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Abstract

The overall aim of this paper is to aid the DIY artist to move towards self-sufficiency through the use of new technologies, which will be achieved by defining DIY music culture, identifying the creative and business needs of the DIY artist as well as establishing a model for DIY artists to be self-sufficient. The research methodology consisted of a mixture of unstructured interviews, including email, telephone and face-to-face. Fifteen interviews were conducted with DIY artists from local music scenes around the UK, in particular Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne and London. The research identifies areas of weakness within the process of a DIY artist's creative project relating to the artistic and/or managerial process, which can be improved through the use of new technologies. This will be demonstrated in the form of a business model.

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1.0   Introduction

Music did not really come to the forefront of popular culture until the early to mid-20th century. There are four main firms: Sony BMG, EMI, Warner Music Group and Universal Music Group, which dominate the music industry. They make up approximately 75% of the market of music sold worldwide (McDonald, 2008). The traditional definition of a Major record company is that it has its own channel of distribution. The domination was achieved by vertical integration, the firms owned the artists through long-term contracts, and hired producers who gathered the ancillary talent, produced the record, and packaged the result (Perrow 1976). Whereas, the independent record companies (the Indies) operate without the funding of or outside the organisations of the Majors.

Therefore, the major labels - or Majors - controlled everything and even if an independent label produced a popular song the Majors would re-record it with an established artist and release it themselves. This was a steady if unspectacular growth economically for the music industry. However, in recent years the lines have become somewhat blurred between the two as the Majors now have subsidiary companies that function like the Indies but answer to the Majors. Other Indies will tie in part of their distribution of a successful artist to a Major in order to secure international licensing deals (McDonald, 2008).

In fact, even today there is a severe lack of clarity in defining the different sectors within the 'music industry'. Williamson and Cloonan (2007) explain how the idea of "a single music industry is an inappropriate model for understanding and analysing the economics and politics surrounding music. Instead it is necessary to use the term 'music industries' (plural)". Therefore it is logical to eliminate any assumptions that the music industries are anything other than fragmented. The music industries are complex and so it takes a different kind of approach to understand how the different sub-sectors function.

With the decline of the UK manufacturing industries there is now more attention being focused on the creative industries, particularly music (Kollewe, 2008). This has lead to higher investment into grass-roots level of the music industries, such as local music scenes. Various initiatives by the government – such as New Deal for Musicians – have been implemented in an attempt to inspire more people out of unemployment and into jobs related to music (Job Centre Plus, 2008). However, the problem of self-sufficiency within local music scenes is still a huge issue.

Local music scenes are sub-sectors of the music industries in the UK, but local in terms of a small locality, not necessary personnel. The independent – or DIY - artist that inhabits a local music scene has a strong ethic that relates back to the punk, lo-fi, bricolage ideals of being creative and having fun whilst being self-sufficient at the same time.

In terms of infrastructure the local music scenes are extremely difficult to define as they are quite fluid and free flowing and are not like a typical organisation. They function in a completely different way, which is an important aspect of this research. Therefore, the overall aim of this paper is to aid the DIY artist to move towards self-sufficiency through the use of new technologies, which will be achieved by defining DIY music culture, identifying the creative and business needs of the DIY artist as well as establishing a model for DIY artists to be self-sufficient.

1.1 Literature review

The term bricolage has been used in many different disciplines, from the arts to Information Systems (IS). In a broad sense it holds comparisons with collage, which is "an assemblage improvised from materials ready to hand, or the practice of transforming 'found' materials by incorporating them in a new work", (Baldick, 2004) which applies to the practical application of the bricolage perspective.

Bricolage is taken from the French word, which means, "tinkering", the closest equivalent in English being do-it-yourself (DIY) although this definition is somewhat vague (Baldick, 2004). There are many important aspects to contemplate with regards to this definition. Firstly, the term tinkering means to be ineffective or to lack expertise as opposed to being an expert and so may lack creativity or improvisatory qualities. Secondly, tinkering usually relates to the undoing of a mistake - rather than improvisation - that means to create or construct. Finally, the manner in which improvisation is of-the-moment is not apparent in the concept of tinkering. The English equivalent of tinkering has many negative connotations, as the concept is more about repairing a problem with not enough time.

Bricolage as a theoretical concept is firmly rooted in the local music scenes where experimentation and improvisation are a way of life rather than a perspective. This has helped push the boundaries of popular music within the UK over the last fifty years and continues to do so. In fact, Shuker (2005) explains how "various musical styles have been credited with bringing a sense of play to the arts of bricolage, utilising different musical sounds, conventions, and instrumentation." This relates to artists' ability to take influences from a range of musical genres and styles and create something new.

The primitive manner in which bricolage is practiced can also be compared to hunter-gathering techniques of the nomads. Merriam-Webster (2008) defines a nomad as "a member of a people who have no fixed residence but move from place to place usually seasonally and within a well-defined territory." It is not just the methods of bricolage that draws comparisons with nomads but also the perspective and thinking behind their actions.

Nomadic thought is best explained by Elovaara (2000) as "critical thinking" as it "embodies experience". A nomad is "always on the move, on its way through somewhere … [and] avoids fixed categories and classifications" (Elovaara, 2000). This, of course, describes the bricoleur. Frith (1987) explains that by, "Transgressing the ordered time and space of everyday life and work under high capitalism, they [artists] tour and record in different towns and countries, stay up late and go to work when others are playing". As a result of this lifestyle, musicians have broken down many social barriers including issues of race, gender, sexuality and class by performing in all kinds of situations to a once segregated audience. This has been successful due to the artist's ability to receive new people and ideas easily.

Punk epitomises "the sub-cultural uses of these anarchic modes" (Hall et al. 1976). Sub-cultural style often appeals to specific groups of people because objects resembled in the distinctive subculture ensembles were "made to reflect, express and resonate…aspects of group life" (Hall et al. 1976). The direct nature of punk sometimes means it is offensive – for example, t-shirts covered in swear words – but this is the whole point of punk, as it needs to get its messages across. In DIY art sometime the most unremarkable and inappropriate items - such as a pin, a plastic clothes peg, a television component, razor blade, a tampon - could be referred to as punk fashion.

Contrary to its anti-commercial message punk was actually all-inclusive with its ideals firmly rooted in bricolage. It was about raising awareness with regards to social and political hot topics and this was achieved by using the tools in-hand, meaning people used whatever resources were available to communicate their message to others. Some chose to self-publish magazines of local interest and distribute them within their communities. Others formed bands and played local gigs, some even going on to become professional musicians. However, the emphasis was not about being accomplished in your particular art form of choice but more about "the rejection of existing rules, the assertion of the need for change and the desperate call to be yourself" (Spencer, 2005). It celebrated the things that were good and despised the things that were bad, take it or leave it that was punk.

The main concept that lives on today from what punk achieved is the do-it-yourself (DIY) ethic, which was actually a catalyst for the bricolage style, as "punk best emphasised such stylistic bricolage" (Shuker, 2005). The main appealing aspect was "not individual punk songs or recordings but punk style" (Horner et al., 1999) as a direct reaction to the poor state of the music industry as well as social and political issues such as equality and unemployment.

There is much more of a motivation amongst DIY artists to move creative ideas and projects forward themselves, rather than rely on others who may not understand the integrity. This is mainly due to the fact that ideas are self-imposed and generated through a passion for music rather than aspirations of fame or fortune. In fact, one of the main features of the local music scenes is that the main emphasis is on nurturing talent, being creative and having fun. Few people at this level have pipe dreams to sign a multi-million pound recording contract with a major record company. Instead, they are 'doing it for themselves', with the simple goal of being self-sufficient as a means of supporting their passion.

1.2   Information Systems

For many years now the Majors have held power over the general public; however, this could be coming to an end. In the mid- to late-1990s there was a technological revolution in information systems integration that would change music forever.

The growth of personal computing, the Internet, satellite telecommunications networks, as well as consumer-friendly data access devices have combined to create a completely new environment for human beings to live. The impact of these new technologies promises to evolve new forms of collaborative thinking, and new ways of processing and managing information - as well as introducing a global electronic marketplace.

As the Internet has become more and more integrated into people's everyday lives so too has the idea that technology is an accessible tool to be used by anyone. (see Figure 1) For independent artists the development of information technology has been a major breakthrough as these tools - such as MySpace - have provided an easy-to-use platform to self-promote their creative work as well as network with fans and fellow

artists (Marshall, 2004). This means that people who may not have previously had an interest in how technology can help the creative process are now learning basic computing such as basic HTML, embedding images and videos and blogging. Specifically within the DIY music scene this has caused quite a stir as an influx of people are being creative online by posting up home recordings, writing topical music blogs about local bands as well as promoting local gigs. Information technology has had a huge impact on music culture and the creative industries having changed the way people create and interact with each other.
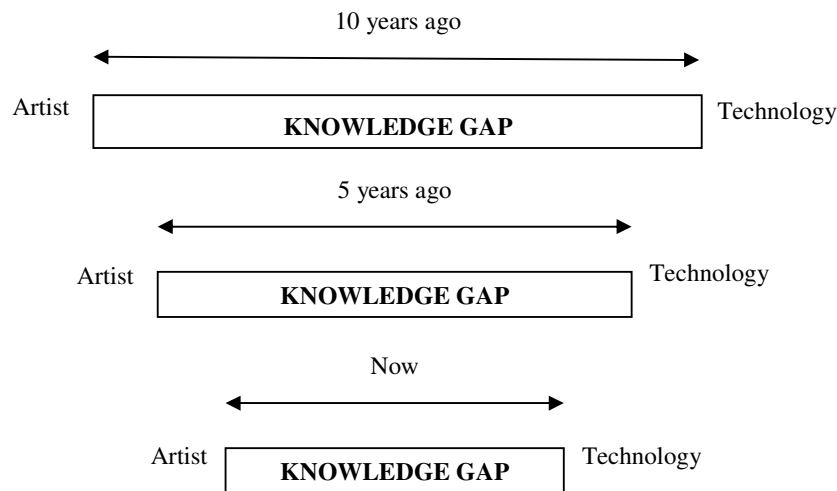
10 years ago

| Artist | KNOWLEDGE GAP | Technology |

5 years ago

| Artist | KNOWLEDGE GAP | Technology |

Now

| Artist | KNOWLEDGE GAP | Technology |

Figure 1.   This shows the gap between people and technology.

New technologies have given fans access to networks, tools and information through the Internet and this has swung the balance of power away from the Majors quite dramatically. This medium gave music artists and fans equal opportunities in terms of communication, sharing of information, visibility as well as flexibility, thus causing a fragmentation within the industry. Despite this huge sea change the Majors failed to react as quickly as consumers and before long companies such as EMI and Sony were losing billions of dollars through music piracy on the Internet (Marshall, 2004). No longer do artists believe the grand narrative of getting signed to a Major – such as EMI - on a multi-million pound five year contract. Many up-and-coming artists aspired to this dream and when it did not materialise their ambitions disintegrated, along with their music careers. Hence, this research will specifically look at local music scenes in order to identify the creative and business needs of the DIY artist for

improving the self-sufficiency by establishing the information base managerial models.

Barnat (2007) notes that the managerial process "is based on the intuitive concept of substantial rationality, which interrelates the drives, impulses, wishes, feelings, needs, and values of the individuals to the functional goals" of the artist. Basically, the role of the manager is to protect, to focus on the artist's career on all levels, from creative to business to marketing and promotion. It is an all-encompassing role. On the other hand, the role of the DIY manager — is quite different. In most cases the DIY artist and DIY manager are the same person and they conduct all of these roles individually.

1.3   Research Methodology

This research will explore local music scenes within the UK, including the artists, managers, promoters and other participants. It will examine the various roles that people have and the processes they go through to be creative and remain productive.

Local music scenes are difficult to define, as the DIY artist is nomadic in terms of activities, and so it is not possible to make a quantitative analyse. The research of local music scenes must be done qualitatively in order to provide a true and rich reflection. The research design (below) shows how a researcher in the field can use his or her toolbox of techniques appropriate to the context, which are evaluated and applied.
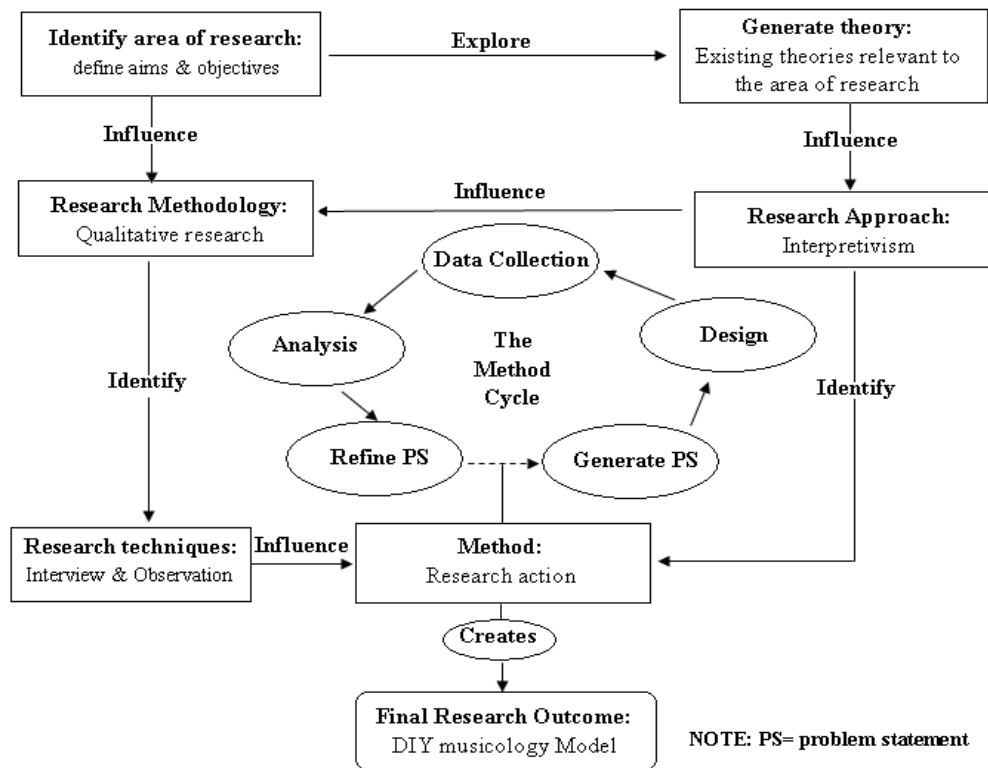
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┌──────────────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Identify area of research:│     Explore        │    Generate theory:      │
│  define aims & objectives │ ─────────────────► │ Existing theories relevant to│
└──────────────────────────┘                    │    the area of research  │
            │                                    └──────────────────────────┘
         Influence                                          │
            │                                            Influence
            ▼                                               ▼
┌──────────────────────────┐    Influence       ┌──────────────────────────┐
│  Research Methodology:    │ ◄───────────────── │   Research Approach:     │
│   Qualitative research    │                    │     Interpretivism       │
└──────────────────────────┘                    └──────────────────────────┘
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Figure 2. Research design for local music scenes

Whilst discussing the field of "qualitative research," Denzin and Lincoln (2003) emphasise its interpretive nature and would include the interpretivist paradigms and methods; they explain that "qualitative research is a filed of inquiry in its own right," crossing over many different "disciplines, fields, and subject matters".

The study of DIY musicology is not a straightforward area of research. The people in local music scenes work with a freedom that is unlike most other industries. Therefore, in order to get a satisfactory insight into the mind of the artist, it is necessary to talk to people in person. This will contribute towards the richness of data, which comes from using a multi-methods technique. In fact, the main methodology employed will be different types of qualitative research.

1.3.1 Qualitative Research

Gorman et al. (1997) describe qualitative research as "a process of enquiry that draws data from the context in which events occur" so that the process can be determined from deducting information given in-depth by participants of a particular event.

Qualitative research methods include phenomenology, grounded theory as well as a case study research, and they use experimental design, applied behaviour analysis, comparison studies, descriptive statistics, basic use of parametric and non-paramedic statistics, as well as other aspects of experimental methods of design (Wigram et al., 2002). The way in which data is collected in the creative industries – specifically local music scenes – is unique compared to other industries. Therefore, the techniques used in researching this area must also be unique.

1.4   Data Collection & Analysis

As a bricoleur, researcher and DIY artist with over ten years experience in the local music scenes this environment is a familiar one. However, it is not like most other working environments. The people within the local music scenes come from a wide range of backgrounds as well as experiences and are practitioners in their art for varying reasons. The first step was to talk to existing contacts such as local musicians in Manchester and Newcastle to find out what they thought of doing a PhD based on the DIY artist and local music scenes. Generally the response was very positive and this was encouraging, especially when the response to music-related research can sometimes be met with scepticism when related to music.

Initially a wide net had been cast exploring all people that were thought to be relevant to the research title, aims and objectives. These people were not only from within the local music scenes but also from the music industries as a whole as well as academia. Therefore, people who could have an outside perspective of local music scenes as well as those with inside knowledge could contribute to the outcome. This group of names was narrowed down over the course of a few months with an eventual shortlist of approximately twenty potential interviewees. These interviewees were mostly either 'primary contacts' where contact had been made prior to this research related to another creative project or 'secondary contacts' where first contact was made deliberately relating to the research. However, there were also cases of 'tertiary contacts' where other people suggested interviewees.

There are three main types of interview in this research: email, telephone and face-to-face. However, during the course of planning for the data collection it emerged that face-to-face interviews would be split into two distinct areas – chat and in-depth. The

chat interview is a brief yet fairly unstructured conversation based on pre-prepared ideas, whereas, the in-depth interview is a full-scale conversation with the possibility of a debate.

The data analysis starts by identifying 130 valuable codes for further categorisation with relevant concepts in 56 categories. Therefore, three main elements for developing DIY musicology model have been defined.

1.4.1 The DIY Musicology Model

This model has evolved through several stages of development. It is called the DIY musicology model because it represents the process involved in a creative project undertaken by the DIY artist or artists. The first stage identifies the three key areas in helping the DIY artist become more self-sufficient: Artistic Process, Managerial Process and Information Systems. Having made the links it is now possible to develop a basic representation of these areas, by splitting a circle into the following three parts:

1. Artistic process
2. Managerial process
3. Information systems
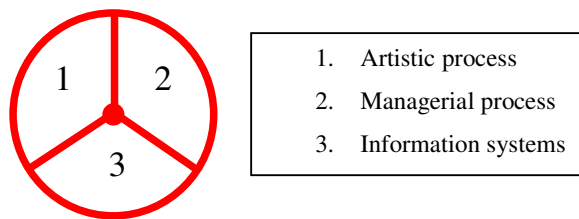
The artistic process and managerial process must be joined by information systems to form a triangulation in order for the DIY artist to become self-sufficient. The following diagram shows where the DIY artist sits in relation to the three main areas, as well as the local music scenes.
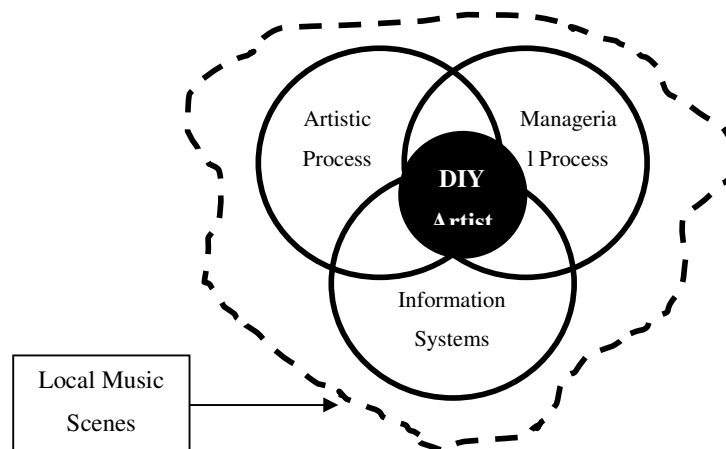

Figure 3.   The DIY artist triangulation

The DIY musicology model (below) helps to identify the problems that DIY artists encounter with regards to self-sufficiency and new technologies.
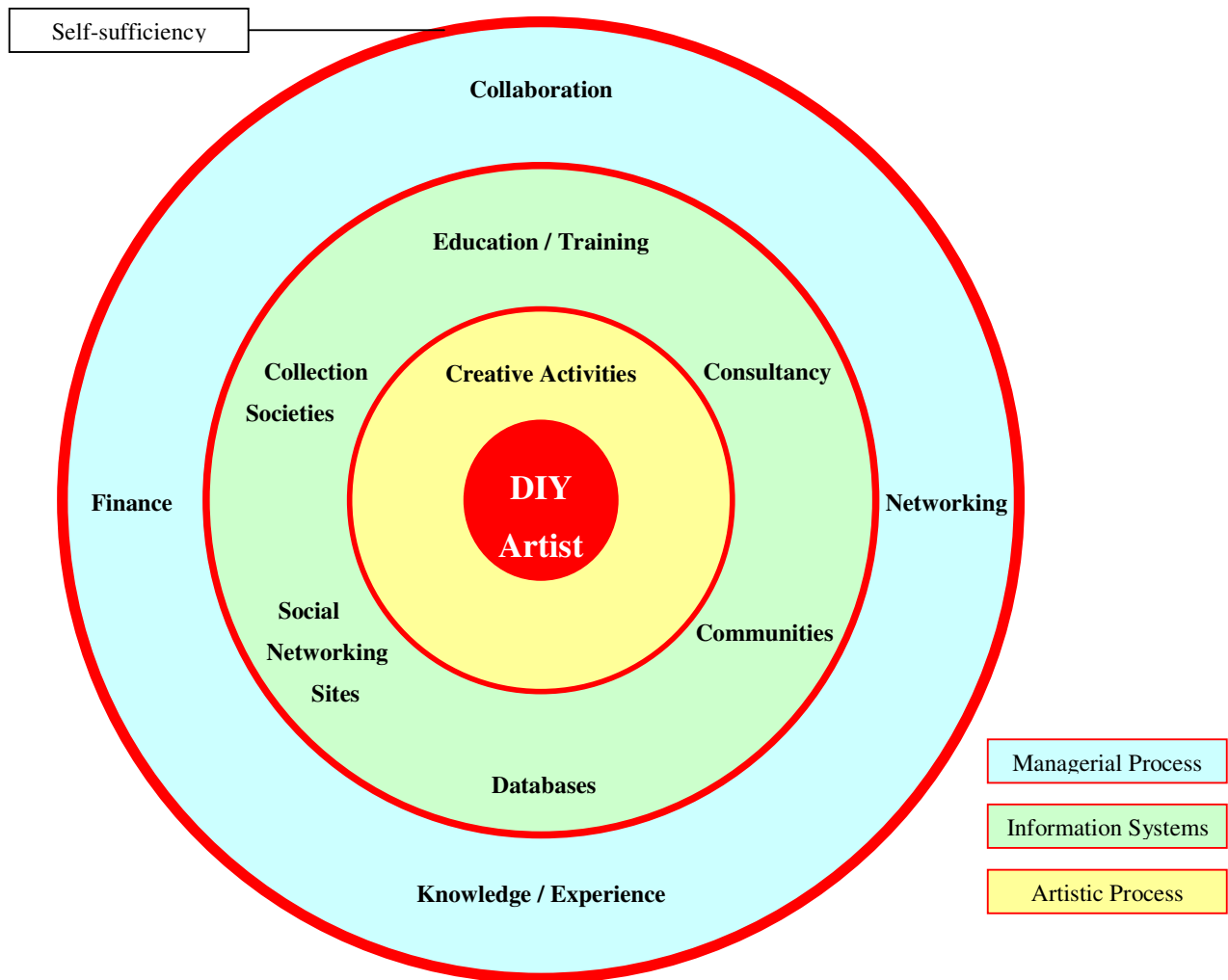

Figure 4.　　　　**DIY Musicology Model**

The centre of the model represents the DIY artist and the starting point of a creative project. In order to be self-sufficient the DIY artist must engage with the managerial process as well as the artistic process through the implementation of information systems.

The first level is Artistic Process and this relates to the creative activities that make up parts of the project, such as a gig, writing songs and recording. In order to be self-sufficiency, it is a must for the DIY artist to make use of all the relevant tools in the

database, social networking sites, collection societies, education / training information, communities as well as the use of communication tools for helping them fulfil the objectives of the creativity activity / activities. Therefore, accurate, valuable supporting Information Systems are required, which form the second level in the model. Knowledge and experience are also necessary for self-sufficiently managing finance in conducting all of the creative projects; thus, the ability to manage networking and collaboration is required to support the fulfilment of the project outcome. Hence, the relevant management skills form the third level, Managerial Process, in the DIY musicology model.

1.5   Contributions

Despite the music industries – in particular the local music scenes - being a large area to cover, it has been relatively untouched in terms of academic research. The contributions to knowledge are as follows:

1. This research will deeply explore DIY art and culture in the UK and look at the current state of the music industries. Also looking at how new technologies affect the local music scenes in relation to managerial techniques through entrepreneurial business.

2. The local music scenes as a domain have been untouched in terms of academic research.

3. Within the research environment the methods have to be flexible in order to deal with changes in circumstance. For example, the DIY artist is not always easily accessible; therefore, the research instrument is constantly changing depending on the circumstances.

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