Illegal Music Downloading:

A Qualitative Research Report.

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Executive Summary

This report uses qualitative methodology to conduct primary research from an empirical approach and subjectivist paradigm. It addresses the moral reasons and uses consumer behaviour and culture to explain the illegal downloading of music. The report dismisses the social influences as a cause, and suggests alterations in the law in order to curb illegal music downloading.

Table of Contents

Background Literature and Problem Definition

According to the BPI report 'almost eight million people in the UK continue to download music illegally' (BPI 2010: 1) and despite the fact that 'by February 2004, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) had filed lawsuits against more than 800 individuals suspected of illegally downloading music' (Kinnally, Lacayo, McClung, & Sapolsky 2008: 894), 'three quarters of all music tracks digitally acquired in the UK were downloaded illegally' (BPI 2010: 1), which equates to two albums per person. This report will investigate the reasons behind this.

Response to Client Brief

The brief states that the key area for research is young adults aged between 18 and 34. The BPI has found that the main motivation is because 'it is free', but also peer influence and ease of access factor in.

This research should investigate the motivations to download either legally or illegally and the consequent sharing of music files. The research should look at perceptions of music ownership and attitudes towards these. Finally the research will attempt to clarify understanding on the consequences of illegal downloading and whether or not this, and the former points affect the choice of individuals in regards to downloading and sharing music.

Previous Research

Firstly, there has been previous research into the illegal downloading of music which has largely examined three main areas of interest. Research has looked at how illegal music downloading is affected by culture, the economic impact illegal downloading has, and has researched in relation to music and copyright laws. (Kinnally et al 2008).

Kinnally et al. (2008)'s article looks into motivations behind downloading music illegally online prior to the increase in legal music download platforms; as described by the BPI (2010); and highlights the consumer's choice between physical CD or illegal download. This

signifies a gap in research in that now, there are a significant number of legal download platforms, so why do consumers choose illegal over legal when both are accessible.

Bonner and O'Higgins (2010) used quantitative research and found a key theme in illegal downloading; that consumers understand their behaviour is morally wrong but continue to do so anyway, and also 'how the majority of respondents opted for neutrality' (Bonner & O'Higgins 2010: 1351). This is a theme that developed from Bonner and O'Higgins (2010)'s research and can be looked at in further detail, and the reasons behind this attitude examined.

In agreement with Bonner and O'Higgins (2010), Lysonski and Durvasula (2008) also used quantitative methodology and found that 'students do not seem to be overly concerned' (Lysonski & Durvasula 2008: 174) with the laws on illegal music downloading and suggest that 'perhaps, it is due to the invisibility of downloading that hides one's identity and allows the recipient (perpetrator) to feel undetected and not subject to being caught' (Lysonski & Durvasula 2008: 174). This is a factor that can also be researched further into.

Consumer Behaviour

From a consumption perspective, Solomon (2006) would suggest that illegal music downloading stems from the consumer's 'desire to fit in' (2006: 350). Consumers feel peer pressure so as to not be excluded from their subculture of consumption, they do as their peers do. This can be looked at as to whether or not consumers legally or illegally download because those around them do.

This theory is supported by the theory of 'the effect of mimicry on consumer product consumption' (Tanner, Ferraro, Chartrand, Bettman & Baaren 2008: 754). The theory looks at how consumers mimic those around them in their consumption habits, 'individuals automatically mimic many aspects of their interaction partners' (Tanner et al. 2008: 755), which instigates an area for further research.

Problem Definition

The factors that generate illegal music downloading comprise of mainly utilitarian reasons, but some research implies there may be social factors filtered in which cause consumers to ignore what they understand to be morally right or wrong.

Problems that cause illegal downloading:

- Availability and accessibility;

- No direct threat from authority;

- Abandonment of morality;

- Peer pressure and the desire to "fit in".

The primary research therefore, will focus on what consumers consider themselves could prevent these problems. This further research allows a greater understanding of the causes of the problems, and thus a solution. The target population will be consumers aged between 18 and 34 and will attempt to gain in-depth insights into these problems, with the use of qualitative methods in comparison to quantitative methodology utilised in previous research.

Research Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives for this report are as follows.

Aims

"To investigate if consumers in the UK aged 18 – 34 choose to download music illegally despite the accessibility of legal downloads, due to peer pressure."

"To examine the moral discard and relaxed attitude towards laws regarding illegal music downloading of consumers aged 18 – 34 in the UK."

Objectives

- To explore the reasons why consumers in the UK aged 18 – 34 download music illegally in spite of the wide availability of legal download platforms.
- To observe whether peer pressure influences consumers in the UK aged 18 -34 to illegally download music.
- To investigate the moral considerations consumers aged 18 – 34 in the UK undertake when choosing to illegally download music.
- To ascertain the legal alterations required for UK consumers aged 18 -34 to cease illegally downloading music.

Evaluation of Research Methods

<u>Research design</u>

In accordance with Holden and Lynch (2004)'s theory, this report uses epistemological, interpretivist methods from a subjectivist approach. The purpose of interpretivist research (or anti-positivism, as they site) is 'to obtain phenomenological insight, revelation' (Holden & Lynch 2004: 400), interpretivisits 'study a specific phenomenon in a particular place and time...and seek to determine motives, meanings, reasons, and other subjective experiences that are time and context-bound' (Hudson & Ozanne 1988: 511).

Subjectivist research 'focus[es] on the meaning of social phenomena rather than its measurement. Their goal is to understand and to explain a problem in its contextual setting' (Holden & Lynch 2004: 404). Subjectivism is a preferable method for exploratory research, in that 'subjectivism's proponents argue that its accompanying epistemology realises a more explanatory success' (Holden & Lynch 2004: 404).

This report undertakes primary research in order to explore the aims and objectives effectively as primary data is 'originated by the researcher for the specific purpose of addressing the research problem' (Malhotra, Birks & Wills 2012: 55). The secondary research is conducted as background research because 'secondary data collection...may complete the research process...to interpret and report findings' (Malhotra 2012: 10), but it has nonetheless been 'collected for some other purpose than the problem at hand' (Malhotra 2012: 55).

Given that the 'qualitative paradigm research is "grounded, discovery oriented, exploratory, expansionist, descriptive, inductive"' (Ali & Burley 1999: 104), qualitative methodology is appropriate for exploratory and inductive research, in that also 'interpretation is more linked with qualitative approaches' (Gummesson 2005: 311). The research is inductive in

that 'inductive research lets reality tell its story on its own terms and not on the terms of extant theory' (Gummesson 2005: 322). This report uses qualitative methods for cross-sectional study; or one-stage in-depth research.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

The primary data collection method is qualitative research, in particular, focus groups. Focus groups are preferential for ten main reasons, 'synergy[1]...snowballing[2]...serendipity[3]... stimulation[4]...security[5]...spontaneity[6]...specialisation[7]...structure[8]...speed[9]...scrutiny[10]' (Stokes & Bergin 2006: 27). Focus groups remain the ideal for explorative research as they allow ideas to be developed and discussed. In light of this, 'the main criticism of individual depth interviews is that they miss out on the advantages of interaction with other consumers' (Stokes & Bergin 2006: 28), for which is the predominant reason interviews have not been used in this study.

Focus groups can, nevertheless, have negatives in that 'participants may feel inhibited in a group situation' (Stokes & Bergin 2006: 28), participants agree with the rest of the group verbally, whilst privately disagreeing, this can be overcome though by the moderator ensuring all participants have a chance to share their views.

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[1] 'the group process generates a wider range of information than would accrue from a comparable number of depth interviews' (Stokes & Bergin 2006: 27).

[2] 'respondent interaction creating a chain of thought and ideas' (Stokes & Bergin 2006: 27).

[3] 'a great idea can drop out of the blue' (Stokes & Bergin 2006: 27).

[4] 'respondent's views are brought out by the group process' (Stokes & Bergin 2006: 27).

[5] 'respondents are more likely to be candid as there will probably be other similar people there, and there is less individual pressure than in a depth interview' (Stokes & Bergin 2006: 27).

[6] 'because no one individual is required to respond to a question, this encourages a spontaneous response when people have a definite point of view' (Stokes & Bergin 2006: 27).

[7] 'a trained moderator can interview more respondents in a given session' (Stokes & Bergin 2006: 27).

[8] 'it is easier for the moderator to reintroduce a topic not adequately covered before than in a depth interview' (Stokes & Bergin 2006: 27).

[9] 'quicker than individual interviews' (Stokes & Bergin 2006: 27).

[10] 'can be observed by members of the research team' (Stokes & Bergin 2006: 27).

As noted by Prince and Davies (2001) it is imperative that the moderator controls the group and allows for group interaction. In addition, it can occur that 'the way the questions are presented will influence the nature of group effectiveness' (Prince and Davies 2001: 209); the moderator must ensure this bias does not transpire, as this will cease the research from being of the subjectivist paradigm.

The focus group was conducted using an interview guide; see figure one of the appendices; this was constructed in order to conduct a semi-structured session. As described in Malhotra et al. (2012) Chapter 7, the interview guide consists of 'introductory questions' (Malhotra 2012: 231) to begin the participants thinking about music and downloading. Part One looks at illegal downloading and the reasons behind it; in line with objectives one and two; and uses both 'transition questions' (Malhotra 2012: 231) and 'key questions' (Malhotra 2012: 231). Part Two also uses both question typologies to gain insights into moral considerations and the participants' attitudes towards the music industry, to achieve objectives three and four.

The focus groups were all conducted using a heterogeneous sample so as to create varying opinions, debate and discussion between participants. There were four focus groups conducted; group one had seven participants, groups two and three had eight and group four had six participants. The groups were all 'dual moderator groups' (Malhotra 2012: 236), who used no visual stimuli or projective techniques to support the session, as it was deemed to not be of relevance. The focus groups did however, begin with a warm-up exercise which consisted of the participants discussing their favourite music and artists with the person next to them and consequently introducing each other to the group, in order to instigate them thinking about music. The focus groups were held in a group working room in a library. This setting allowed it to be familiar to the participants, so as to feel at ease, but also to remain a working environment in order to maintain a professional feeling. This was designed to relax the participants whilst still remaining a professional environment, for optimal results.

Ethical Concerns

As highlighted by Ryen (2009), it is of paramount importance that the participants feel at ease and that their views will not be publicly distributed. This is done by a consent form; see figure two of the appendices; of which participants are asked to read and sign at the top of the session. The consent form outlines that, although the session will be recorded, all views expressed will remain anonymous and confidential. The participants are also verbally assured of this by the moderators. The research is in accordance with the *Code of Conduct Established by the Market Research Society (MRS).*

Sampling

The non-probability sampling technique of convenience sampling was used for the primary research. The selection for this technique is 'left primarily to the interviewer' (Malholtra 2012: 502) and an 'example...include[s] use of students' (Malholtra 2012: 502). This technique is beneficial as 'the sampling units are accessible, easy to measure and co-operative' (Malholtra 2012: 503) and 'can be used in exploratory research' (Malholtra 2012: 503). The sample size is small in relation to the population and target sample, but is however, representative.

Data Analysis Methods

The data was manually transcribed; of which an example transcript can be found in figure three of the appendices; and analysed. It was manually transcribed as a pose to using computer software, as 'there are few universally accepted procedures and standards for qualitative data analysis' (Maclaren and Cattrall 2002: 28) due to the 'plurality of philosophies and theories that underpin [it and]... the variety in research approaches, strategies, designs and techniques' (Maclaren and Cattrall 2002: 28).

Firstly when analysing the data is important 'condense data, to make the same information more compact and manageable but not lose weight' (Gummesson 2005: 312), so recurring themes are identified from all four focus groups. This allows the data to be explored in line with an epistemological methodology.

'Data are compared with data, with existing theory' (Gummesson 2005: 312) to attempt to explain consumer behaviour. The data was compared with the background research to evaluate the relevance it had to the primary data. This is reflective of an inductive and subjectivist approach to research as it is looking at the data in comparison to society.

Another important consideration for analysis is the language used by the participants. 'Language is far more than a large collection of words and grammatical rules. Rather, it is a system of interrelated meanings' (Thompson, Pollio & Locander 1994: 434). The way the participants spoke indicated their attitude towards their viewpoints, in that pauses indicated hesitancy; in that they knew their behaviour and attitude was wrong; and laughter signified a lenient attitude towards their behaviour. This assists an interpretive research approach as it allows full understanding of the data.

It is however, important to consider the problems in qualitative data analysis. Research can be accused of having a 'hidden agenda. All research builds in part on assumptions and restrictions...[from]pre-understanding' (Gummesson 2005: 314), but this can be avoided by explaining previously conducted background research.

Limitations of Research Approach

The subjectivist approach has come under criticism, it has been said that 'researchers cannot distance themselves from: (1) what is being observed, (2) the study's subject matter,

or (3) the methods of study' (Holden & Lynch 2004: 404). This can be over-come though, in that the researcher must ensure their own opinions remain exempt to avoid bias.

Focus groups 'can produce a consensus view' (Stokes & Bergin 2006: 28). This can be conquered though, in two ways; firstly by informing the group that all opinions are welcome and nothing they say is wrong, and secondly, by encouraging those who have initially conveyed alternative views to share them.

Despite this, and as discussed in research design and data collection methods and procedures, the decision was made to conduct primary research from the subjectivist paradigm, from an interpretivist, epistemological, exploratory and inductive approach using the qualitative method of focus groups.

Research Findings and Discussion

The research into illegal music downloading presented 6 main themes: (1) The quest for immediate gratification; (2) Artist (brand) loyalty and collection of their CDs; (3) Artists make a considerable amount of money from other sources, so there is no need to pay for music; (4) Consumers do not mimic peers or download to fit into a subculture; (5) Illegal downloading is insignificant and you are unlikely to be caught; (6) Stronger punishments and publicised prosecutions would deter illegal downloading.

Theme 1: The quest for immediate gratification.

- Participants described how, in line with the BPI (2010)'s research, the main reason for illegal downloading was due to the fact that it is free, but the research shows, whilst this is an important factor, also the availability and vast sources of illegal music were paramount.

"...it's easier to do it online, well easier for our generation to do it online"

(Participant B, Focus Group 1)

"I think people today they live for everything now so it's at the click of a button they can access it, erm because they don't have to wait for like a release date, it's instant"

(Participant G, Focus Group 1)

"Its all because of the ease of availability of free music on the internet"

(Participant A, Focus Group 2)

"It takes a lot of time to download from itunes, its very time consuming so why not download it from someplace which is more convenient."

(Participant D, Focus Group 2)

"I don't actually have to get out of my bed and go to a store and stand in a queue and go through all that hassle whereas I just have to click and button and bingo that's it"

(Participant A, Focus Group 1)

There is a large emphasis on the time it takes to download, this O'Donoghue and Rabin (2000), would suggest is a consequence of the post-modern condition. 'A preference for immediate gratification' (O'Donoghue & Rabin 2008: 234), causes consumers to illegally download, they cannot wait for a legal download site, or to either order or physically purchase a CD. Thus, agreeing with Kinnally et al. (2008)'s research that illegal downloading is culturally dependant.

Theme 2: Artist (brand) loyalty and collection of their CDs.

- It was highlighted that on the occasion where the consumer was motivated to purchase a CD, it would be due to the fact that the artist was a particular favourite of the consumer and they build a collection of their releases. This demonstrates a brand loyalty in that 'brand-loyal consumers have a relatively high level of involvement with the brand' (Hoyer and Macinnis 2008: 259).

"I think people who have favourites, people who have artists where there music comes out and they just can't wait to get it and buy the CD or whatever, I think it's people like that"

(Participant C, Focus Group 1)

"If I'm very keen about a song and I admire the artist and enjoy the song a lot then yes I will buy the CD and pay for it."

(Participant D, Focus Group 2)

"If I like an artist I will get their album"

(Participant C, Focus Group 3)

"Yeah, I like a Japanese singer, so I like collecting their CDs, and bought it online."

(Participant B, Focus Group 4)

It was evident though, that for some participants, in particular 1C, this is something that other consumers, do. The language of 1C demonstrates how they feel the artists' income come from others and that so long as others are doing this then it is acceptable for less loyal fans to illegally obtain the music.

Theme 3: Artists make a considerable amount of money from other sources, so there is no need to pay for music.

- It is felt that the price of the other items for sale by the artists compensates for the loss in music sales that illegal downloads cause. Highlighting how 'price is a critical factor' (Hoyer & Macinnis 2008: 230).

"I think they earn a lot of money from things other than the music, so the talks on TV selling interviews, clothing lines... they get the benefits that come with having popular music"

(Participant B, Focus Group 1)

"You can buy their merchandise or you can buy tickets for their concerts which are so expensive so you pay them in a way"

(Participant E, Focus Group 2)

It is clearly felt that artists earn enough money from the sales of products associated with not just their music, but their fame. So participants felt that whilst illegally downloading does effect the artist, it does not mean they have no income as this is derived from other sources.

There is however, a contradictory viewpoint. Some participants felt that the music was constructed carefully and over time for their enjoyment, and therefore should be paid for.

Contradictory theme: Legally download due to respect and admiration for the artist.

"I prefer CD's because then you know that you've got the object that the artist has taken months of carefully putting together. You can tell by the CD cover and the songs themselves how much the album means to the artist because they took so much time into making the music which they enjoy making for their fans as well as for themselves."

(Participant F, Focus Group 3)

"Because I think it is a kind of protect[ion], [to]protect the artists. And it is a kind of respect. For them, I will buy CDs to pay for their work"

(Participant A, Focus Group 4)

This disagrees with the statement that consumers '...allow their emotional attachment and reactions to music to out-shadow any ethical principals they hold on the issue of downloading' (Bonner & O'Higgins 2010: 1352), as these responses show it working in reverse, there is a respect for the time and effort the artists have put into their work.

Theme 4: Consumers do not mimic peers or download to fit into a subculture.

- Peer pressure was not an influence on illegally downloading and they did not share files. Participants noted they did not illegally download due to peer pressure; it was not for a desire to "fit in" as Solomon (2006) suggests. It is not a social relationship shared by an ascribed social group (Wright 2006) that compels them to act against the law, the participants do not share the music they have illegally download with their peers. When asked if they downloaded because their peers did so, responses included:

"Not at all"

(Participant A, Focus Group 3)

"No."

(Participant E, Focus Group 1)

The simple and concise answers show how this is something that is not considered an important factor by the participants, and strongly rejects Tanner et al. (2008)'s notion of consumption mimicry.

This said, some participants from focus group one share links as a pose to files:

Contradictory Theme: Sharing as a form of social interaction.

"If I find a good song on YouTube like for instance I just put it up on twitter so my friends can listen"

(Participant A, Focus Group 1)

This supports Shouten and McAlexander (1995)'s notion that consumers are grouped into sub-cultures of consumption; a distinctive subgroup of society that self-selects;

which are based on commitments to a particular consumption activity, so consumers share music links with their sub-culture as an interaction with similar consumers.

Theme 5: Illegal downloading is insignificant and you are unlikely to be caught.

- Consumers understand the moral and lawful implications of illegal downloading, but consider it to be of and have no, consequences. In direct agreement with Lysonski & Durvasula (2008), the research shows that participants show a disregard for breaking the law.

"I know for a fact if I'm just downloading five or six songs a day then I'm not going to get caught so"

(Participant A, Focus Group 1)

- There is a strong belief that they will not be reprimanded for their actions, the use of "so" at the end highlights this. It is a way of saying "so what?", indicating that nothing will come of their actions.

"There are other important issues in the world on which we should be focusing upon"

(Participant E, Focus Group, 2)

"I'm not supplying it or downloading in massive amounts"

(Participant C, Focus Group 3)

As the transcript in figure three of the appendix shows, there is a large amount of laughter that occurs during the session, which demonstrates the relaxed attitude towards illegal activity, which Lysonski & Durvasula (2008) found.

Theme 6: Stronger punishments and publicised prosecutions would deter illegal downloading.

- The general consensus is that penalties should be harsher and prosecutions should be publicised. As Lysonski and Durvasula (2008) suggested, the research highlights the anonymity of the Internet, and that there is a 'significant negative correlation between downloading intentions and consequences of being caught downloading' (Lyonski & Durvasula 2008: 175), which is reflected in the suggestion that cases should be reported.

"It would only take having ten reported cases of people being fined £2000... it would only take a few stories circulating for people to use the alternatives ... it would then not be that bad an option if you thought well actually I might be fined a heavy amount "

(Participant B, Focus Group 1)

"If they went crazy on lawsuits against people downloading music then yes I will stop"

(Participant A, Focus Group 2)

"Once knowing someone actually has been caught you'd stop because you actually know it happens and isn't just hearsay"

(Participant D, Focus Group 3)

This supports the idea 'found that laws can be a strong force in deterring' (Lyonski & Durvasula 2008: 175), that 'if people suspect that they would be caught and punished, then they are less likely to download illegally' and strongly supports the research found that if authorities 'file lawsuits against some people, prosecute them, and disseminate such news is likely to have some impact' (Lyonski & Durvasula 2008: 175).

Conclusions and Recommendations

<u>Conclusions</u>

The key themes found in the research respond to the objectives outlined in the conception of this report.

Objective one aimed: *"To explore the reasons why consumers in the UK aged 18 – 34 download music illegally in spite of the wide availability of legal download platforms."* Themes (1) and (5) addressed this in the explanation that consumers seek illegal downloads as the quickest fulfilment for their needs, and that consumers find illegal downloading to be of no importance to authorities as there are no immediate threats of retribution.

The second objective of the report was: *"To observe whether peer pressure influences consumers in the UK aged 18 -34 to illegally download music."* Of which, theme (4) dealt with by concluding that consumers neither download to fit in with their subculture, nor do they mimic their peers.

Objective three looked *"To investigate the moral considerations consumers aged 18 – 34 in the UK undertake when choosing to illegally download music."* Themes (2) and (3) discussed this in discovering how consumers feel artists gain sufficient revenue from fame-related projects other than music, so do not need consumers to pay for their music. However, consumers who do purchase CD's, do so in order to build a collection stemming from brand loyalty to said artist.

Finally, the fourth objective hoped *"To ascertain the legal alterations required for UK consumers aged 18 -34 to cease illegally downloading music."* Theme (6) reflected on this, in that consumers expressed the idea that harsher punishments should be given to those found illegally downloading, and furthermore these cases should be made an example of.

Recommendations

Recommendations to the client comprise of the following:

- Make legal download platforms simpler and cheaper to use;

- Ensure legal download platforms are prevalent in the consumer's minds (brand awareness);

- Create attractive methods on legal platforms for consumers to send downloads as gifts;

- Create a 'share' button whereby consumers can share on social networks which albums they have just purchased (in order to build a collection);

- Increase brand loyalty through fanbases and fanbase rewards;

- Use artists and other celebrities to encourage consumers to purchase legal music;

- Create brand loyalty and reward schemes to users of legal platforms;

- Make consumers fully aware of the consequences of illegally downloading;

- Demonstrate to consumers that authorities are interested in prosecuting those found to be illegally downloading music;

- Publicise any cases against individuals who illegally download;

- Harsher penalties for those who illegally download.

Reflection and Further Research

Reflection

The limitations of this research lie in the use of only one qualitative method. To be fully exploratory, the report could have used more than one method to gain data. The sampling technique, although an effective one, does not give every person in the population a fair chance of being selected. These points could be modified in future research.

Further Research

Further research could elaborate on what focus group 1 touched upon. Further research could examine how consumers' attitude towards illegal downloading alters, when asked to consider how they would feel if they were the artist.

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Appendices

1. Interview Guide:

Focus Group Interview Guide

Introductions

Consent forms

Reassurance & confidentiality

Warm-Up Exercise – Talk to the person next to you, introduce yourselves and discuss each others favourite type(s) of music and artist(s)/band(s).

               - Introduce each other to the group.

Part One:

Where do you usually get this music (CD-shop?, Online)?

What website do you most commonly use to download music?

Why do you download music there?

Do upload and/or share music and videos online?

Why do you share music online?

Part Two:

What is your perception of music ownership, do you think it should be publicly owned or privately?

What is your opinion of illegally downloading music?

What do you think about the long term consequences of illegal downloading music?

Do you have friends who illegally downloading music online?

Have you ever downloaded music illegally?

What is your perception of music industry? How do you perceive record companies and the artists?

Can you give some suggestions for stopping people illegally download music?

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2. Consent form:

Participants' Consent Form for the focus group

I understand that my participation in this project is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the project at any time, without being asked to give any reason.

I understand that this focus group will be recorded and used in a report.

I understand that any views expressed are confidential and I will remain anonymous.

I understand that this research is in accordance with the *Code of Conduct Established by the Market Research Society (MRS)* (this can be found at: http://www.mrs.org.uk/standards/code_of_conduct).

By signing below you understand the above and agree to the following:

I am **willing** to participate in the focus group

I am **willing** to be recorded

I am **willing** to convey my views

My name: _____   Signature: _____

Contact email address (this should normally be your university email address):

3. Transcript from focus group 1:

[Introductions] **I am mod1 and this is mod2,**

This is our focus group on illegal music downloading.

Before we start can we ask you to fill out the consent forms.

And to tell you that we are recording on two devices if everyone is ok with that? [acknowledgment in the form of nods] Yes.

Just to let you know, everyone's opinions are welcome and nothing you say is right or wrong, we would just like to know what you think.

[Warm up exercise]

Where do you usually get this music (CD-shop?, Online) Do you get it online or do you prefer to get it from a CD shop or both?

1A: youtube

1B: youtube

1C: I just get it online

1D: youtube

1D: if you like it, if this brand or this singer is your favourite you buy some CD's from HMV

So you use you tube to just listen and then buy?

1D: yeah but download online is good because it is free

Do you download or just listen?

1A & 1C: just listen

So you would say youtube is the main place?

1D: yeah and itunes.

1B: if I want a special album I'll buy so I have the pictures and stuff but I haven't done that for a long time, erm Michael Buble's Christmas album is coming out and I've ordered that with my concert tickets so that's nice because I can actually have that [giggles] but yeah so no most of the time I just get it off itunes

So you would say it would have to be one of your favourite artists for you to buy the CD?

1B: to buy it physically yeah they'd have to be my favourite

1E: I think if it's like a limited edition album or something which is really special like a collectors item then it's nice to buy a hard copy of it

1F: I like to listen to it online and then choose whether or not to download it, I'm not sure if it's illegal or not

Yeah, are you aware the sites you use are illegal or illegal?

1D: always illegal I think [group laughs] yeah I always download from the kiwami software from china. I think the Chinese people erm think that they need to pay for music

1F: if you want to listen to premium music you can top up your membership

Do you think that the illegal sites are easier to use than the legal sites?

1A: the illegal sites are free right, so I think that's the main reason that people use it to download illegally, whereas itunes, napster and all these places, they charge you. I don't wanna pay 4 quid for one or two songs. That's my main reason, I actually download illegal music at times, not always, at times.

Do you want to purchase higher quality music online if you really like it?

1A: it doesn't really bother me, I'll blast it up anyway

1B: sometimes if I'm just buying one song I'll go onto youtube, it's if I'm downloading in bulk because I find itunes quite easy to use, it's really clear the way it's layed out erm but so that's only if I'm buying every now and then, most of the time I'll just make youtube playlists, so if I'm actually downloading it to actually have it on my computer I'll do it on itunes because it's quite simple. I've not really looked into downloading from youtube.

Do you share it, do you share anything you download?

1E: yeah, sometimes I will upload my favourite, music to a blog

For what reason do you like sharing?

1E: just a suggestion, to my friends

1A: when you say share it do you mean putting the link on Twitter, or...?

Anything

1A: oh yeah then I do that, if I find a good song on youtube like for instance I just put it up on twitter so my friends can listen

So, you touched on that you think people think they shouldn't have to pay for music, does everyone share that view?

1C: yeah, if you get it for free why would you pay for it

1A: yeahh

1C: if that's the best available option then why would you opt for the other

1A: yeah I think so

How would you feel if you were the artist and people weren't buying you music, they were just downloading illegally?

1B: I think that nowadays like really successful artists, they make a lot of money outside from their actual song

1A: true

1B: they make a lot of money from like endorsements and stuff, I think they get a lot of wealth from the stuff that goes with music rather than the music itself

1C: and they're doing so well without them

Who do you think legally downloads, who pays for their music. You say that artists are doing well without you paying, then who does pay?

1C: I think people who have favourites, people who have artists where there music comes out and they just can't wait to get it and buy the CD or whatever, I think it's people like that

1A: I actually refuse to believe that, because like everything is available online, especially youtube, although I still don't know how to download from youtube, so if anyone can teach me I'd be more than happy to know that! But I know lots of my friends like to go on youtube and watch the video and stream the video. I really doubt anyone actually goes online and buys it, like buying the whole thing is out of date now, it's old fashioned.

1C: No I meant go and buy the CD

1A: probably, probably

1C: because people like to collect things

1F: exactly

1C: like you have their first ever albums and whatever

So do you burn CDs from the downloads?

1A: no

1D: nope

What is your perception of music ownership, do you think it should be publicly owned or privately?

1G: I don't think so, because we didn't create it so it shouldn't really be public, as the rightful owners are like the producers and the artists

So do you agree with royalties?

1G: Yeah

1A: I do to some extent because we are the consumers right, the music was actually made for us for our pleasure, so I personally kind of believe I have some rights on songs, that's my view

1C: Yeah that's so true though because the artists are serving us, well no they're not serving us, it's made for us so we can listen to it and we can maybe relate to it for whatever reason, but it's kind of, we don't own it but it's made for us, so we can listen to it whenever

1B: I think it depends on the artist, because some people set out to make music to make money, other people will play in pubs, get scouted get found and be heavily advised to then sell the song but that's not the reason why they would want to produce the music. So I don't think you can say it's either for the consumers or for them, they're making music and they're sharing it with us so we can have some say in it but it is their music too

So do you think there's a difference between the people who've worked hard for it and perhaps, say someone who's perhaps just come off a talent show like the X Factor, do you think there's a difference, do you think you would have a different approach?

1G: I think they still work hard if they're on X Factor

1C: it's just that's a good platform to do it on, when people didn't have stuff like American Idol and the X Factor, people were just working hard to get there but it doesn't mean they don't have just as good of a talent it's just that's a good platform to do it on

1G: yeah, they're just luck enough

1B: what I think is bad that the people who everyone's gonna buy their music, like Rihanna, they will want the money for it whereas the people who are making good music but aren't as well known they haven't got the ways to put themselves out there will have to offer their music for free to be heard, so there's a difference between that

You see it as more of an art than a commodity?

1B: erm, I'd say that you could argue in both ways I think an art can become and commodity

What is your opinion of illegally downloading music?

1A: they should make it legal

So you think all music should be free?

1A: why not?

If it was all free, how do the artists and record companies make profits?

1A: make some jingles for adverts you know [laughs]

1F: they make money from concerts

1D: they're better dividing their audience into two parts, the first part is the poor guys and the second part is the upper class who have a lot of money, who are rich, they can buy what they want and it be kind of a status for them

So saying that you'd say it's the rich people who pay for their music...

1D: yeah yeah

...rather than the general public?

1D: yeah yeah

1A: I don't believe that, everyone does it

1G: I get the majority of my songs off itunes and I'm not extremely rich, I'm a student , I don't think it's that expensive at like 99p a song

So it's more your belief then?

1G: yeah I think so

What do you think about the long term consequences of illegal downloading music?

1A: just don't go ballistic with your downloading just download two songs a day, I think that's fine, you won't get caught then

Do you not think it has a long term effect?

1G: Yeah!

1E: yeah maybe some companies may meet the situation of bad prophecy of the record industry

So you think that's a prospect for the future?

1E: yeah yeah maybe

Everyone else? Or do you not think about it?

1C: I don't think about it, I'm just thinking about downloading or listening to the song rather than about the artist and whether they're making money or not [group laughs]

Do you have friends who illegally downloading music online?

[All in agreement]

Do you do it because they do?

1C: I do it because it's the easiest way for me to access the music

It's not peer reflected?

1A: nah

1C: no

1B: I think younger age groups it might be, they might be more keen to impress their mates and stuff but I think at this age you do what's right for you as an individual

1B: mmhm

Do you think it's something you've done recently or something you've done for a long time?

1B: we're quite an old generation, music download has only just come out recently because of the internet and it's only as we've been growing up that CD shops have been in decline. I remember when I was like 11 or 12 buying *Steps* and *S Club 7* like the actual CD, so I think it's kind of a new thing

1E: so do I, I was buying CD's when I was a teenager and then I thought online music is more and more popular so I chose to download music online and sometimes I will buy CD's but only a couple of times a year as a gift maybe to my friend if she likes the singer, I will buy the singer's latest CD to her as a personal gift

Do you buy CD's as gifts?

[all in agreement]

Or would you give them a voucher for online downloading?

1G: I think it depends on the person you're giving it to. If it was my boyfriend's dad, he doesn't really do stuff online, he's an avid fan of *The Beatles* so I know he'd want like a physical hard copy of a Gold edition album or something

A generation thing then?

1G: yeah definitely

1C: and usually, when people stick to the classics, they want a CD or something physical, because you wouldn't get a *Lil Wayne* CD you'd just get it online, but if its classics then you want it as an attachment kind of thing, put on your shelf for a collection

So you collect your favourite artists CDs?

1C: yeah

1G: I have all of *Westlife*'s CDs! In a box

1B: if there's somebody that you know you wanted a load of music that's in the chart you'd give them a itunes voucher because you'd get more value for your money that way and you could get a range of artists

1G: definitely

1B: I know they do things like hits 78 or they do these compilation albums but I think people just tend to pick and choose off the internet rather than buy those. They've tried to compensate by having those CD's but it hasn't really worked.

Do you think that's part of the reason then, because people do like a variety, so they don't have to have an album they can just pick and choose what they want?

[all in agreement]

1A: that's why I do it

Do you think it's price or availability why people download?

1B: both in equal measure I'd say, it's easier to do it online, well easier for our generation to do it online

1G: I think people today they live for everything now so it's at the click of a button they can access it, erm because they don't have to wait for like a release date, it's instant

What is your perception of music industry? How do you perceive record companies and the artists?

[pause]

How do they earn money from the music?

1B: I think they earn a lot of money from things other than the music, so the talks on TV selling interviews, clothing lines

1G: yeah

1B: other stuff, their music is played on the radio and then shared and they get the benefits that come with having popular music

1A: that applies to the artist but what about the music industry, she's absolutely right I'd not thought about it that way

1B: haha yeah, the artist is fine but the record company

1A: the record company, they're going down haha

1G: yeah but they take a proportion of the artists' income

1B: yeah

1A: they do yeah true

1G: they take a proportion of whatever they received, to be their managers and that

Do you think then that you could make it in the industry without a record company if you were trying to get famous?

1G: Ed Sheeran did, he was just a university student

1B: we've got a band from my home town and they've been together for 4 or 5 years and they're getting more and more successful and they've been doing sort of support act, big names since the beginning of the year, well not big names but bigger names, so um, they've not had a label they've just been putting videos of themselves all over Facebook and stuff and getting popular that way

Do you think if you were an artist you would be happy just selling other things rather than your music?

1B: if we were the artist?

Yes

1B: it depends on the person, some people would say, oh it's my music and that's why people love me, but um it's actually more to do with what TV show they're in and things like that influence their sales

How do you think people can be stopped from illegally download music or do you think it's something that they will do?

1A: you can't stop, we've discussed all the various issues but the fact is it's free it's easy, I don't actually have to get out of my bed and go to a store and stand in a queue and go through all that hassle whereas I just have to click and button and bingo that's it

1G: you just have to click a button in itunes though

1A: yeah but I have to pay for that

[the groups laughs]

1G: I think like, yeah I dunno, I think if the government actually did something about it and you know enforced some like regulations and some harsher rules some harsher penalties

1B: yeah yeah

Does everyone agree with that, if there were harsher penalties?

1B: yeah

1D: yeah

1C: yeah

1A: yeah

1G: I don't think they do anything about it really, like a harsher penalty would stop a person. Well it would!

1A: definitely I totally second you, yeah she's right she's right, if I know the fbi's on my house if I click that button then I wouldn't that but I know for a fact if I'm just downloading five or six songs a day then I'm not going to get caught so

1G: yeah!

1B: it would only take having ten reported cases of people being fined £2000 because one of their friends who wanted to drop them in it told them or something or told the police, it would only take a few stories circulating for people to use the alternatives like itunes like you [1G] do already, it would then not be that bad an option if you thought well actually I might be fined a heavy amount

1G: they have like 59p buckets on itunes as well, like sometimes they do offers where instead of it being 99p a song they do 59p or 79p

So if do you thing if they promoted that more it would_

1B: I think the prices need to be lower

1A: yeah

1B: I can see why there should need to be some prices for the really sort after music 'cause they've obviously done well to campaign and advertise themselves to the point that where that song is anticipated so it might deserve some credit if we're gonna listen to it a lot

The online downloading price or the CD price?

1B: erm, well... both really

1A: both

1G: my friend from work got a letter saying that his computer's been known to be illegally downloading and he doesn't ever download now so that's completely freaked him out and he's stopped doing it, just one letter saying that you have been known to be

Do you think that would stop you if it was just a letter?

1G: yeah

1B: yeah definitely

1C: yeah! Yeah it'd like I was being watched or something

1B: we all know it's illegal, so if somebody is saying to you and they're not your friend that it's illegal and you're doing it then you're probably going to stop

1C: yeah if you put like contact to anything they it makes people, well most people stop

1E: one of my friends, his coursemates told the government or school or something that he was illegally downloading not music but movies and he had a fine for that, but that wasn't in the UK

Do you think people do see a difference between films and music because there has been a lot in the press about piracy?

1B: in a way yeah because music, a song like that's come out, you can hear it on the radio and stuff you can hear it so much so hearing it once more on your computer isn't that big a deal but you don't see films all the time and stuff so if I stole a film that would feel a bigger deal than stealing a song I heard on the radio ten minutes ago

Does anyone actually think about it when they're doing it, think about the consequences, do you know what the consequences are?

1C: I don't think about it, I just click it [laughs] I just whatever, listen to it

Does anyone know?

1C: no

1A: the consequences right? No not really. We'll get a letter or something? £2000 maybe? I dunno or as an international student I might just get deported [group laughs]

Do you think that it's different in different countries?

1B: yeah

1G: oh yeah

1C: I mean everybody does it but like, I think people pay more attention to it, like people back home in my country they're not even thinking about music, like they don't think about it, I mean sure, it happens all the time but they don't think about it as a punishment, they have other things on their plate, so it's not a priority or even piracy, they don't promote it

1E: I know some software apps on iphone we can download music in China

1D: mmhmm

1E: but we can't use it in the UK, so I think the company use something

1D: depends on the country

1E: yeah to protect the profit or copyright on things

Do you think that protection on music would stop it, where do you think the music comes from in the first place when people upload it to youtube?

1A: but youtube's not illegal is it?

1C: no 'cause they make money out of it right?

1A: exactly yeah

1B: I think playing the song or video itself is alright but some people might use the url and put it into

1A: right right yeah so downloading it from there is illegal but uploading it the video on youtube isn't illegal

It depends if you have the original copy, it you own the rights then no, but if you don't then it is illegal

1B: like the people who put up video with song lyrics on

Do you think they should be punished for that?

1A: they should be hanged to death [group laughs]

1C: the thing is as well it's like because so many people do it, it is still illegal and if the bad thing of downloading illegally is that it takes money away it's kind of like well fifty other people have already done it so what would one more person going to do, I'm not going to be able to save that artist or the music company in general by not downloading one song because I've just seen twenty videos on youtube with exactly the same thing

Does everyone think that, because everyone does it then it's ok?

1C: it's like they're not getting caught so it's that thing were it's not that big a deal

So maybe if someone was made an example of that would deter you?

[all in agreement]

Do you think that perhaps by the artist uploading their video to youtube in the first place as promotion they're asking for it to be downloaded?

1B: not so much that they're asking for it, but I think they should accept that will possibly happen as a result but obviously they promote it because they want people to buy their songs

So it's a risk they've got to take?

1B: yeah, in today's situation, morally it's awful but practically, I personally think you can't change it, so they should be aware

I think we have covered everything now.

Thank you very much everyone.