingrained in our modern lives, we need to go back to a scene that started on New York's underground” (Elba 2012). New York at that time was going through a financial decline in the 1970s, where clubs began to occupy the empty spaces that business vacated. Disco, known as clubbing in the 1970s, “came out from a melting pot of black, Latino, straight, gay, white, male, [and] female” youths in clubs like Paradise Garage and The Loft (Elba 2012). Saturday Night Fever brought disco to the mainstream when it was released in 1977 and everyone knew what disco was.

House music came from late-night warehouse parties in Chicago during the dying days of disco. Disco and electronic music spread from New York and found their way to Chicago through the DJ circuit where music sets became longer and less focused on vocals. New York DJ and Godfather of House Music Frankie Knuckles began playing “a raw, simplified version of disco” (Elba 2012) at The Warehouse in 1977. In 1984, house music was born in the walls of The Warehouse. Here, anything went, as the DJ-producer played a variety of music including disco, hip-hop, and Euro pop from groups like Kraftwerk as well as adding their own musical signatures with samples and synthesizers to a repetitive four-to-the-floor beat (Snoman 2004, 44).

German group Kraftwerk “didn’t make music in a studio, they constructed it in a laboratory” (Elba 2012) and inspired a whole generation to create electronic music in the 1970s with their albums Trans-Europe Express and The Man Machine. Kraftwerk’s music not only established the early stages of trance and revealed the bountiful creativity between people and machines but also jump started mutual cohesion between electronic music and hip-hop after Afrika Bambaataa and the Soulsonic Force sampled their 1981

song “Numbers” in their massive hit “Planet Rock.” The 1980s also saw the creation and rise of Detroit techno, “slightly more harder edged and slightly more industrial” (Elba 2012) than Chicago house.

Hip-hop in its inception created its own culture that has become one of the biggest American exports in the world. Hip-hop culture meant a particular style of art, dance, music, and dress. It was born and grew up on the Bronx streets and influenced gangsta rap. In The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness, Paul Gilroy writes that black communities have often been constructed through music. “The musics of the black Atlantic world were the primary expressions of cultural distinctiveness which [blacks] seized upon and adapted to its new circumstances” (1993, 82). In the late 1980s, American hip-hop and house were imported to Britain and Europe via Ibiza, inspiring a new rave and popular culture (Elba 2012). One noteworthy new sound was jungle, the first subgenre embodied and developed by black Britons which combined Jamaican dub, European hardcore techno, and Miami Bass. It was a genre that crossed cultural boundaries and blended musical forms. Junglist DJs composed the music electronically on a computer, used samples from other songs or sources, and hired an MC to rap/sing the verse/chorus over a speedy reggae track at 150-170 beats per minute.

By 1989, black America had generated four distinct and full-formed genres of EDM: Detroit techno, deep house/garage sound of Chicago and New York City, acid house and minimal jack tracks, and breakbeat-and-sample-based hip house (Reynolds 2012, 33). House music became an umbrella genre for Euro beat/dance pop, deep house, tech house, progressive house, electro house, acid house, Chicago house, and other sounds within EDM. Chicago house influenced UK garage music in the 2000s, bringing stateside success to garage singer Craig David and exporting American hip-hop ‘bling-bling’ culture back to England. After the popularity of garage, drum’n’bass and dubstep

also came full circle in influencing American dubstep and bass music. The shift from records to computers also brought about endless possibilities in how EDM songs could be constructed. Like jungle and hip-hop before it, dubstep (and all its offshoots) infused various audio samples from YouTube videos, movies, songs, video games, and stock libraries into songs that featured the signature wobble bass indicative of dubstep. The 2011 Skrillex song “Ruffneck (Full Flex)” is constructed of these various styles and available tools, similar to the amalgamation sound of jungle. For example, the MC heard rapping in “Ruffneck Bass” is actually a stock loop from the music production software audio library Primeloops. Skrillex made the song his own by infusing intricate drum patterns that are synonymous with his sound.

After decades of little attention, EDM finally caught on in mainstream America through Skrillex and also the blending of American and British electronic music made by Calvin Harris. Harris's 2011 song “We Found Love” features Rihanna and was certified Multi-Platinum on April 6, 2012, by The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), with over four million copies sold in America. The success of this song is similar to David Guetta’s 2009 song “When Love Takes Over” with Kelly Rowland that featured a well-known, talented R&B vocalist singing over quintessential electro beats. The “We Found Love” music video is nominated for Short Form Music Video for the 2013 GRAMMY Awards. Video director Melina Matsoukas said she wanted to create a video reflecting the “rave-y” feeling of the music (Vena 2011). The video is reminiscent of the British rave culture that Harris experienced while growing up in the 1990s when raves were organized and “held in open fields along the M25” (Elba 2012). Because of the song’s success and exposure, the music video was widely seen and received numerous criticisms for its depiction of drugs that were a somewhat unfamiliar entity for American audiences but normal for rave culture.

Drug usage was prevalent in the smaller raves because police presence and the chance of arrest were minimal. The drug and alcohol culture of disco and the anything-goes Ibiza lifestyle were imported into these clubs where the euphoric sensation of methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA or ecstasy) was preferred over other substances. Drugs also changed the way ravers danced. Instead of the body-on-body synchronized gyration of disco or house, raving was isolated or complemented with glow sticks or other paraphernalia that lengthened the high. Although glow sticks and LED lights were incorporated into contemporary styles, leaving X behind, EDM has not been able to shed itself of its image as a drug culture. In the last decade, tobacco companies began promoting their cigarettes at music festivals as a new market venture, as ecstasy and alcohol users most often chain-smoke while under the influence. A picture of a Marlboro space is seen below in fig. 2.2.



Figure 2.2: The Marlboro Experience seen here gives out free boxes of cigarettes to 18+ festivalgoers at Nocturnal Wonderland, Texas, 2012.

Deadmau5 is a vocal opponent of the drug culture associated within EDM and criticized Madonna for her comment regarding the ecstasy derivative, molly, at UMF Miami 2012, when she said: “I have a few questions for you: How many people in this crowd have seen molly?” He tweeted the pop icon his concern and later clarified his tweet on Facebook, saying “very classy there madonna. ‘HUR DUR HAS ANYONE SEEN MOLLY???’ such a great message for the young music lovers at ultra. quite the f’n philanthropist. but hey, at least yer HIP AND TRENDY! fucking cant smack my head hard enough right now” (Deadmau5 2012).

HOW TO DRESS LIKE A RAVER

Being a fan of EDM does not just mean knowing the music and celebrities, it also often involves looking like other fans and producers, which is equivalent to one of the fan fantasy practices that Jackie Stacey discusses about women spectators of Hollywood films (1994). When acid house music exploded out of the British underground club scene, people began to take it seriously. Fashion designers Rifat Ozbek and Alexander McQueen designed looks in their collections to mimic clubbers’ “free and easy approach” (Elba 2012) to dress in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Rave fashion is not a constant part of the individual lifestyle, unlike punk, and is based on hedonism, sensation, and escape (Goulding et al. 2010, 75). In these earlier days of EDM, clothes reflected on the performance space: small clubs and warehouses featured more underground genres where there was an anything goes dress code while larger spaces like super clubs required clubbers to dress to impress (Redhead 1997). Some music festivals, like Sensation, enacted dress codes which required ravers to coordinate with each festival's theme: white

for Sensation, white or black for Sensation black. Females accessorized their looks with daisies for Electric Daisy Carnival although most of the time there is little else:

There are a lot of pasties. PASTIES in taped crosses, pasties in duct-tape bars. Bikinis sprouting plastic daisies. Body gems in stars and rainbows. Scant lacy gothic corsetry à la '90s Japanese tweens . . . Tie-dye tank tops, Indian headdresses, and arms beaded with chunky bracelets from wrist to shoulder, bead-mail gauntlets cuffed against a coming Zelda insurrection. A frankly surprising array of your basic polo shirt. Spirit hats: panda heads, tiger heads, shark heads, wolf heads. Neckerchiefs. Beaded neckerchiefs. Beaded Pac-Man neckerchiefs. (Lewis-Kraus 2012)

Besides this fantasy trend, other standout styles were the UFO pants and track suits worn by junglists and DNB fans reminiscent of break-dancers in the hip-hop subculture. The bright colors of the candy ravers encapsulated this as the go-to look for raves. Those who thought this too extreme or thought themselves too old did not stray from the ordinary and wore their everyday, casual clothes to raves instead. Candy raver or kandi kid gear has been incorporated into the dominant style for female fans. In the past, candy ravers could be male or female fans of the happy hardcore subgenre who wore over the top, brightly colored clothing, backpacks, and lots of plastic beaded accessories.

What do Candy Ravers wear? ...Some prefer wearing huge wide furry pants, with many different contrasting colors, or just a single color. A Candy Raver may have tons of fluorescent [sic] plastic bead necklaces and bracelets, referred to as "candy jewelry." Some Candy Ravers purchase or make for themselves huge plastic baby-blocks, balls, or links to use as a wallet-chain. A Candy Raver may also wear a kid's backpack. Some Candy Ravers wear lots of glitters and stickers. Some color their hair to their favorite color. (Paul 2000)

Although males also wore these bright colors, they were restricted to practical clothing choices like t-shirts and hats (so no bikini tops, skirts, and furry boots). Males also donned EDM-related slogan t-shirts or RVCA, OBEY, and other fashion labels reminiscent of California skaters or Australian surfers. Most EDM fans discovered these

fashions from pictures and videos from Electric Daisy Carnival or Coachella online or on Twitter feeds and wore them to their next rave. Spirit Hoods, Spider Man, and Native Americans were also common encounters although some of these fashions could be banned or restricted according to venue regulations. Because of the attention that some of these clothing choices gained, it was not uncommon to see a homemade t-shirt or sign online and then see it again at another festival. An example was the “I love Swedish House Mafia” t-shirt, the unofficial official garment for both fans of Swedish House Mafia (SHM) and EDM. A picture of the shirt appeared on Twitter feed from a recent SHM concert, and like the DIY attitude of candy ravers and the skillful Daft Punk/Deadmau5 helmet makers, the design was made on a computer, printed, transferred onto a t-shirt, and worn. A copy is featured below in fig. 2.3, seen in Miami a few weeks after the original picture was uploaded on Twitter.



Figure 2.3: DIY style at Ultra Music Festival Miami 2011.

Besides Daft Punk’s TRON helmets, Deadmau5’s LCD mouse head, and SBTRKT’s African tribal masks, raver fashion stops before reaching the DJ booth. DJs and producers do not partake in the same sartorial choices as their fans wear to raves.

Tiësto’s style has largely remained unchanged over the past two decades: t-shirt and jeans, which is the common combo during live sets for most. Deadmau5 and Skrillex follow suit, but Diplo is known for “wear[ing] a suit every night when I do a Major Lazer show” (Diplo's Suit Measurements 2010). However, this is not practical for others onstage or in the audience. Fig. 2.4 below shows typical outfits of several prominent EDM producers. Although producers are the focal point on stage, they are overwhelmed by everything else that is happening. In reality, the producer subdued their clothing to let the music be the center of attention—along with state-of-the-art sound equipment, million-dollar light systems, eye-catching performances, and, of course, an abundance of dancing fans.



Figure 2.4: How to Dress Like an EDM Producer from @SHMSweden 2012.

However, most producers do market their name and brand with a logo and merchandise. Logos are used to differentiate each other on concert flyers and festival listings, and brands are stamped on various items that are sold at shows and online.

Skrillex, Diplo, Deadmau5, and Tiësto all sell official merchandise like clothing, iPhone covers, underwear, and hats on their websites. Tiësto currently has two clothing lines: CLVB LIFE, launched in 2011, and NYT LYF, a collaboration with Guess clothing, launched in 2012. An advertisement is pictured below in fig. 2.5. In the past, Tiësto teamed up with Armani Exchange twice, once to promote a limited edition t-shirt benefitting Mercy Corps in 2008, and another as the face and designer of a wristwatch in 2009 (Mason 2011).



Figure 2.5: NYT LYF advertisement in a Miami shopping mall 2012.

Skrillex did have some sway with his trademark hairstyle. The Skrillex Haircut, one side of the scalp shaved with long hair on the other side, was seen on fans and other musicians and found itself the topic of a Tumblr page. Girls that Look Like Skrillex was launched on April 2, 2011, and housed almost 1300 posts from 'tweens to twenty-somethings from around the world who wore thick black glasses and had a haircut a la Skrillex. Although this haircut was popular with rivetheads (fans of industrial dance

music) in the early 1990s and re-emerged in Europe from Greek singer Anna Vissi in the mid-2000s, the style was mostly associated with the EDM producer. In March 2012, Nine Inch Nails (NIN) front man Trent Reznor noted the resemblance and attention of Skrillex's hair to that of his own a decade before and tweeted "Come to think of it, Skrillex may indeed owe me some publishing on that hairdo" (@trent_reznor 2012). Skrillex, himself an admirer of Reznor, replied, "would that mean NIN or just exotic birds" (@skrillex 2012).

EDM producers were also ideas for Halloween costumes, the most common being Deadmau5, Skrillex, Daft Punk, and Steve Aoki, given their unique appearances. The website Hipster Runoff offers tips on how to pull off one of these costumes: for Deadmau5 "buy a rat/mouse mask, dress like a DJ" and for Skrillex, "Get Skrillex/Win Butler haircut, glasses with large frames, look like a relevant dubstep DJ" (Carles 2011).

WHERE IT IS NOW

EDM is certainly much more mainstream now than even ten years ago. Kraftwerk recently headlined with Tiësto and Skrillex at the 2012 UMF Miami; a month later they held eight sold-out performances for their Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) "Retrospective." Gone are the days when clubbers hid from the authorities in fear of being arrested or having raves shut down and enter the era of popular culture.

When EDM moved out of the warehouses and into arenas, DJs became "the new rock stars" sought after by companies and clubbers (Take One - Movie Trailer 2 2010). These new celebrities have embraced all the fixings that came with success: fame, money, travel, etc. According to figures compiled by Forbes, Tiësto, Skrillex, and Deadmau5 ranked the first, second, and sixth highest-grossing EDM musicians. Diplo almost cracked the top ten with his six million earned. Aside from selling music and

tickets, producers rake in money from endorsements and merchandise. Other financially rewarding creative projects include Deadmau5's cat headphones venture with Sol Republic, Skrillex's scores for films, and Diplo's photography book 128 Beats Per Minute: Diplo's Visual Guide to Music, Culture, and Everything in Between. These undertakings reveal parts of their lives not seen on stage: Deadmau5's affinity for cats and Diplo's love of travelling.

In order to sell \$999 headphones for cats or a coffee-table book, there must be an audience to sell to. One way to gauge the popularity of such-and-such artist is through Beatport and iTunes sales, illegal downloads, and social media websites. As previously mentioned, EDM has not yet succeeded in infiltrating major media outlets in America, unlike other areas of the world, so the internet is the main medium for all things EDM. Twitter offers a behind the scenes look into the jet-setting lives of those whose names fans scream. Moreover, now, more than ever, fans could interact with and follow their favorite celebrities in real-time.

Chapter 3: EDM Celebrity

The rise of EDM celebrities in the United States was different than in Europe and the rest of the world where the few radio stations that did have dance music on rotation played either trance or Euro dance during the late 1990s and early 2000s. The experience of discovering new artists was mostly accomplished by either going to raves or surfing the internet because no pirate radio or radio station like Radio 1 played the newest tracks from underground artists. The internet, and SiriusXM eventually, exposed North Americans to the sounds of dubstep, progressive house, drum'n'bass (DNB), and electro house.

Two exceptions that experienced huge commercial success in America through traditional media were The Prodigy and Daft Punk. When British big-beat group The Prodigy released their third album The Fat of the Land, they “were generally given top billing as the group that would sweep in to lead pop music's new electronic, millennial craze and save the world” (Heath 1997) and “went on to become the face of rave culture for the MTV generation” (Elba 2012). The Fat of the Land debuted at number one on Billboard, spent fifty-seven weeks on the chart, sold two million copies, and launched the group into stardom. They were nominated for a GRAMMY for Best Dance/Electronic Album in 2005 but lost to Daft Punk. The Prodigy sound was comprised of a smorgasbord of sounds ranging from DNB, hardcore techno, Detroit techno, and punk rock. Seemingly overnight they became the unlikely face of electronic music. Their crass lyrics, vulgar videos, and sensational sartorial style did not prevent them from propelling to popularity: an international musical sensation that could be heard on radio, television, and movies in a time when EDM was rarely on the music charts. Their electronic mix of punk, dub, hip-hop, and DNB was both commercial and underground; their music and

lyrics were aggressive. Like the hip-hop artists before them, they did not conform and made their own identity, giving “dance music a chance to get into the charts without compromise” (Elba 2012).

A second 1997 album influenced today’s popular music. Homework by Daft Punk redefined “the limits of what dance music could be” and was “totally way off what was happening at the time” (Elba 2012). Their follow-up album Discovery was another experiment with house music and hip-hop, which R&B and rap artists sample today. Where The Prodigy made everything heavy and fast, French duo Daft Punk slowed everything down. The Prodigy used simplistic videos and samples, and Daft Punk went the creative, high-art route. Members Thomas Bangalter and Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo did not embrace celebrity like The Prodigy either and decided early in their career to wear futuristic costumes that stood for both blending of humans and machines. Few pictures or videos exist of them without their costumes, which would separate their public image and private life.⁷ The French duo have been nominated for eight GRAMMY awards, winning Best Dance Recording and Best Electronic/Dance Album in 2009, and they later composed the soundtrack to TRON: Legacy in 2010. They list acid house, Aphex Twin, and Bob Marley as musical influences, but the Daft Punk sound reflected the current French house and older Chicago house scenes. Their catchy riffs and overall mystique made them MTV favorites and poster-boys for the house renaissance. As Bangalter notes:

The place of electronic music, culturally and socially, is today completely different-- it is now everywhere, and it has been totally accepted. Consequently, there is now a younger generation that is more focused on making great electronic music, good parties, and having fun, where there is not any more so much need for cultural and ideological statements in electronic music itself.

⁷ Deadmau5 also uses this costume spectacle where he performs in a mouse head made up of a liquid crystal display (LCD) that displays videos and makes him the spectacle.

We're genuinely happy if some musicians of this younger generation are influenced by our music, as we were ourselves influenced 10 years ago by older musicians. (Pytlik 2007)

Daft Punk seldom performed live and preferred to stay behind the scenes, whereas The Prodigy still performs in stadium arenas all over the world. Neither group embraced fame and celebrity like today's EDM artists, but both proved that electronic music could be commercialized and profitable without losing its creativity and authenticity. Skrillex saw the now-infamous pyramid stage setup from Daft Punk's 2007 Alive Tour and declared: "it changed my life . . . in my heart, I was just like, man, I wish I could make my own music. I don't need to be Daft Punk. I loved how they would throw on some suits, make a big production, and come out" (Dombal 2012). Even though these groups were extremely protective of their image and limited their live appearances, their popularity opened the door for other electronic acts in the years that followed. Skrillex says, "There have been a couple times where I've been so proud of what I've done live, like I feel like I've given someone the same kind of feeling I got at that Daft Punk show. And that feels so good" (Dombal 2012).

This feeling relies on an emotional connection made by an admirer, a particular requirement for creating a celebrity. The characteristics of a celebrity (Leslie 2011) are having a public life, talent, and renown (Rojek 2001) and being attention-seeking, highly discernible in the media, and connected with the general public. These features of celebrity are applicable to Deadmau5, Diplo, Skrillex, and Tiësto through their nonstop worldwide touring, contribution to the arts and popular music, promotional tactics, private life and public works talked about in the media, and large numbers of fans who feel an emotional connection to them. These celebrity producers attempt to influence fans to buy their music and merchandise, attend their concerts, and follow them on

Twitter. This chapter explains what Twitter is and analyzes celebrity tweets to describe their celebrity image (Staiger 2005, 116) and describe how they use Twitter.

TWITTER

Twitter was initially designed as a conversation platform, loosely based on the idea of instant messaging, but the website went through several makeovers and emerged in its current form as a shared collective in 2009. As social media grew, Tiësto used it to stay connected with fans and give a personal touch to the man behind the DJ booth. “I really love Twitter, I think it’s a very positive thing. It makes it so easy to connect to people,” he explained (Mason 2012). He began posting pictures from backstage, shots of concert crowds, hotel rooms, and other social experiences during his tour to the delight of fans everywhere.

Imagine a switchboard operator from yesteryear who connects telephone calls from a caller to a recipient, usually many callers directed to several recipients. Similar to telephone calls, twitter recipients can choose to respond or ignore tweets sent to them. Six types of tweets are on Twitter as well as two signs from the computer keyboard. Normal or plain tweets,⁸ mentions,⁹ replies,¹⁰ retweets (RTs),¹¹ promoted tweets,¹² and direct messages (DMs)¹³ are all limited to 140 or fewer characters and are public except for direct messages. Another characteristic is that promoted tweets are the only type of tweet that is paid for, usually by advertisers, and is labeled as such. For this thesis, normal

⁸ Any message with fewer than 140 characters posted to Twitter.

⁹ Any Twitter update that contains an @username anywhere in the body of the tweet.

¹⁰ Any tweet posted in reply to another user’s message, usually posted by clicking the reply button, and always begins with an @username.

¹¹ A re-posting of someone else’s tweet. RT also means the act of forwarding another user’s tweet to all of your followers.

¹² Tweets that selected business have paid to promote at the top of search results on Twitter.

¹³ Private messages between the sender and recipient.

tweets, mentions, replies, and RTs are examined. Favorite¹⁴ tweets and promote tweets or topics are not included in the study.

A normal tweet reads as “good morning everyone :D hope you're all well! working my butt off, in turbo mode finishing up for the Junos!” (@deadmau5 2012a), whereas other tweets use two additional symbols, a @¹⁵ or #,¹⁶ and look similar to “Just read @rollingstone’s articles on EDM @deadmau5, @skrillex, @tiesto, and EDC. Amazing. #EDMTakeover” (@djkiost 2012). As long as a Twitter account is public, not private, both registered and unregistered users are able to see tweets. The public exchange between celebrities and fans on Twitter is unparalleled with other forms of media. Tweets are short, immediate, and widespread, become great entertainment and free promotion, and provide easy exposure, consequently are easily turned into a celebrity instrument.

When Twitter was launched, it asked the question “What are you doing?” and allowed 138 characters for the user to respond. In 2009, Twitter changed this to the more current, “What’s happening?” and let users type their answer in 140 characters. The trending topics sidebar was also introduced, shifting the paradigm on Twitter from instant messaging towards what (now, former) CEO Jack Dorsey describes as “massively shared experiences” (Sarno 2009). 2009 saw the large trending topics of the Gaza War, economic and fiscal crises, Iranian protests, Australian bushfires, L’Aquila earthquake, and Michael Jackson’s overdose, which became the first celebrity death trending topic on Twitter and crashed the website temporarily because of tweet overload.

¹⁴ Tweets that have been marked as such, denoted by a yellow star next to the message.

¹⁵ Is used to call out usernames in tweets. Multiple @usernames are used to reach more than one tweeter.

¹⁶ A hashtag is used to mark keywords or topics in tweets. Popular hashtag keywords become Twitter trending topics.

These shared experiences have “I think defined a new behavior that’s very different than what we’ve seen before,” according to Dorsey. “The concept is so simple and so open-ended that people can make of it whatever they wish” (Sarno 2009). Users began to track news updates, sports scores, and social events and to follow friends, celebrities, parody accounts, politicians, newspapers, authors, blogs, and companies. This new behavior on Twitter that Dorsey talks about means that the almost 200 million active users on Twitter send more than a billion tweets every four days. Twitter is no longer a one-trick pony. The majority of tweeters are talking, imitating, and exploring a variety of topics across their social networks. Twitter’s instantaneous, self-updating feed allows users to do all of this in real time—unlike websites or traditional media where information is buried in sections and sub-sites.

EDM CELEBRITIES ON TWITTER

All EDM producers saw an increase of followers during the research period of this thesis (March to November 2012), likely due to more exposure in traditional media, word of mouth in social media, and more people registering on Twitter. The increase was five hundred thousand for Deadmau5; Diplo made almost one hundred thousand; Skrillex doubled to over two million; and Tiësto averaged forty-eight thousand new followers every month. The combined total of Twitter followers of Deadmau5, Diplo, Skrillex, and Tiesto is over six million so every topic, mention, or RT in their tweets means a potential viewership of millions.

With such a large number of followers, I wondered what each celebrity was writing in their tweets—after all, 2.3 million of their fans were located in the United States and subjects for this thesis. All four producers were logged into Twitter by spring

of 2009 so they had already figured out the role that the social media site played in their lives when I conducted my research. I analyzed all tweets sent from each account from March to November 2012. This section analyzes these tweets to “explore the ideological meaning” (Redmond and Holmes 2006, 257) of each producer’s celebrity image on Twitter. . This multi-faceted image is incoherent and incomplete (Ellis 2007, 90) because the extraordinary celebrity is also an ordinary person. Celebrities live envious and desirable lives (Marshall 2006, 6) but also experience life like the Average Joe:

Mom: turn that shit down Me: it's @tiesto mom! Mom: turn that shit up!!
(@ThatkidJorge27)
Sounds like my Mom!! (@tiesto 2012a)

I'm hangin out with my dad at work!!!! (@diplo 2012a)

While looking at how these celebrities portray themselves through their tweets, I will describe how they use Twitter.

Deadmau5 is perhaps the most nostalgic, sarcastic, and antisocial out of the four producers. He talks the most about his personal life, with stories, daily events, feelings, and dating, and uses other platforms like Tumblr and Facebook to rant when Twitter does not provide enough space. This connectedness to other social media websites is also evident from his other type of non-promotional or normal tweets when he incorporates computer slang and memes. These tweets also include birthday wishes, shout outs, and congratulations for friends as well as his announcements for hosting live question-and-answer sessions on Ustream: for example, “lemme see if i can get ustream goin...hold up” (@deadmau5 2012b). He talks about girlfriends for all the Twittiverse and celebrity watchers to see and discusses his depression: “patiently waiting for the world to unfuck itself while I sit in a room full of machines, people still wonder why i'm depressed” (@deadmau5 2012c).

But not all his tweets are negative; he mentions and shares his life successes with those who made it possible, his fans and friends, to whom he replies the most. He also RTs fans on occasion although these RTs are restricted to witty comments or technical knowledge. Deadmau5 also uses Twitter, like everyone else, for promotional purposes but not at the expense of anyone else. He advocates the concerts, songs, and artists he chooses. These vary from his own work, friends, and musical acts on his Mau5trap Records label and are also in the behind-the-scenes photographs and shares with his followers from his tours and travels: “@skrillex Epic congrats dude! 5 noms! I knew you had some A game when we put out the first EP! lookit you now! :D #bestofdogs” (@deadmau5 2012d). Sometimes it seems that Deadmau5 lives in front the computer as he tweets while creating new tracks and spending date nights at home.

Diplo also may have a problem disconnecting from the internet, sending an average of twenty-seven tweets per day. These tweets mostly pertain to music, travels, concerts, shout outs, ramblings, and fan RTs. “I seriously dont like dubstep unless @Skrillex is playin... My dude murdering it rite now [sic]” (@diplo 2012b). These ramblings vary from fishing for RTs, “RT if its cold” (@diplo 2012c), making random thoughts of clarity, asking for suggestions from fans, creating memes, and posting his contact information for demos. Diplo is always looking for up-and-comers to feature in his radio shows for SiriusXM and BBC Radio One and to introduce on Mad Decent’s The Jeffrees Tumblr. Unlike Deadmau5, Diplo does not discuss deeper topics of his personal life, but he will tweet topical subjects like likes and dislikes and life experiences.

These life experiences cover his time on tour and in the studio, supplemented with pictures and videos of family, friends, other celebrities, hotel rooms, music video shoots, and other wonders of celebrity. “Jus hangin with the gawds @Avicii and @deadmau5” (@diplo 2012d). Diplo works with hip-hop and pop stars more than the other three

producers, adding another level of glamor to his life with flashy cars, extravagant jewelry, and more celebrity friends: “We outchea @tiesto @LilJon @TheRealRafRiley @theiluminati” (@diplo 2012e). He frequently tweets shout outs to his celebrity friends and shares conversations with fans, also sending birthday wishes to those who ask and thank yous. Fan tweets are the bulk of Diplo RTs and range from concert experiences, funny comments, #expressyourself pictures, and parody Twitter accounts.

Skrillex is one friend Diplo talks to on a regular basis. Skrillex does not tweet nearly as much as Diplo, but he tweets about similar topics of discovering new music, sharing life behind the scenes, and expressing gratitude to his fans: “NYC thanks for letting me play the weird shit tonight” (@skrillex 2012a). He is also the only other producer in a high-profile relationship, with British songstress Ellie Goulding, but he did not talk about it in great length like Deadmau5. “Dinner with Ellie, Nero and Drew dog...good wine good foodz, good times” (@skrillex 2012b). Other tweets regarding his personal life were limited to feelings and thoughts about everyday concerns. Pictures from his Instagram account were the bulk of his tweets, recounting his life in image form. “Brisk sky, early plane, see you soon mom” (@skrillex 2012c). Links to songs on YouTube and RTs from fans were also common topics seen in Skrillex tweets: “Check this link..Our new OWSLA signing, MONSTA ...this song is incredible” (@skrillex 2012d). Skrillex also had the most followers and was mentioned the most by other celebrities. “This morning I thought I heard a neighbor blasting that new @Skrillex song I like, but then I realized it was just the garbage truck” (@ConanOBrien 2012).

Another celebrity favorite is Tiësto, who says he tours so much he lives out of two suitcases and his private jet. Even though he has been in the public eye more than the other three producers, little is known about his dating and relationships. This seems to be a topic he avoids, never responding to tweets asking him about it. He also steers clear of

negative or pessimistic tweets, frequently tweeting inspirational quotes, sentimental sayings, and witty words of wisdom like “Always be yourself...unless you can be Tiësto...then always be Tiësto” (@tiesto 2012b). Tiësto shares his pictures with celebrity friends, life on the road, and fan tattoos, but mostly he replies to fan tweets. The major distinct characteristic of @tiesto from the other three producers is the role of his management who uses his account to announce endorsement deals, contests, podcasts, and concert cancellations. Why they tweet from his account or why he does not publish these announcements himself is not explained: “Tiësto regrets to announce that due to a back injury he has been advised to take the month of October off - Tiësto MGMT” (@tiesto 2012c). One reason could be is that he is incredibly busy traveling and performing so he has little time to stay updated with press releases and other matters.

“I really love Twitter, I think it’s a very positive thing. It makes it so easy to connect to people,” Tiësto proclaims (Mason 2012). Twitter gives a glimpse of two faces of a celebrity’s image: their public persona and private life (Staiger 2005, 116; Dyer 1979). Their accounts played out like a daily activity log, cataloguing the ups and downs experienced almost on an hourly basis: “aww man... lol @Skrillex unfollowed me :(hahahaha... yup, he mad. ah well. will miss you duder!” (@deadmau5 2012e). A Twitter account was similar to a twenty-first-century talent agent as it provided the self-promotion an established or newbie musician needs.

CONCLUSION

After examining over six thousand tweets, I have concluded that Deadmau5, Diplo, Skrillex, and Tiesto share similar types of tweets with their fans, even though their Twitter personas are different. All used the RT function; replied to fans, celebrity friends, and other types of followers; shared pictures of life behind the scenes; and used Twitter

to post ramblings or update followers on what they were doing. Skrillex also promoted and shared music from friends and from his record company, something that the other producers did to a lesser extent. Although tweets showed another face to the celebrity image, it did not show the real star; Twitter is another performative text (Marshall 2006, 11) of a celebrity, like music or performances. Celebrities are still extraordinary even though they talked about and shared pictures of them doing ordinary activities like go out for food or talking about music that they liked. However, these activities combined with their personality allowed fans to identify with them regardless, as fans saw some self-recognition or ideal self for each celebrity, which is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Fandom

Electronic dance music (EDM) artists never received the same exposure that mainstream musicians received and have depended on word of mouth from fans for publicity. Another hurdle in attracting fans is that most live shows take place in age-restricted nightclubs and music festivals so younger fans either attend a rare all-ages show or wait until they are older to see these producers play live. Social media like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter created outlets for underground musicians to share videos, songs, pictures, and messages with fans of all ages. In this era where everything is digital and immediate, fans could now experience via Twitter a sense of community in the global electronic village to create a worldwide popular culture.

After explaining how the EDM subculture and celebrities are constructed online in the previous two chapters, this chapter looks at fan engagement with celebrities on Twitter through content analysis of tweets to and from Tiësto, Diplo, Deadmau5, and Skrillex. Because most EDM producers travel constantly, what better way to announce shows, interact with fans, get in touch with other producers, promote contests and merchandise, and share stories and pictures than through Twitter in real time?

Whereas celebrity-watchers stay behind a Fourth Wall, fans form emotional attachments with celebrities and attempt to begin relationships with them and other fans. Different levels of fans exist, beginning with an ordinary audience member, to those who connect with the music, to those who appreciate the music, and then to obsessed fans (Cavicchi 1998, 97). Although a sort of elitism exists within music fans, they may “feel

an affinity for one another and a sense of belonging together” (Cavicchi 1998, 158) in the audience during performances and in spaces dedicated to the artist. On Twitter, fans appear to feel this sense of togetherness through following similar people, tweeting about the same songs or concerts, and using the same # keyword. This chapter looks at how these fans identify, interact, and behave with celebrities on Twitter using published literature on fan culture and behavior.

FAN IDENTIFICATION

This section uses Jackie Stacey’s fan identifications (1994) for EDM fans on Twitter; here, identification is defined as “loosely meant sympathizing or engaging with a character” (1994, 130). These fan identifications are broken down into practices of the performance and fantasies of the celebrity’s identity: devotion, adoration, worship, transcendence, aspiration and inspiration (the first); and pretending, resembling, imitating, and copying (the second). The first group relates to feelings toward the celebrity and the second group is the uses of the celebrity in fans everyday lives.

Fans identify themselves through devotion or intense passion--“I love deadmau5 so much (@mikeykinz 2012), adoration, and worship. Adoration includes admiration and love, such as "I want to be @tiesto when I grow up" (@CleanupZombie 2012), and occurs when fans “transition into adulthood” (Stacey 1994, 139). Fans who worship celebrities also have feelings of love and adoration, but the feelings are “often represented through the discourse of religious worship” (Stacey 1994,142): “Skrillex is a musical god all I have to say.” (@Cobzay 2012).

Sometimes fans lose themselves and imagine being the celebrity. One fan tweeted, “I want to be @deadmau5 . . . #crunchfackinbeat” (@douggekurt 2012) and

attached a YouTube link of a live performance of himself. This is an example of transcendence because the fan temporarily imagines himself performing as a celebrity. Other fans become inspired by these celebrities and aspired to be like them; @dylankarakas looked up to Diplo for inspiration of becoming a famous producer, tweeting, “When I'm famous, I'm gonna [sic] have my own nice camera to take pictures of my travels, the crowds I play for, and the experiences I go through” (2012). He also looked to Diplo for music: “Definitely just bought Diplo's book to get some serious knowledge on music” (@dylankarakas 2012), slang, fashion, and demeanor. Other fans not only imagined their lives as their celebrity ideal, but pretended to be them, partying like a rock star in nightclubs or living the high life in expensive places: “LIV My favorite nightclub. Just like @tiesto's” (@kay42288 2012).

Resembling and imitating celebrities are two additional fan identifications Stacey discusses. Fans resemble celebrities when they share a physical attribute, and imitations are based on behavior and activities. An example of a fan resembling a celebrity is “New look just like @Skrillex” (@danirollinbaby 2012) and “My ultimate goal in life is to reach the swag level of @diplo” (@AudioClimaxx 2012). These were only a part of the celebrity's appearance or image, but other fans desire to look and act like celebrities and transform themselves into that likeness. One fan copies Tiësto through what is visible on Twitter and other media outlets. @bambladimir has twelve thousand tweets RTing @tiesto, addressed to @tiesto, or Tiësto-related. His location, background image, and profile description all reflect information about the producer, which he states on his profile: “Tiësto definitely a DJ I admire. I'm loving his music and live shows! #Tiësto #TiëstosClubLife #MusicalFreedom.”

Out of the seventy-one images @bambladimir tweeted, forty-nine were addressed to @tiesto: pictures of live performances, recent merchandise purchases, screen captures

of podcasts, Tiësto-related memes, and even suggestions. One tweet asked, “Should I wear this shirt for tonight?” (2012a) and was accompanied with a bathroom cellphone-shot of his outfit. He has very few tweets, whether sent from him or RTs that stray from this Tiësto-centric world. @bambladimir lives in the Los Angeles area, a second-home for the Dutchman, and no doubt feels a closer connection to Tiësto than others. His Twitter account is a digital shrine, his decisions mimic Tiësto’s, and marginalizes his own identity (Stacey 1994).

One of @bambladimir's tweets did garner an RT and reply from his idol, as well as a quick exchange of tweets:

Amazing photo! @Tiësto (@bambladimir 2012b)
Love it! RT @bambladimir (@Tiësto 2012d)
@tiesto You love my photo! Thanks for loving it. (: (@bambladimir 2012c)
@bambladimir I put it on my Instagram as well :) (@Tiësto 2012e)
@tiesto Ha! Yes I saw it, I got so jealous. I only have a couple of likes. You have thousands. (: did you see my Instagram? (@bambladimir 2012d)

He then re-uploaded the picture with the RT'd message from Tiësto and sent another tweet proclaiming, “Best known for: 'being a legend' @Tiësto #Tiësto #Tiësto I love this pic!” (2012). Meanwhile, Tiësto also replied to another of @bambladimir’s tweets, “I look so serious haha RT @bambladimir: Great shot of you @Tiësto !#Tiësto” (@tiesto 2012f).

From these few examples reproduced here, it appears that contemporary fans of EDM producers behave in ways very similar to the fans that Stacey studied. Fan emotions, identifications, and activities seem to be consistent across media and decades.

FAN-CELEBRITY ENCOUNTERS

The fan-celebrity dynamic in EDM is slowly transitioning from organized events and promotions to more spontaneous ones. Producers play hundreds of raves each year

and have little time off for promotional gigs. Fans are no longer satisfied to stare at their idols from a distance or wait in line to receive the same signature as everyone else. They want a more personal experience.

“One distinction between fan-celebrity relationships and ‘ordinary’ social relationships involves the element of trophy seeking: fans seek to take away a souvenir of sorts from their encounters with stars” (Ferris 2011, 14). Like internet dating, Twitter connects users with millions of others with a global exposure of their words and interests: it is the largest concert in the world. In the past, fans collected merchandise, albums, and photos of their favorite musicians and singers (Cavicchi 1998, 150). Now, fans collect RT souvenirs a kind of digital autograph or virtual crowd surf. “If @Skrillex RT me, I’ll be the happiest girl in the world^_^” (@aksenova_olya 2012). And the underlying thought is, “Maybe we aren’t so different after all. We would probably be friends.” Celebrities know the power they have and often use the RT function to show their empathy to fans. And the effect is profound:

Tiësto fucking retweeted me again for the third time!!!!IM GOING CRAZY . . .
HE LOVES ME I JUST KNOW IT . . .
Everytime @tiesto retweets me I get a mini fucking heart attack i swear.
(@kimberlyyy22 2012)

OH MY GOD TIESTO RT’D ME . . .
AHHHHHHHHHHHH . . .
I JUST DIED A BIT INSIDE . . . (@Had_a_dad 2012)

To a fan, an RT is an acknowledgement through the crowd, a high five, handshake, or smile. The action is simultaneously personal and public: the RT’d user and the celebrity share a moment, under the eyes of the other million followers. After their few minutes of fame, the tweet becomes lost and disregarded except for the fan who will remember this moment like a fan remembers a first concert when hearing a song.

skrillex got me 10 followers, 170 RT's and like 70 favorites. i feel cool.
(@marthizza 2012)

Oh hai it's just me express'n muhself again RT @diplo: This girl is at an
extremely high level of #expressyourself !! (@avelise 2012)

Another aspect of trophy seeking is putting oneself in the position to retrieve the rewards of fandom. Traditionally this includes seeing the celebrity at press events, concerts, sports games, film openings, and autograph signings. And while these are still utilized of course, fans simply need to follow their favorite celebrity to know an upcoming travel itinerary or Twitter locations instead of waiting for an organized event through a third party: “#Tiësto and I @ McCarran International Airport (LAS)” (@amymckinlay 2012). If a celebrity is more open with his tweets, inevitably he will include his current favorite places to eat or may mention which time his airplane is leaving. “Hey @Tiësto You were waiting at the airport [sic]... but no luck !!” (@krlonxooo 2012). What a surprise it is when fans run into their favorite celebrity! Another trophy is gained, a signed t-shirt or iPhone photo, and a memory of the time they bumped into their idol.

Spontaneous run-ins happened also although less frequently than pre-staged or RT encounters. Most often, fans announce these on Twitter for everyone to see: “I JUST MET DIPLO! is this real life” (@jack_attackk 2012). Sometimes seeing a celebrity in real life without makeup or a signature look makes the person look more human, and fans hold back from talking to them or asking for a picture. “Two years in a row now I'm sitting at the same exact table at Cafe Sidney and see @tiesto walk by in his baseball cap disguise lol#fb” (@blakejarrell 2012). In fig. 4.1 two fans ran into Skrillex and were featured in a music video he was filming.



Figure 4.1: Fans run into Skrillex after his Beatport Beach Party Performance during Miami Music Week 2011.

Keery O. Ferris and Scott R. Harris describe that pre-staged events are under a scrutinizing eye of security and management, sterilized from the unpredictable (2011). Fans will wait hours in line to ask their celebrity a question, eager to learn more about the celebrity's private life, and receive a practiced, canned answer in response, while the unstaged encounter may feel more natural. By combining these two types of encounters, Twitter lets the celebrity appear natural and more human while maintaining a distance and polishing an answer before replying. Moreover, the quantity of postings offers fans a number of ways to connect with the celebrity. A musician can appear worldly and well traveled with pictures from fantastic foreign vistas but still down-to-earth when foregoing healthy food and choosing a hamburger. The stage spotlight is still lighting up the celebrity, but the interaction has the easiness of standing in a line at the grocery store. It adds all the more charge when the celebrity does include a fan in his/her world, even for a few minutes or seconds until the RT vanishes.

FAN BEHAVIORS

As soon as one tweet vanishes, another one or even two appear. Celebrities see a constant stream of tweets directed at them and chose which ones to read, reply, RT, and ignore. Fans act in a similar way, choosing tweets and sharing their own on Twitter, which is only an inkling of the general behaviors that Henry Jenkins ascribes to fans. Fans are “producers of culture” (Staiger 2005, 105) too and share drawings, computer-generated art, tattoos, and remixes with other tweeters and celebrities. If their art is RT'd, then it shows up on the celebrity's image gallery on the profile, a kind of wall of fame for others to see. For those who are not as talented, then screenshots of what song they were listening to on their smartphone, Instagram photographs, and videos from past performances are shared. These shared activities and interactions are another type of fan behavior (Jenkins 1992), and listening to music and attending concerts (Cavicchi 1998, 166) also create an active association between fans. So Twitter facilitates the fan communities.

Fans tweet other fans about concerts, gossip, song lyrics, and interpretations about celebrity tweets. Jenkins describes this behavior and is part of the fan's construal of the celebrity text. A simple jest or remark from one celebrity to another becomes fodder for blogs or next day's gossip, an example of which is when Diplo sent a tweet to (ex-girlfriend and former collaborator) M.I.A. saying, “Please stop leaking the songs you didn't pay me for...” (@diplo 2010). This quick tweet could have been sent via text message, email, phone call, or carrier pigeon, but by broadcasting that in cyberspace, it opened among fans a Pandora's box of conspiracy theories and gossip, as Diplo and

M.I.A.'s relationship had been strained for some time. Fans tweeted their thoughts about what Diplo and M.I.A. should do or made predictions based on this limited information of a forty-one lettered tweet. It is still unclear what their relationship is like, but fans tweet and blog broadcast their opinion on what they discover online or by word of mouth. These opinions become normal conversation between fans as celebrities are known by large groups of people, if not by all. This is another type of behavior that Janet Staiger (2005, 105) adds to Jenkins list, how fans incorporate celebrities into their every day lives.

Unlike film or TV fans, music fans are able to listen and watch celebrity texts while commuting to work, cooking dinner, walking to school, or working out. But live performances trump everything else (Cavicchi 1998, 111). With an abundance of producers touring the music festival circuit, EDM fans do not go to only one rave in their lifetime. The majority of fans go to raves again and again, in different cities and venues, because the music is “deeply felt” in their own lives (Cavicchi 1998, 40).

One type of fan behavior not seen among EDM fans is “consumer activism” (Jenkins 1992), something that has been seen and talked about in the media recently. Fans join together to make their case heard to television networks about why the networks should save XYZ show or will talk about shaky plot and character developments. A reason for this is because for music, there is no weekly show or yearly movie; the information available (tweets, songs, and performances) is not open-ended so consumer activism does not make sense quite as it does for other entertainment media.

CONCLUSION

When fans talk about wanting to be or act like celebrities, they are using them “as an ideal to guide their sense of who they might be” (Cavicchi 1998, 140). “Sometimes I feel like @Tiësto....” (@vicalam 2012) could mean the fan wants to be talented, business-minded, or some other characteristic he/she finds in the celebrity. Tiësto is a particular target for tweeters to vent their frustrations on him for selling-out and playing mainstream music. Listening and relating to old songs remind fans of when they transformed (Cavicchi 1998) into a fan, and the old songs are forever compared with newer songs. Recently Tiësto addressed one critic on Twitter, an act he seldom does, when a follower casually tweeted, “I want the old @tiesto :)” (@MRShienta 2012). Tiësto responded, “Listen to his old albums!” (@tiesto 2012g). Tiësto then tweeted “I love this @jayz quote: 'if you like my old shit, listen to my old albums’” (@tiesto 2012h) as an additional response. Attacking someone like this in real life is rare, but because the lives of celebrities are shared so openly online and through texts, some fans believe they know them. For reasons unknown, although reasons implied because of the embarrassment, @MRShienta deleted his Twitter account after the encounter.

Tiësto, Diplo, Skrillex, and Deadmau5 play sold out shows almost every day of the week, all around the world. Tweets reflect this global reach that EDM celebrities have. Fan tweets appear in a multitude of languages besides (all dialects of) English, like Spanish, Portuguese, Jamaican Patois, French, Dutch, Swedish, Indonesian, Japanese, and Korean, and include pictures, links, and comments about music and live performances. The most common topics sent to celebrities discovered in the analysis I did for this thesis were music praises, concert shout-outs, complements of the celebrity's good looks, requests for RTs, but mostly replies to celebrity tweets. A large portion of tweets sent to Deadmau5 were about cats, as he frequently tweeted about his cats, and

Diplo's #expressyourself phenomena, which were rarely seen in the timelines of other producers.

The variety of tweets sent to each EDM celebrity show the range of emotions they stir up in fans: joy, anticipation, allure, admiration, and many others. Negative emotions like enmity or harassment also occur. Celebrities are the recipients of hate tweets, threats, stalking, and trolling. Trolling is a new trend in the internet age, where potential trolls stealthily antagonize or start rumors about others, all for achieving a response. Successful trolls include convincing others that so-and-so has died or announcing a concert. Deadmau5, Skrillex, and Tiësto had to confirm they were in fact alive and kicking from the amount of publicity their 'deaths' created: "@deadmau5 are you dead again as well? Heaven is a great place isn't it?:)" (@tiesto 2011).

Although celebrities cannot delete tweets from others, they can block users, ignore them, and report spammers or trolls. Twitter is semi-restricted access to the celebrity, an access that is controlled by them and determined by their security settings and the information they provide online. Second parties do not hunt them down for the inside scoop, as their innermost thoughts and intimate details are available to all. Celebrities feed fans' desirability to know more about them, appearing to make their relationship more personal.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Certain limitations exist to this study despite the extensiveness and selection of this examination. The most obvious weakness is the saturation of fake Twitter accounts prevented error-free research of total influence over followers. Between the sample size I researched and the lengthier amount from the analytic websites, there is no definite answer of how many fans are really following each celebrity. Even celebrities become confused with fake accounts, as any user can claim stake to any name. “Haha twitter gets confusing sometimes RT @Irish_Jonny: @tiesto You tweeted the wrong Hardwell he's @HARDWELL. That's a fake.” (@tiesto 2012i). If and when they find out who the fake accounts following them are, the additional difficulty is of unfriending thousands, ten thousands, or even hundreds of thousands of users. Another difficulty is figuring out how many followers see each tweet and how many of those followers respond to them.

Celebrities have become more than characters in movies or presidential candidates; they are spokespeople for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and brand ambassadors for companies. Fans project and imagine themselves as celebrities but are not expected to be swayed or controlled in their own lives. Following a celebrity on Twitter is not only a form of entertainment, as their life is more exciting than the typical American's, but also an impact on their lives. Celebrities become the motivation to lose weight, better one's self, and shoot for dreams. Celebrities are people too, just like the rest of us: “i get the ego behind the # of fans.. but isnt it about actually connecting w real people?” (@diplo 2012e). Relationships are made as followers engage with each tweet, staying updated with the celebrity's daily life and talking about the celebrity to others, like a friend who lived in another city.

I used Larry Z. Leslie's (2006) criteria of what a celebrity was in order to choose which electronic dance music (EDM) producers would be the case studies for this thesis. To separate out someone who is famous or well-known, the person must provide an emotional relationship to fans, have a public life, be talented, have fame, be attention-seeking, be easily discernible, and have the ability to influence others. The most obvious choice for this study would have been French producer David Guetta who almost single-handedly rebooted the EDM takeover of America in 2009 with his single "When Love Takes Over" and his constant platinum records since then. I decided in favor of Deadmau5, Diplo, Skrillex, and Tiësto because of their ethnicities, visibility in the American music market, commercial exposure, and involvement in the EDM world. The data from this thesis could be used with different celebrities as the main constructs of celebrity and fans are the same. Most tweeters use Twitter for the same reasons, and any future studies on celebrity culture would be comparable with this.

There will still be different kinds of celebrities; musicians differ from actors because they do not rely on a large team to help with their image or career. Actors depend on managers, agents, public relations, writers, acting coaches, directors, and film editors to assemble the finished product. EDM musicians become famous through their dedication and innovation of constantly creating new songs, not movie posters or magazine articles. They find exposure through word of mouth recommendations from fans and friends online, especially Twitter, or from a performance at a music festival. Deadmau5, Diplo, and Skrillex used the internet to generate a buzz about their music early in their careers, and younger producers followed suit. Now, winning a remix contest on Beatport or DJ gig on Mixcloud is a guaranteed chance of making it to the next level. Uploading songs and sets to YouTube and Soundcloud creates exposure and makes it possible for other producers to use them in their own sets and remixes. Because of new

technology being developed constantly and driving down prices, laptops and computer software are suddenly affordable for everyone. People can go from zero to hero in an instant: French producer Madeon made a video of him mixing a song in his bedroom, uploaded it to YouTube, and headlined the Coachella Music Festival a few months later. Deadmau5 and Skrillex sign new discoveries to their labels and Tiësto uses them in his SiriusXM radio broadcasts. The Jeffrees from Diplo and Mad Decent is another hub for downloading the latest music.

It is no secret that post-Napster record sales are among the lowest in the modern era of the music business. The entire genre of electronic music sold around ten million records in 2011, which were mostly sales from mainstream electro-house or Guetta. But these figures do not gauge the actual penetration of EDM songs. Neither do numbers from the Billboard charts or the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). Moreover, EDM is a genre that never focused on selling records but having a good time. It was born and made during the wee hours of the morning on the dance floor which is where it is today. Whereas punk went against established authorities and hippies rejected conventional values, ravers live for the music. Rave followed the nocturnal cultures of disco, Chicago house, and Detroit techno and shared its soundtrack to the world. Chapter 2 looks at where EDM came from and how the mixing of various elements through songs, dress, and nightlife culture make it what it is today.

Almost all EDM producers release a weekly playlist available for download on iTunes or broadcast on SiriusXM where fans are able to hear new songs without paying anything. Additionally, some producers encourage illegal downloading or offer fans to download albums for free: “My friends, I forgot to post this but yesterday I put out 19 tracks by my friends on my label OWSLA, for FREE.” (@skrillex 2012e). Two reasons for doing this are cash and exposure. For every one big-name headliner for a rave or

festival, ten hopefuls are below them. This saturation makes it near impossible for fans to buy all the songs they like or want so most opt for illegal downloads. However, these fans will most likely see these performers in action, putting the dollar back in the producer's pocket. This is not the main mentality for musicians, but they do need to earn some money for their work after spending months for creating a five-minute song. Producers make the majority of their money through performances, licensing, and merchandise, not by selling singles or albums. Skrillex released "Make it Bun Dem" for free two weeks prior selling the song on Beatport. Deadmau5 made a song with a fan coincidentally via Ustream after he expressed his frustrations about how the vocals were turning out: "The Veldt" is the end result of how "@deadmau5 finds his latest vocalist in an unlikely place... Twitter" (@dancingastro 2012).

These are important indicators of what the future landscape will look like because most contemporary EDM producers are business minded and technologically savvy. They know how to target their music and can become incredibly popular in a relatively short amount of time. Skrillex is the perfect example of this, compared to older producers who started pre-Napster, like Tiësto. The secret to success is not sales but stability: as long as they continue to deliver something unique, they will continue to be famous. Everything is done in an instant; there is no waiting period between composing, promoting, and performing. This is a sustainable celebrity culture because it is the most efficient and effective way of gaining attention and reaching fans.

Twitter provides the platform for carrying this out and connecting with fans as well. Celebrity-encounters are becoming more personal and less guarded. Meet-and-greets and fan letters are things of the past; now its tweets and RTs. Fan clubs and fan websites gave way to hashtags and fan accounts. Videos streaming of live performances were watched; even making a song with Deadmau5 was possible on Twitter. Instead of

passively following celebrities in movies and television shows, EDM fans take advantage of this immediate engagement. They actively participate in conversations with celebrities on Twitter or Facebook and contribute to the subculture online. Both producers and fans became the translators and authorities of what EDM is and was through the music and culture. These Millennials became Homi Bhabha's in coined translation "a condition in which a complex of cultural cross-currents and cross-fertilizations produce a wealth of hybrid identities that simultaneously blend together a diversity of cultural traditions" (1994).

The world is becoming increasingly connected, with over 2.5 billion people online and over one billion people on Facebook. There will no doubt be future studies on the social effects and aspects of living life in front of a computer. Social media affects us because of the range of possibility it brings: communicating with friends, watching celebrities, learning how to make dubstep. Twitter intensifies this by making everything real-time and easily accessible, allowing users to participate in large-scale experiences and collaborate with each other. Following celebrities on Twitter is a reason for this participation and collaboration, allowing tweeters to create a communal space in cyberspace, like one massive dance floor at a rave.

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