

The recording industry and grassroots marketing: from street teams to flash mobs

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Abstract

New media have changed the relationship between the recording industry and fans. The Internet allows fans to share copyrighted music in p2p and Web 2.0 platforms. The recording industry has reacted mainly with 'prohibitionist' strategies, while cultural scholars argue that a 'collaborationist' approach is needed with the aim of creating an 'affective economy'. In this paper, I describe the strategies of the major labels to create a fanbase of grassroots promoters. During an ethnographic research project, I identified different forms of grassroots marketing ('street team', 'flash mob', and 'mission'). I argue that labels try to harness 'participative stardom': a 'music star' is created thanks to transmedia strategies (online presence and TV appearances during media events and talent shows), then labels outsource promotional activities to fans, rewarding them with branded products and the opportunity to meet artists.

Key words: recording industry; stardom; grassroots marketing; street team; flash mob.

1. Introduction

New media have changed the relationship between the recording industry and fans. The fact is that networked technologies allow fans to share copyrighted music in peer-to-peer (p2p) networks and Web 2.0 platforms. Major labels and their representatives have reacted mainly with 'prohibitionist' strategies. They identified file-sharing as the cause of the recording industry's crisis and labelled file-sharers as 'digital pirates'. However the Internet could be a challenge to create new business models. First, e-commerce allows the creation of new markets, and the reduction of the cost of storage and distribution. Second, synergies between producers and consumers could emerge. In fact, fans are not just 'pirates', but also promoters and co-creators.

Cultural scholars argue that the industry should adopt a 'collaborationist' approach to create an 'affective economy' (Condry, 2004; Jenkins, 2006a; Varnelis, 2008). In an affective economy audiences are not passive consumers, but are active, emotionally engaged and socially networked users who cooperate with producers and musicians in the promotion of media contents. Empirical research has demonstrated that both indie labels and pop artists can benefit from 'fan labor' (Beer, 2008; Baym & Burnett, 2009; Yang, 2009).

With the aim of describing the new relationship between recording industry and media consumers, between December 2009 and August 2010, I conducted an ethnographic project into online music fandom. In order to highlight the connection between the global phenomenon of the pop music industry and the local dimension of the Italian market, I focused on the Italian fandom of national and international pop artists. During this explorative research, I observed the strategies used to create an affective economy of three different pop artists: the Italian singer Marco Mengoni, and the international pop stars Lady Gaga and Shakira. In particular, I focused on the grassroots techniques developed by Italian street team portals. In this article, I describe the major labels' strategies to create a local fanbase of grassroots promoters in the Italian pop music market.

2. The recording industry and the challenge of new media

New media have changed the way cultural industries produce, distribute and promote cultural goods. Since the mid-nineteenth century cultural production has taken on an industrial model due to the high capital investment required to produce and distribute music, movies, radio and TV programs. Cultural industries are characterized by a high cost of production and a low cost of reproduction. Because of that, Hollywood, the broadcasting system and the recording industry have all invested large sums in the production of a small number of high value cultural goods with the aim of maximizing their audience. However, since audiences use media contents in highly unpredictable ways, producers tend to minimize the damages of the unsuccessful productions by *formatting* their contents in three main ways: through the 'star system' (i.e., associating the name of star writers and performers to the texts), through 'genres' (i.e., associating labels to the products such as 'horror film' or 'hip hop album' to suggest the kind of pleasure that audience can gain from the consumption), and through 'serials' (e.g., TV series, hit list albums) (Hesmondhalgh, 2007).

In the new millennium, the rise of networked digital technologies is enabling a decentralization of the production and distribution of cultural goods (Benkler, 2006). In fact, digital technologies such as recording devices (e.g., the digital camera), digital editing tools (e.g., GarageBand), p2p networks and Web 2.0 applications (e.g., social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and content sharing sites such as YouTube) allow people to record, store, copy, edit and distribute media files via the Internet at low cost. On the one hand the Internet is thus a new opportunity for industries to create new markets. But at the same time consumers have access to distribution platforms that are no longer exclusively controlled by cultural industries. In particular, Web 2.0 (O'Reilly & Musser, 2007)

applications are free services that create an 'architecture of participation' where users share multimedia content and connect with each other. Appropriating, recreating and sharing cultural material, users create new flows of grassroots products. Therefore Web 2.0 fosters 'media participatory cultures' that emerged online (Jenkins, 2006a; Varnelis, 2008). This process generates a conflict between Internet users, who appropriate copyrighted material, and the cultural industries, who try to get back control over their contents with restrictive policies. At the same time, new media companies try to harnesses the collective intelligence that is emerging online creating an 'affective economy' :

Affective economics has both positive and negative implications: allowing advertisers to tap the power of collective intelligence and direct it toward their own ends, but at the same time allowing consumers to form their own kind of collective bargaining structure that they can use to challenge corporate decision (Jenkins, 2006a, p. 63).

With the aim of describing how cultural industries are reacting to the challenge of the new media, I focus on the recording industry because this sector has been faced with these digitalization and decentralization processes since the mid-1990s. While digital books need a device that allows an easy reading (such as the e-book) and movies need a broadband connection for distribution, the technologies of the Nineties were already enough to disrupt the way music was distributed and listened before then.

2.1 Digital distribution: between defensive strategies and innovative business models

Technological innovations have had a great impact on the history of the recording industry. This sector of the cultural industries born in the early 20th century, when the music industry's business model shifted from selling sheet-music and concert tickets to selling records. During the 20th century the recording industry was an oligopoly dominated by the so called 'Big Four': the major labels that control 80% of the music market, namely AOL-Time Warner, Sony/BMG, Universal and EMI. In the 1950s, the first independent (indie) labels appeared, targeting a new market, the *baby boomers*. These innovated the music landscape, but nonetheless remained marginal in terms of the broad music market. Also from a transnational perspective, the Big Four had great power. For example in Italy the main national labels were acquired by the international ones during the 1990s (Magaudda, 2009).

In the last decades of the 20th century, while the centralization and globalization of the cultural industries was taking place, digitalization disrupted the music market. Until the 1980s, recording industry revenues had come from selling long-playing (LP) and cassettes. With the invention of the compact disc (CD), the 'Big Four' were able to exploit this new technology by adopting a policy that forced retailers to stop selling LPs (McLeod, 2005). This was the beginning of the 'golden age' of the music industry, that grow quickly from 1985 and the end of the 1990s. At the same time also, the video revolution took place. In 1981

with the launch of MTV (McGrath, 1996), the first channel targeted to youth pop music fan, music video became a privileged channel for musicians' promotion. Even if movies such as the rock-movies and rockumentary had been a promotional channel for rock star since the 1950s, with MTV the video became the primary medium for conveying a star's image, changing both the music industry and the audiovisual aesthetic of cinematic production.

The music video revolution was the first media convergence between the music and TV industries. A couple of decades later, a second media convergence, between old media and the internet, took place. In 2001, global music industry sales fell by 5 per cent, and between 2004 and 2009 sales fell by around 30 per cent. Representatives of the record industry, such as the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) and the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) as well as the Big Four identified the main cause of the crisis as digital file sharing. Since the mid-1990s, music fans have been able to share digital contents thanks to networked technologies such as Internet Relay Chats (IRC) and, later, p2p networks (Leyshon *et al.*, 2005). Since many users share copyrighted material, they have been associated with a 'culture of piracy'. The recording industry has predominantly attempted to fight this 'culture of piracy' by extending intellectual property rights, developing digital rights management (DRM) restrictions, creating public relations campaign and prosecuting p2p sites (Condry, 2004). But even if RIAA won some battles against file-sharing services such as Napster, many new networks with non-centralized distribution structures have emerged (e.g., KaZaA, BitTorrent). Because of that, IFPI has sought a legal environment that would sanction users who use file-sharing. RIAA has proposed a 'graduated response approach'¹ that has been realized in France, South Korea and Taiwan, thanks to deals with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) (IFPI, 2010).

However, file sharing is not the only cause of the sales fall. Other media interests such as mobile phones, new media and gaming compete with music in relation to the most profitable market: teenagers. Furthermore, previous technological innovations such as radio had been accused of 'destroying' the music industry because they allow people to listen to music for free. Now that has become a fundamental promotional channel (McLeod, 2005). In a similar way, the recording industry could benefit from new media. Since the 1990s, music labels and musicians have been using the Internet to create promotional and informational websites. In 1995 Sony created one of the first cross-media promotional campaigns that integrated a website to launch Michael Jackson's *History: Past, Present and Future* (Hayward, 1995).

During the 1990s also, the first e-commerce sites were created, such as the web-based retail mail-order site CDNow!. E-commerce services are based on a 'long tail model' (Anderson, 2004): they have developed tools such as collaborative filtering software and user recommendations to drive demand for niche cultural products, thus inventing new types of markets (Bollier, 2008). Nowadays iTunes Store, Apple's e-commerce service, that pioneered the *à-la-carte* download model, is the largest revenue source in the online sector (IFPI, 2010). However major labels have also created subsidiaries that manage digital distribution systems (subscription-based companies such as Listen.com) and partnerships

with ad-supported services (e.g., MySpace Music), mobile operators (e.g., Vodafone), handset makers (e.g., Nokia and Sony Ericsson) and online video channels (e.g., Hulu and VEVO, a centralized platform for high-quality music videos). Therefore, in the last few years, the recording industry has been diversifying its revenue streams and its promotional channels. Thanks to these strategies, during 2009 27% of the music industry's revenues came from digital channels such as download stores, streaming sites, subscription services, free-to-user sites or mobile phone handset (IFPI, 2010). The importance of digital sales drove changes in chart regulation which now have to take account of both physical and digital sales (Beer, 2008).

2.2 Web 2.0: the challenge of building relationships

Web 2.0 is a new business model that emerged at the convergence between market and non-market exchange. Networked technologies enable non-market forms of production that have been defined as 'commons-based peer production' (Benkler, 2006). Peer production is a form of 'gift economy' since participants are motivated to cooperate by non-economic rewards such as social relationships and reputation. The concept of 'gift economy' was first proposed by Mauss (1926) to describe how gifts, or free exchange of goods, are not motivated simply by good will and generosity, but are aimed at creating mutual ties and reinforces trust, creating obligations and expectations. This model has recently been applied to describe online communities such as the free software developers; in fact, programmers share their code for free in order to be part of the community, being respected and gain reputation, and expecting others to do the same, thus creating a virtuous circle (Bollier, 2008). Fan cultures are gift economies as well, since fans work for free to produce user-generated contents (UGC) that have social and symbolic values. In the new millennium, Web 2.0 entrepreneurs aim at harnessing the free collective intelligence with the aim of increasing their income. Web 2.0 media companies provide free services in exchange of personal data, attention and free labor (Li, 2010). Therefore a new mixed economy is emerging.

In Web 2.0, artists and labels have new opportunities to reach international audiences, build relationships with fans and harness their collective intelligence with marketing purposes; but they have also to compete for attention in a distributed, remote and larger music market (Baym & Burnett, 2009). Pop and indie artists create official profiles in social network sites (SNSs) to share information, music videos and podcasts with the aim of promoting their music in a global environment. Pop stars such as Mika and Justin Bieber have been discovered thanks to their online profile in MySpace and YouTube. Independent musicians use Web 2.0 applications to distribute their content without the mediation of labels. In fact, SNSs help musicians to cultivate social relationships with their fans and create a loyal audience base. Beer (2008) describes the social relationship that emerged in MySpace between fans and the indie artist Jarvis Cocker. Beer noticed that the presence of the musician was not necessary for the creation of a network of fans which develop friendships; however it does give a sense of 'liveness' to the profile. Furthermore SNSs allow

people to 'hang with the stars' in a flattened space because audiences directly communicate with the performer. Users believe they are communicating with the star even if they are communicating with an employee who is managing the performer's profile:

They know it is highly likely they are being misled but they continue to participate in the charade. Or it may simply be that they do not really care (Beer, 2008, p. 232).

In Web 2.0, other strategies are applied to build relationships between musicians and fans. For example the English band Radiohead distributed for free their album *Kid A* which was downloaded by millions of people before its release. But instead of reducing sales, this pushed the album to the top of the Billboard CD sales chart (Bollier, 2008). Also the US rock group Nine Inch Nails distributed a free album online, because its business model is based on selling concert tickets and not from selling CDs. By sharing free content online, musicians create a gift economy based on a relationship of trust with their fans: the 'free music' is a way to thank fans for their support, maintain their loyalty and stimulate them to go to concerts (Li, 2010).

However, in an affective economy, fans can be not just loyal consumers but also active promoters. For example the Swedish independent music scene reached international attention thanks to the free work of fans (Baym & Burnett, 2009). Thanks to Web 2.0 applications, fans became gatekeepers, filters and influencers on a global scale. Creating mp3 blogs with music critics, organizing concerts, tagging and sharing music in SNSs, they work as grassroots promoters for musicians and labels. Fans don't gain economic capital from their free works, but acquire other forms of reward. In particular they have the chance to form relationships with artists and spread their passion both for the artist and for their chosen music genre. Furthermore they get 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1984): skills and knowledge related to a particular taste culture that allow members to differentiate themselves from other social groups. Working for free, fans thus acquire knowledge and skills related to the object of their fandom and therefore are recognized as experts and leader of in their taste culture (Hills, 2002). In their research, Baym & Burnett describe also how in the indie scene fans perceive themselves both as enthusiastic consumers and as artists' peers, who could eventually become part of the professional scene. Another example comes from 'Toriphiles', fans of the singer and songwriter Tori Amos, who have been described by Farrugia & Gobatto (2010). Toriphiles are mainly young women who feel a deep connection with Amos' personality. Amos built her success thanks to live performances, which allowed fans to perceive the performer's authentic condition. Toriphiles have thus been particularly active in the production of 'bootlegs', unofficial live recordings that circulate inside the network of fans. Bootlegs allow fans to express subcultural capital that is then incorporated into the unofficial licensed material, and to experience the performer's liveness that live recordings provide. Furthermore, distributing bootlegs online, they increased the visibility of an artist such as Amos, who has received limited radio play. Recently, Amos decided to released *Official bootlegs*, that are an example

of commodification. With official bootlegs, the recording industry commodifies both the live events and the subcultural values of the amateur recordings.

Grassroots marketing works also for the pop scene. The Chinese pop musician Li Yuchun became a national idol thanks to the work of her fans, who call themselves 'Corns' (Yang, 2009). Corns are adult women who feel a maternal love for Yuchun and who work for free with the aim of supporting a female artist in a male-dominated entertaining industry. Yuchun was a participant in a Chinese talent show, a genre that creates TV stars to promote music. Corns thus participated in the star-making process. The fans helped their idol to reach the Top Ten charts in different ways: voting for Yuchun online, sending text messages during the TV program, listening to online free trials, and buying many copies of her albums. Furthermore Corns created a charity foundation and an anti-piracy campaign to improve the public image of Yuchun. Yang's research has demonstrated how fans are willing not just to buy music but also to work for free participating in the star-making process if they feel a connection with musicians.

3. An explorative research on the transnational pop music market

Existing empirical research into music cultures shows that fans work as grassroots promoters both online and offline. Web 2.0 applications allow musicians to gain attention and to keep in contact with fans and, at the same time, allow fans to cooperate and promote their favourite artists, receiving social and cultural rewards from their free labor. However, to maintain a loyal fan base, musicians have to create an enduring and trust-based social relationship with customers, and acknowledge the value of fan labor. Indie musicians such as Tori Philes as described by Farrugia & Gobatto, Swedish bands as analyzed by Baym & Burnett, and Jarvis Cocker who is the focus of Beer's research, are able to maintain this affective relationship thanks to an ongoing personal connection both online and offline. Are pop artists applying similar strategies to construct affective economics? The case of Corns described by Yang demonstrates that a TV music star has also been able to connect with her fandom in a similar way. However more research is needed to describe the transnational dimension of pop music industry and his fandom. With the aim of describing how major labels and pop artists get attention in a 'global music market', I conducted ethnographic research into the transnational pop music online fandom.

3.1 Ethnographic research in the Web 2.0

Ethnographic research has a long tradition in media studies. Ethnographic methods such as participant observation and in-depth interviews have been applied by social researchers with the aim of studying both mainstream consumption such as broadcast TV in the domestic context (Lull, 1990), and youth participatory subcultures such as the dance cultures (Thornton, 1996). However, with the emergence of the Internet, online discussion groups such as mailing lists and newsgroups have become a rich sources for audience research (Jenkins, 2006b). During the 1990s ethnographers applied discourse analysis and participant-observation with the aim of giving a thick description of the practices, norms

and ethos of online communities that emerged in bounded sites such as mailing lists and newsgroups (Baym, 2000; Hills, 2002). However online talk is deeply interconnected with the offline environment, therefore Hine (2000) suggests that the researcher should not confine herself/himself to a particular bounded site, but should trace the complex connection between different sites. Hine points out that the ethnographer has to be part of the setting in which people interact with the aim of giving sense to the cultural context, and has to locate herself/himself in relation to those sites. This 'non-sited' and 'mobile' approach is always more necessary due to the specificity of the Web 2.0 media cultures. In fact, with the mass adoption of SNSs, online networks are now more interconnected with the offline network. Furthermore, even if bounded communities still exist, SNSs provide a new organizing mechanism for developing a context and sharing information, that have been defined by Boyd (2006) as 'egocentric networks', since people define their community egocentrically. Because of this, media ethnography in the Web 2.0 has to apply a non-sited approach that follows the complex interconnections between media producers and media consumers in the egocentric networks that emerge online and that are deeply interconnected with the offline sites.

In my previous research on fan culture (Vellar, 2011), I combined participant observation with in-depth interviews in a fansubbing community of a US TV series. I became a member of the online group and I described the collective identities, practices and rituals that were specific of that community. I conducted this research between March 2008 and November 2009, and I had the opportunity to observe the mass adoption of SNSs by Italian fans. While during 2008 fans mainly interacted in the bounded space of the online forum, since mid-2009, they have started to construct an egocentric network in Facebook, where they interact both with their offline friends and with other fans whom they met for the first time online. When I started my ethnographic research on recording industry and grassroots marketing, I thus chose to explore more fully the role of SNSs in fan cultures. In fact, ethnographer has to take into account the specificity of the Web 2.0 environment with the aim of choosing methods that best suit the new social, technological and economical context. In her description of Swedish independent music, Baym used both in-depth interviews and observant participation in multiple online and offline sites where the 'networked collectivism' of indie fans interact (Baym, 2007). Beer (2008) on the other hand followed an 'object' of research moving backwards and forwards through a specific artist's career, analyzing the information stored in different Web 2.0 applications. The focus on a single artist has been adopted also by Yang (2009) and Farrugia & Gobatto (2010), who analyzed both the musicians' strategies and cultural production, and the fans' practices and reception. In the case of Yang, her researches have been developed after three years of immersion in her chosen culture as a fan.

Starting from those previous ethnographic experiences, I chose to investigate this affective economy not from the point of view of a specific community or a single artist, but by constructing a field around my egocentric network. At that time, I had never been involved in music fan groups, but I was a listener to pop music and a viewer of music talent

shows. Therefore, I decided to analyze how major labels are able to involve pop music consumer in participatory activities. With the aim of better defining my field, I choose to focus on three different artists that I previously known. Since the global dimension of the contemporary music landscape needs a transnational perspective, I chose the Italian singer (Marco Mengoni), and two international pop stars (Lady Gaga and Shakira), who have different relationships with their national boundaries. Mengoni was the winner of the third edition of the talent show *X Factor* and has a deal with Sony Music Entertainment Italia. Shakira is a Colombian songwriter who gained success as a Latino pop star and in 2009/2010 released the bilingual album *She Wolf* and the single *Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)*, which became international hits. Shakira has a deal with Epic, owned by Sony Music Entertainment. Finally, Lady Gaga is a songwriter who in 2009 with her debut album *The Fame* reached number one in UK, Canada, Austria, Germany and Ireland, becoming an international pop icon. Gaga has a deal with Interscope Records, owned by the Universal Music Group. In December 2009, when I started my research, these three artists were in the Top Ten of singles downloads on iTunes, and therefore are good examples of successful artists who have been able to get attention in the global music market of the Web 2.0.² I started my research by subscribing to all the official channels of Mengoni, Shakira and Gaga and, in particular, their official portals and their Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts³. In addition I subscribed to two Italian portals that are not related to a single artist but to the broad pop music fandom: the street team portal Teamworld⁴ and U-TEAM.⁵

Across 9 months (December 2009 - August 2010), I gathered information and 'calls to action' (i.e., requests to participate in contests and promotional activities) from the official portals and profiles in SNSs. I was immersed in an affective economy, where labels and musicians try to involve consumers in an emotional relationship with stars and to harness their participatory activity online. To build a broader, objective view of the strategies applied by labels, I collected and analysed the digital materials that both musicians and fans publish online in official sites. In particular, I collected: posts that Mengoni, Shakira and Gaga shared on Twitter and Facebook; screenshots of their online portal; official videos published in their YouTube profiles; video responses published by fans on the Mengoni, Shakira and Gaga official YouTube profiles as a response to the official videos; and newsletters delivered to fans by the staff of Teamworld. However, to gain a deeper insight in the affective economy, I also participated in the Teamworld online activities. In particular, I responded to two 'calls to action', which meant that I participated in two contests created to involve Italian fans of Gaga in the promotion of her brand.

This participation allowed me to gain an insight into the motivation that stimulates fans to participate in grassroots marketing activities. But I decided not to participate in collective offline activities, because the participants were all teenagers organized in small groups and I perceived that my participation could be interpreted as an intrusion. Therefore I conducted participant observation in the online environment applying a non-sited and mobile approach; in fact I constructed the field dynamically following the complex relationship between three pop stars and their fans. I analyzed the visual and textual

material that I collected during my fieldwork using the qualitative analysis software NVivo8. The quotations and visual materials that are presented in this article are thus taken from the digital materials that I collected online and that have been shared in public official profiles by both fans and artists.

Analyzing textual and video content that I collected online, I identified several different strategies for constructing a music star and for organizing grassroots marketing. I will thus describe how the 'celebrity *personae*' of Mengoni, Shakira and Gaga have been constructed with the aim of creating a loyal audience base. Then I will describe the two Italian websites that organized grassroots marketing (Teamworld and U-TEAM), focusing on three different strategies: 'street teams' (i.e., groups of fans that distribute flyers in local communities), 'missions' (i.e., challenges that have the aim of promoting some media content) and 'music flash mobs' (i.e., collective performances in public spaces).

3.2 'Transmedia music stars': building relationships online

Celebrity is instrumental in the creation of an affective economy. Classic celebrity studies focus on how the dualism between onscreen/offscreen film stars creates a paradox of ordinariness/extraordinariness that engages the audience. While classical film stars are perceived as distant and enigmatic, the television rhetoric of intimacy and familiarity and the domestic context of their reception fosters a closer identification between the 'celebrity *personae*' and their role, giving the impression that TV stars are just being 'themselves' (Bennett & Holmes, 2010). Reality TV, ghosted autobiographies, and confessional journalism are sites where a celebrity publicly performs her intimate self with the aim of creating an intimacy with her audience (Nunn & Biressi, 2010). In Web 2.0 there are new sites where celebrities construct their *personae* and perform their intimate relationship with fans. Therefore labels exploit different media channels and communication strategies with the aim of constructing a music star and creating an affective economy. I will thus describe the strategies applied by producers to create the celebrity *personae* of Shakira, Mengoni and Gaga.

In 2010, Shakira reached popular success in Italy thanks to *Waka Waka*, which was chosen as the official song for the FIFA World Cup. *Waka Waka* became the sound-track of the most important event of the most popular sport in Italy: soccer. *Waka Waka* was thus appropriated by the mass media, which integrated it in TV shows and commercials. However *Waka Waka* was also part of a broader strategy to construct a latin pop star. Shakira gained popularity in Latin America during the 1990s, with Spanish albums distributed by Sony Music Colombia. In 2000 she released her first bilingual (English and Spanish) album and signed a deal with Epic Records, a US music label owned by Sony Music Entertainment. She thus became a 'latin pop' singer who gathered international success. Her musical career has always been interrelated with her activity as a philanthropist. In fact in 1995 she founded 'Pies Descalzos Foundation' (a.k.a. 'Barefoot Foundation'), a non-profit and non-governmental US organization devoted to making education universally available to every child. Shakira has partnered with the clothes brand Mango and the humanitarian

organization UNICEF to design a collection of African-inspired t-shirts to be sold during the FIFA World Cup, as announced in her website: 'Designed to represent the spirit, vitality and energy of the host continent of the FIFA World Cup, profits from the *Waka Waka* t-shirt campaign will benefit early childhood education initiatives in South Africa'.

Shakira thus constructs her persona as a philanthropist and latin pop star, combining charity campaigns with marketing strategies that have self-promotional intent. Shakira's identity has been constructed online, via the official web portal Shakira.com and many SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube, bebo, iLike and Sonico. All the online communications are bilingual (English and Spanish). In Facebook and Twitter there is information about her professional career, amateur videos created by her fans and pictures that depict Shakira both during public performances and during philanthropic activities.



Figure 1, 2, 3: Shakira online: public performances and philanthropic activities

Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta is a U.S. songwriter who gained huge success as a pop star during the two year period 2009/2010, under the stage name of Lady Gaga. Her *persona* has been co-created with a collective called 'Haus of Gaga'. This is a creative team modelled on Andy Warhol's Factory, which collaborated with her to create clothing, stage sets and sounds. SNSs have a huge role in the construction of Gaga's celebrity persona. Twitter and Facebook profiles are written in the first person and present themselves as performances of Gaga's true interior state of being: she shares personal information about her family and (celebrity) friends and about her support for LGBT rights. Gaga's support for the gay community is an important part of her celebrity persona and, because of that, she became a gay icon. On Facebook she uploads pictures of her music videos, of her everyday life, and also of the fans who come to her concerts (Figure 4, 5, 6, 7). During summer 2010, Gaga became the public figure with most subscribers on Facebook and most followers on Twitter. When her Facebook profile became the most subscribed, she thanked her fans with a video posted on Facebook:

Hi, this is Lady Gaga and I'm saying hallo to all my Little Monsters on Facebook. I love you guys so much. I'm on my North American Monsters Ball Tour sold out across the United States. I'm so, so excited to be travelling and coming to see you. So thank you so much for all of your love and your support and for sticking by me throw the fame and the fame monster. I love you. Become my friend on Facebook.



Figures 4, 5, 6, 7: *Gaga on Facebook: performance, everyday life, video-message and fans*

The synchronicity of the SNSs and, in particular, the perceived spontaneity of Twitter allow stars to generate 'authentic' celebrity (Muntean & Petersen, 2009). Gaga takes advantage of the perceived authentic communication that SNSs and online videos allow reinforcing her relationship with fans, whom she nicknames 'Little Monsters'.

While Gaga's transnational fame has been created thanks to the use of SNSs as sites to perform her intimate relationship with her 'Little Monsters', Mengoni constructed his relationship with fans, thanks to a more traditional medium that was better suited to an Italian audience: broadcast TV. Mengoni became famous through his participation in the third edition of *X Factor*, the Italian version of the namesake UK original format created by record producer Simon Cowell. *X Factor* is a 'talent show', a subgenre of the 'reality show' that combines a classic broadcast show entertainment with interactive features such as a vote-in component that allows the spectator to influence the results of the competition. Inviting audiences to contribute to the construction of the star, talent shows reinforce celebrity-fan relationships as a strategy to create loyal audiences (Yang, 2009; Enli, 2009). Reality TV uses unscripted performances that create a reality-celebrity, a subgenre of TV celebrity that depends upon the 'behind-the-scenes' quality of her persona and encodes them as 'off-camera text' (Curnutt, 2009). Mengoni, participating and winning *X Factor*, constructed a reality-celebrity persona. After the end of the program, he maintained his relationship with fans thanks to his video appearances both on broadcasting programs and via online video messages. He also won third place in the 60th edition of the *Sanremo Music Festival*, one of the most popular Italian media events. During the *Sanremo Music Festival* he published on Yahoo!Video his video diaries where he spoke about his experiences during the festival, revealing his emotions. Furthermore, in synergy with his sponsor (the glasses brand Lozza) he created the 'Make it possible' competition. On YouTube, 'Make it possible', a series of mini-interviews were uploaded where Mengoni spoke about his aspirations, dreams, and about his life as an artist. Inspired by Mengoni's mini-interview, fans are asked to share their own dreams. They can win glasses, or the opportunity to meet Mengoni. The (perceived) direct relationship between Mengoni and his fans is maintained through video-messages since the official account on Twitter and Facebook are explicitly managed by other people and written in the third person. The official Twitter account notifies the followers of the video release, the TV appearance, and the dates of the tour. A fan manages his Facebook profile, sharing news, uploading photos (promotional and informal moments with his producers or colleagues) and video-massages where he asks fans to follow him.



Figures 8, 9, 10: Mengoni on Facebook: promotional, informal and video-message

Shakira, Gaga and Mengoni can be defined as ‘transmedia music stars’ because different media have been exploited to construct their stardom. Shakira combines a sport media event with philanthropic images, reaching top sales with *Waka Waka*; Mengoni is a reality-music-celebrity who maintains his relationship with fans by showing the ‘behind-the-scene’ of his music career during the reality show and by online video-messages; finally, Gaga use SNSs to construct an empathic relation with her fans. Therefore SNS profiles work both as ‘official sites’ that keep fans updated with official information, and also as sites where celebrities perform their intimate self. Furthermore in video-messages stars directly speak to fans, eliminating the mediation by professionals that occurs during journalistic interviews. In Web 2.0 there are thus new sites where celebrities perform their intimacy further reducing the (perceived) social distance between stars and fans.

3.3 When consumer became promoters: street team portals

‘Street teams’ are voluntary groups of people who promote an event, a product or a brand through word-of-mouth in urban contexts. They work both online and offline. Offline, they spread posters and stickers in cities’ streets and in public places where young people gather together; online, they publish videos and posts both in social network sites and in webforums. Furthermore they organize public performances such as flash mobs and videorecord them in order to share the video online.

During the 1990s, independent labels created street teams as a grassroots tactic to gain attention in the face of a lack of investment in mass media promotion. This grassroots practice has been integrated into corporate strategies to gain attention in the digital market. In the US music business online organizations such as FanCorps and ReverbNation involve fans in spreading the music, promoting shows and recruiting new fans⁶. In Italy, the first street teams were created by fans in 2000 with the aim of promoting the boy band The Hansons. In 2001, the Italian label Sugar Music created a street team web portal: SugarNet. The professional staff of SugarNet organized street teams to promote artists such as Articolo 31 and Avril Lavigne. They collaborated with Italian and international labels (e.g., BMG, Universal, Emi, Sony) and with TV shows such as MTV TRL Italia. During this period the most active members of the street teams, who worked for free to promote artists, became members of staff attaining a professional qualification (and thus monetary compensation). In 2005, SugarNet’s staff created an independent website that is currently the main street team website in Italy: Teamworld. Teamworld is a professional independent organization

that collaborates with the music industry, with the aim of organizing grassroots marketing for national and international musicians such as Giusy Ferreri, Sonohra, Katy Perry and Robbie Williams. At the same time Universal Music Italia also created its own street team portal, U-TEAM, to promote artists such as Mika, Justin Bieber and Selena Gomez. Teamworld and U-TEAM are thus the two main organizers of music grassroots marketing in Italy; they manage online participative website with the aim of engaging fans in promotional voluntary activities.

The Teamworld and U-TEAM web portals are informative spaces where music fans get information about promotional activities and music contests. However the web portal also integrates a participative space: the Internet forum managed by ‘moderators’. Moderators create message boards inside the forum for each artist who has to be promoted. Fans have to subscribe to the portal to have access to the forum. In this way they become users and can share information, visual contents and translations of the lyrics. However, the main aim of the board is to organize grassroots promotion and, above all, street teams. To locally promote an artist, different local street teams have to be created in many Italian cities. A street team is composed of between three to twenty ‘street-teamers’ (mainly female) coordinated by a group leader. The moderator coordinates the local street teams, keeping in contact with the group leaders via the Internet forum. A hierarchical organization thus emerges. The moderator posts online the flyers and the sticker that street-teamers have to distribute in the cities.



Figure 11, 12: a flyer and a sticker shared in the Gaga’s message board in U-Team

However many fans create stickers and poster for themselves. Street-teamers record and take pictures of themselves during promotional activities. They thus create mashup videos remixing their favourite artist’s song with self-produced visual materials (Figure 13, 14). They upload these mashup videos and pictures both on the forum and on other social media such as YouTube.



Figure 13, 14: Mashup video: Gaga’s street team – U-Team

However, street teams are not the only grassroots promotional activity organized by U-TEAM and Teamworld staff. In fact, moderators also create threads to stimulate fans to promote artists in different ways: integrating a promotional banner in their online profiles, sharing links to the artist's forum in other online portals, translating foreign content (e.g., news, online video), voting online, and by text-messages for the artist in national and international contexts and charts (e.g., Teen Choice Awards, MTV TRL), putting comment videos on online portal, creating video or organize 'fanaction' (i.e., collective activities realized by fans during concerts).

In Teamworld, the grassroots activities are labelled 'missions' and are rewarded with CDs, DVDs, gadgets, concert tickets, and with the opportunity to meet the musicians ('Meet&Greet'). The 290 fans who participate in the missions are called 'TSurfers' and are rewarded based on their commitment. TSurfers have to send an e-mail to the staff with a picture or screencap that depicts their offline and online promotional free work. In this way the staff can evaluate the commitment to the mission and can choose which TSurfers deserve to get prizes. For example, to promote the '1972' single of the Italian band The Suns, TSurfers were asked to vote for it and comment on the video in the MTV Italia web portal. The moderator motivated fans both mentioning the prizes and stimulating their engagement:

Guys, this mission is not getting the results that we hoped for. We have to do more! I remind you that who will distinguish himself will have the best chance to get the ticket for the Lady GaGa and Good Charlotte Italian concerts. Since The Sun won't be in the top ten of TRL On The Road we can't give up. We have to vote for '1972' hell for leather. We can do it! We face harder challenges! In this one we have to SHINE!

The wish to participate in Gaga's concert thus stimulates TSurfers to participate in a mission for a less-known emergent Italian group. However the fame of Gaga in the Italian market is also the result of a broad grassroots marketing campaign. In fact U-Team, Teamworld and the fan forum Lady Gaga Italia⁷ created synergies to promote her album and her Italian tour. Teamworld organized two 'Lady Gaga missions'. In the first one, TSurfers had to use Gaga's image in their Facebook profile. In the second one, TSurfers were asked to take a picture of themselves with strange glasses imitating Gaga's style. I personally participated in those contests and indeed I won the first one, receiving as prize a Gaga poster. U-TEAM and the fan forum Lady Gaga Italia cooperate to organize the creation of a 'user-generated' GagaBook that will be given to Gaga during her concert in Milano. Fans have to send images, articles, letters and other media contents that will be published in the GagaBook. Those activities stimulate fans' creativity and their desire to impersonate their favourite celebrity and to get in contact with her through a gift such as the GagaBook. However, some missions are less creative but also more lucrative. For example, during the 'Download Day', fans had to download multiple times a song from iTunes. For each time that they bought the song they scored 20 points, that would be converted into gadgets or other prizes:

This time we propose a different ‘challenge’. We invite you to participate (and make your friends participate) to the DOWNLOAD DAY of the Jennifer Paige & Nick Carter new single ‘Beautiful Lie’. The DD will be Friday 9 July [...] All you have to do is to buy the song on iTunes. In this way the song could be in the Top ten on iTunes.⁸

‘Download Days’ are organized not just to sell more online products, but also to get an artist the fame associated with the iTunes’ Top Ten. So to promote Mengoni, a Download Day was organized. Mengoni’s grassroots promotion is internally managed by his staff and there is no collaboration with street team portals. However the grassroots promotional activities were similar. In fact on Mengoni’s official online site, Sony Music organized the Download Day on March 5. However grassroots marketing activities can also emerge spontaneously. For example on YouTube Mengoni’s fans organized an ‘action’ to help him win an online voting award:

Girls, we had an idea to help Marco winning the Wind Music Awards! On the site you can vote just one time. However, if you have a computer lab at school you can use different PCs to create many account and vote many time. Are you in? :) P.S. Spread the word! <3

At the convergence between market and non-market exchange a new business model is thus emerging for the recording industry. Fans work for free to promote musicians and buy digital products that have no use value for them (such as multiple copies of the same song). In this way, labels gain money from online sales and outsource promotional work to fans, reducing their costs. Fans are rewarded with branded products, with the star’s gratitude expressed in online textual and video communication, with the opportunity to meet artists face-to-face during Meet&Greets, but also with the pleasure of re-enacting the star’s performances, as exemplified in the flash mob phenomenon.

3.4 ‘Let’s All Dance’: music flash mob and online video

In *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution* (2002) Rheingold affirms that networked mobile technologies will allow people to connect rapidly and create new forms of social aggregation and political activism, such as ‘smart mobs’. Smart mobs are aggregations of strangers in public spaces organized by a ‘moberator’ who sends information on an upcoming public event via text messages, e-mails, blogs or forums. Thanks to the cooperation between ‘mobbers’ the message circulates as a chain letter to involve more participants. Furthermore text messages allow participants to coordinate themselves during the event. Rheingold coined the term ‘Smart Mobs’ to describe cooperative activities with a social or political purpose, that could have both positive (e.g., democratic public manifestation) and negative outcomes (e.g., terrorist attack). This term inspired a New York blogger to coin the term ‘flash mobs’ in 2003. Flash mobs are a subtype of ‘smart mobs’ because they consist in public gathering of strangers who perform a pointless collective act (e.g., pillow fights, freezing in a place) in a public space (e.g., squares, stores) and then disperse into the crowd (Schepers, 2009). Flash mobs are the result of the convergence between mobile

communication and public performances. While smart mobs describe the cooperation between people through networked technology, flash mobs require a public performance that surprise, attract and sometimes involve the audience. Flash mobs are thus performative and their aims are to get visibility. In order to increase visibility also online, Flashmobbers use camcorders, digital cameras and camera phones to record the event and share it on SNSs to document their participation. Flashmobbing can be described as a form of performative art since they straddle the boundaries between spectacle, activism, experiment and prank (Nicholson, 2005). During 2003, flashmobbers perceived themselves as part of a movement, which they also declare extinguished in that same year. However, there are still different manifestations of flashmobbing both in the US (Flash Mob America⁹) and in Italy (Flash Mob Roma¹⁰). At the same time the cultural industries are also organizing flash mobs for marketing purposes. Flash mobs thus became mainstream after the original movement ended because they have been appropriated by different social actors such as common citizens, no-profit organizations as well as big companies as a promotional strategy. Nowadays flash mobs are therefore a nonconventional marketing strategies, as the case of music flash mobs illustrate.

‘Music flash mobs’ have been integrated into the promotional campaigns of Shakira, Mengoni and Gaga. Video tutorials have been published online, with the aim of teaching fans choreography based on one of their songs. The online video works as a call to action to stimulate fans to participate. In the shakirawakawaka channel the video ‘WAKA WAKA: Let's All Dance For 1GOAL’ was uploaded. A similar video in Spanish language was uploaded as well. In the video Shakira challenges people to dance *Waka Waka* and to upload their self-produced video on YouTube: ‘Every child in the world should have access to an education. This time dance with me for this one goal. [...] 1 Song, 1 dance, 1 goal’. In the video tutorial, two dancers explain the *Waka Waka* dance, then many people who dance *Waka Waka* are depicted.



Figures 15, 16: Shakira: flash mob tutorial ‘WAKA WAKA: Let's All Dance For 1GOAL’

The video tutorial received 824 video responses in one month. The video responses were made by single amateur dancers or groups (Figure 17, 18). Most of the video responses contain the location in their description. It is thus possible to perceive how the *Waka Waka* dance became a worldwide phenomenon. In Italy, during the World Cup, *Waka Waka*'s flash mobs were organized by the label and by independent groups in different cities such as Milano (organized by Sony Music Italy and uploaded on the official YouTube channel

sonymusicalityTV) and Olbia (organized by a group of fans and uploaded on their own channel).



Figures 17, 18: Shakira's fans dance Waka Waka

Mengoni's flash mob were organized by Sony Music Entertainment Italia in 16 Italian cities for June 19. In YouTube an ironic video was uploaded where Mengoni invited fans to participate and show the choreography: 'In every city. In every village. All over the world. You too. All Me too. Everyone together. Let's dance together'. During the tutorial the cameraman joins the dance crew, with the aim of showing that everyone can learn the choreography. In this way, fans discover that the cameraman is Luca Tommasini, the official *X Factory Italia* choreographer.



Figures 19, 20: Mengoni: flash mob tutorial

In the video tutorial Mengoni encourages people who can't join the official flash mob to upload video on YouTube of them performing the choreography. Fans uploaded both videos of public flash mobs and private performances made by single fans, family or small peer groups.



Figures 21, 22: Mengoni fans

Shakira and Mengoni harnessed a grassroots practice like the flash mob with the aim of promoting their albums. The same strategies have been applied also to promote Gaga's tour in Italy. Teamworld and the fan forum Lady Gaga Italia organized a flash mob in three Italian cities for August 27. Teamworld created a video tutorial to teach fans the choreography realized with a remix of three Gaga' hits (*Alejandro, Telephone e Bad Romance*). Fans can download for free the remix song from the official portal and, if they participate at the flash mob, they can win a concert ticket. The videos of the flash mobs and the pictures of the participants dressed like Gaga have been uploaded in the Teamworld portal and spread in Facebook as well (Figure 23, 24).



Figures 23, 24: Gaga's tutorial and flash mob participants in Milano and Napoli

With Gaga, there are also examples of grassroots flash mobs. In May 2010, fans organized a flash mob in Madrid with the aim of asking for a Gaga date tour in Spain. Also the Flash Mob America organized an official Lady Gaga flash mob in Long Beach during a gay pride week.

Music flash mobs are thus an act of 'mimicry', because fans re-enact the music star's performance dancing her choreography and, in some case, dressing like her. Hills defines fans' mimicry of an icon as 'performative consumption': a form of fan display and expression that embodies the process of stardom (2002). In Hills' theoretical framework, fandom is a performance. The concept of 'performance' has been used to underline how the attribute that define our identity such as gender, class, race are not fixed because identity is an ongoing process based on the everyday practices performed in different contexts (Goffman, 1959; Butler, 1990; Giddens, 1991). In a similar way also to be a fan of a cultural product define the individual identity and is ongoing performed through fan practice. In fact, Hills describe fan practice not as an act of text interpretation but as a performance that attempts to relive and re-embody the cathartic moments experienced during consumption. While commenting upon a TV series episode on a web forum or dressing like Elvis Presley, fans express their own passion for the cult product (that could be both a text or a celebrity) and integrate it in their own identity. This is what Hills defines as respectively 'textual performance' and 'performative consumption'. In the same way, when fans participate in flash mobs and share the videos online, they relive the cathartic moment of the consumption and re-embody the process of stardom spreading the image of the star itself¹¹ and integrating it in their own identity.

4. Discussion

In the pop music market new forms of fans' self-expression, celebrity-audience relationships and marketing strategies are emerging. They are enabled by the participatory and audiovisual nature of Web 2.0 applications, but are not limited to the digital environment, and are specific to the music cultures, that are inherently social and performative. The affective economy that is emerging in Web 2.0 is changing the relationship between celebrities, labels, fans, and the new intermediaries such as street team portals. First, stars create an emotional relationship with fans with the aim of involving them in an affective economy. Second, labels outsource promotional activities to fans; from this new relationship between labels and fans, new intermediaries emerge, such as street team portals that organize the free work of fans.

The opportunities afforded by Web 2.0 change the power relationships between labels, stars and fans. Are fans gaining power, or are producers exploiting the free works of naïve fans? A study of the para-social relationship between girls and talent show stars suggests that adolescents are also aware of the music industry's interest and of the media context in which music stars are constructed (Lothwesen, & Mullensiefen, 2007). Furthermore, Baym & Burnett (2009) argue that fans who work for free are not exploited by professional producers because they gain other forms of non-economic capital. In fact, working for free, fans organizer and MP3 bloggers gain social and cultural capital that allow them to get in touch with professionals and, eventually, become professionals themselves. In my previous research into online fandom (Vellar, 2011), I described how fans who work for free to create subtitles of US TV series acquire knowledge and skills related to the English language and pop culture (cultural capital), relationships with other Italian and foreign fans and with professionals (social capital), and are recognized as experts in their field by both Italian fans and the mass media (symbolic capital). The fansubbing community that I analyzed, became thus a new transnational intermediary between the US production and Italian audiences; it is now an alternative to old intermediaries such as the Italian broadcast system which dubs and distribute foreign products. In a similar way, Teamworld became a new intermediary between the Major labels which globally distribute their products and Italian audiences. However, while the community of fansubbers is still an amateur fan group, Teamworld has been created by fans which become professional, and is now a commercial platform.

Teamworld is thus an example of how music fans, working for free, acquire cultural, social and symbolic capitals which they are then able to convert into economic capital. This professional staff, since it is composed by people who have previously been free workers themselves, is well aware of fans' motivation and therefore is able to involve a new generation of fans in grassroots promotional activities. The data analysis of digital material that I collected online, thus allowed me to describe systematically the professional strategies and fan practices in pop music's affective economy. However, the observant participation gives me a deeper insight into fan culture. In fact, I experienced both the positive and negative sides of fan labor. Since I participated to the Teamworld online

activities, I experienced the reward that come from free work. For example, winning the contest I've been awarded with the poster, that is a form of symbolic capital that I exhibit at home. However, to win that context I had to keep the picture of Gaga as my avatar in my personal Facebook profile for many weeks. In that period I desired to change my avatar to express other sides of me, but I felt obligated to keep it with the aim of winning the contest. Therefore I argue that, while other form of free work (e.g., MP3 blogging, creating bootleg, fansubbing) are content-oriented, the practice that characterize pop music's affective economy ('street team', 'flash mob', 'mission') are performatively oriented and therefore deeply involve fans' identity in relation with the media exhibition of their online and offline bodies. We need not see this as a form of exploitation, since fans are rewarded with branded products, have the opportunity to meet the artist, and can attain professional status as in the case of Teamworld. However, the difference in fans' motivations between the content-oriented and performatively oriented free work needs further study, using other methods such as in-depth interviews. Furthermore, I would argue that the concepts of cultural, social and symbolic capital have to be combined with the concept of 'performative consumption' proposed by Hills (2002), with the aim of further understanding the new relation between stars' and fans' bodies and its role in the professionalization of amateur free labor.

5. Conclusions: from 'collective intelligence' to 'participative stardom'

In this paper, I have described the strategies of the recording industry for harnessing the free labor of fans. While Web 2.0 media companies harness 'collective intelligence' with the aim of enriching their online platforms, I argue that the recording industry tries to harness 'participative stardom' with the aim of promoting musicians. 'Collective intelligence' refers to the collaborative construction of a shared knowledge and it is thus a 'content-oriented' participatory practice. Instead, to describe the 'performative oriented' free work that I observed during my empirical research, I propose to use the term 'participative stardom', that is, the collaborative construction of a transmedia performance (re)enacted by musicians as well as fans, with the aim of creating and spreading a brand that is embodied in the music star.

Since the beginning of the 19th century, cultural industries have exploited the star system with the aim of constructing a loyal audience. In the new millennium, stardom is being created by means of transmedia strategies. 'Star-making TV' as talent shows engage consumers in (para)social relationships with artists. This relationship is reinforced thanks to fan-artist interactions through SNSs which reduce social distance. Fans feel a deep connection with artists and become not just loyal consumers but also active participants in the star-making process. Re-enacting the star's performance in public online and offline spaces through the practice of performative consumption, they spread the music, the image of their favourite artist and build their own identity. Grassroots practice such as street teams and flash mobs are thus integrated into the corporations' strategies: labels challenge fans to work for free as grassroots promoters and reward them with branded products and

the opportunity to meet artists. From this process emerge also new transnational intermediaries which organise the performative consumption activities. In the new millennium, stardom has become participative, since fans' practices are deeply integrated into the construction of media icons with the aim of fostering a loyal audience base. Further study on participative stardom is needed with the aim of better understanding the new dynamics between producers, transmedia performers and consumers with a focus on the role of fans'/stars' bodies and the professionalization of free work.

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¹ The IFPI describe the 'graduate response approach' as a system in which 'the holders of accounts identified by rights holders as being used for infringement are sent notices by their ISP. The notice would advise them to stop infringing and suggest the use of a legitimate service that respects copyright and rewards rights holders. An escalating series of warnings would result, as a last resort, in temporary internet account suspension for those few who refuse to stop (IFPI, 2010, p. 24).'

² Source: FIMI (Federazione Industria Musicale Italiana)-Nielsen Soundscan International.

³ In my previously ethnographic experience I conducted participant observation in an online community, presenting myself to the social groups and explaining to members the methodology and the objective of my research. In the research on music fandom the field was built around my online identity; therefore fans and artists had access to the information about my role as researcher. That allows me not to explicitly communicate my research in each online profile I was subscribing, an activity that would be not just time-consuming but also intrusive due to the dispersed social structure of the fandom in social networks, which doesn't require each new user to present itself. Furthermore, in this research I decided to collect just public data, in order not to violate the fans' practices.

⁴ <http://www.teamworld.it/>

⁵ <http://www.u-team.it/>

⁶ See the online post in Nancy Baym's blog: <http://www.onlinefandom.com/archives/reverbnation-street-teams/>.

⁷ <http://ladygagaitalia.it/>

⁸ All the textual material that I collected in the street team portal is in Italian. I have translated these sentences for this English article.

⁹ <http://www.flashmobamerica.com/>

¹⁰ <http://www.flashmobroma.it/>

¹¹ For a more detailed analysis of fan video as performance, see Vellar 2012.