Chapter XIV
Online Music Distribution

Francesco Spadoni
Rigel Engineering S.r.l., Italy

ABSTRACT

This chapter analyses multiple aspects of online music distribution, investigating the major problems, the different approaches, and business models, considering the different points of view and perspectives, presenting the emerging technologies and digital rights management standards, analysing issues for rights clearing, intellectual property protection, content retrieval, and metadata management. The chapter presents the structure of the developing market of digital music and multimedia content distribution, considering all the stakeholders and their mutual relationships, as well as the legal framework. It highlights the importance of the needs of end users and consumers of music when considering the major problems, as well as the new behaviours and possibilities originated by the availability of music in digital form. This chapter is aimed at many different audiences, from policy makers to music end users and consumers to content creators, publishers, and distributors, as well as technology providers, and in general, to all the players in the digital music content value chain.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter investigates the development of multimedia content distribution, analysing the major problems, the different approaches, and business models, considering different aspects and views of the phenomenon. The main focus is on distribution of multimedia content using the Internet to perform transactions and/or content delivery. Key issues are business models, new technologies, and distribution media (mobile environments, Web services, XML, Web-TV and streaming), rights clearing and content protection aspects (digital rights management), content information retrieval (metadata management). It will also consider the legal framework and the developing market of digital music, as well as the quality and accessibility of music distribution services.

The chapter analyses in depth the structure of the market of digital music and multimedia content distribution, considering all the stakeholders and their mutual relationships. The next sections
present data and evaluate the bleeding-edge of technologies and products, systems, tools, and research, considering, at the same time, business and user needs. A section of the chapter presents and analyses the most important issues, problems, or barriers affecting the development of the multimedia content distribution sector.

The analysis revealed the increasing importance of the needs of end users and consumers of music when considering the major problems, as well as the new behaviours and possibilities originated by the availability of music in digital format. To this aim, copyright can represent the tool to get a trade-off between the sometimes conflicting interests of users and publishers-majors-authors, balancing the needs of the rights holder against those of society, users, and consumers.

More and more authors, copyright collecting societies, and independent labels are embracing the conviction that economic and business models generated or based on new communication and transaction schemas, like P2P, are totally positive in terms of distribution, selling, and knowledge of music. Such authors and their representatives are inviting the major labels to start a new innovative and creative approach, involving also the Internet Service Providers in the process, and allowing the user, paying a fee, to access music and possibly redistribute rights via the peer-to-peer and a new licensing scheme.

Adoption and proposition of emerging standards are considered for critical aspects of multimedia content delivery systems, as for instance, for the protected communication protocol used for communications and transactions management between the delivery systems and the related clients or third-party applications. Standardisation activities can play a primary role for the full exploitation of the Internet in terms of content exchange. In particular, the still evolving MPEG-21 ISO standard appears to fit well the music distribution scenario, providing an interoperable multimedia framework and supporting users in accessing, exchanging, and manipulating digital music.

This chapter is aimed at many different audiences, from policy makers to music end users and consumers to content creators, publishers, and distributors as well as technology providers, and in general, to all the players in the digital music content value chain. Each one of the players is characterised by having a deep and very specific knowledge concerning his/her core business, but sometimes a limited understanding of the needs and processes of other players, partners, and (sometimes) even customers. Considering such a widespread target audience, every attempt has been made to make this chapter as readable and usable as possible to such differentiated audiences, while still retaining the accuracy and clarity needed in a technical report. The author tried to present an objective overview of the digital content distribution phenomenon, abstracting as much as possible from ethical and philosophical considerations concerning the boundaries of individuals' freedom of action against the enforcement of intellectual property rights.

Part of the content of this chapter is the outcome of different activities and initiatives performed under the framework of the Working Group on Distribution of Coded Music of the MUSICNETWORK Project, a centre of excellence financed by the IST Program of the European Commission.

The following sections present an overview of the market for online distribution of digital music, a description of the main players in the content value chain, an overview of the major products and services, a discussion on the major problems affecting the market and the major stakeholders; a list of the basic enabling technologies; a description of emerging and promising technologies that can be used to solve some of the existing problems and/or to moderately improve the current situation; existing and emerging business models for the online distribution of digital music; new business models and approaches to the market better
Related Content

Online and Face-to-Face Voice Instruction: Effects on Pitch Accuracy Improvement in Female Voice Majors
Mindy Damon and Amanda J. Rockinson-Szapkiw (2018). Pedagogy Development for Teaching Online Music (pp. 21-44).
www.igi-global.com/chapter/online-and-face-to-face-voice-instruction/203868?camid=4v1a

Interactive Technologies and Audiovisual Programming for the Performing Arts: The Brave New World of Computing Reshapes the Face of Musical Entertainment
www.igi-global.com/chapter/interactive-technologies-and-audiovisual-programming-for-the-performing-arts/157955?camid=4v1a

Employees' Protection: Workplace Surveillance 3.0
www.igi-global.com/chapter/employees-protection/157959?camid=4v1a

Structuring Music-Related Movements
www.igi-global.com/chapter/structuring-music-related-movements/72438?camid=4v1a