MUSIC (ONLINE MEDIA)

A website is an additional platform that allows an artist to generate new fans and keep existing fans engaged. It should be well structured and easy to navigate.

ARTIST IMAGE
- To help with building a brand identity
- To introduce a new song / artist
- To provide information about the artist
- To show off an artist's image
- To promote an artist or their song

COMMERCIAL (MAKE £££)
- Online store to sell merchandise
- Tour dates
- Release dates of new music
- To promote an artist or a song

FOR THE FANS
- Provide links to social media platforms
- Encourage social engagement on social media or the website
- To attract global fans
- Exclusive content or new content

SOCIAL MEDIA & CONTEXTS

Before social media and online media, historically fans would form their communities offline maybe meeting through conventions or the back pages of the music magazines. Music journalists had some real clout (impact) too and artists would spend time trying to get into the pages of music magazines, whether through reviews or whole articles. Now though, it’s much easier for fans to create communities online and these communities can span space and time as the internet has a global reach which operates 24/7. And, where once music journalists were ruling the industry, now bloggers and vloggers have taken over in many respects.

Social media is very important to the music industry- most fans turn to Twitter and Facebook to keep updated with their favourite bands and how most new tracks and videos will get their launch on social channels. Social media is monitored, often by paying someone to carry out data analysis and monitoring engagement of different tweets, posts and image uploads. This will then inform them of how to launch their next campaign, maybe by using pre-release material, or teasers. Social media is also very important for artists to identify and engage with fans to maintain their relationship, however it is often unlikely that artists write all their own Tweets/Posts and they usually have a brand manager who helps with their online presence.

MUSIC (MUSIC VIDEOS)

TYPES OF MUSIC VIDEOS

CONCEPT VIDEOS
Using ideas and imagery rather than shots of the performer

ADVANTAGES
- Artist and production team can be really creative
- The music video can become iconic in itself and be a text that audiences enjoy.

DISADVANTAGES
- Can be more expensive to produce
- Can be time consuming to plan and produce
- Doesn’t really sell the artist or their brand image

PERFORMANCE VIDEOS
Recording the performer as they perform the song

ADVANTAGES
- Cheaper to produce
- Much quicker to plan and produce
- Gives a sense of ‘authenticity’ as it includes the artist

DISADVANTAGES
- Can become repetitive or lack creativity
- The performer has to already be established to have an impact on the audience

PURPOSE OF MUSIC VIDEOS

TO HELP SELL A SONG
- To help promote a song
- To promote an artist or a song
- To introduce a new song / artist
- To promote an artist’s image
- To help make songs more memorable
- To allow the artist/song to be seen/heard on more platforms - music channels, internet, DVDs
- To promote an artist’s other skills – dancing or acting maybe
- To provide a visual representation of the song and its narrative
- To entertain the audience
- To allow the audience to connect with the singer/ feel like they’re watching them live

YOUR CASE STUDY MUSIC VIDEOS & WEBSITES

TAYLOR SWIFT - Bad Blood
www.taylorswift.com
@taylorswift13

PHARRELL WILLIAMS - Freedom
www.pharrellwilliams.com
@pharrell

MICHAEL JACKSON - Black or White

WHY AUDIENCES USE WEBSITES - APPLYING THE USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

Uses and gratifications theory refers to ACTIVE audiences- audiences who seek out, choose and use media products to satisfy a need. There are four main needs audiences will satisfy when consuming media:

Personal identity
(The need or satisfaction of relating to the media product, in the artists, their music etc)
- Fan identity- they can relate to the artist and their music, the way they look/how the audience want to be (like them)
- To compare their life experiences with those in the artist’s lyrics/music

Information
(The need or satisfaction of getting information from the media product)
- Learning about the artist’s latest news including new music, music videos, tours and merchandise

Entertainment
(The need or satisfaction of escaping from everyday lives and being entertained)
- Enjoyable functions- watching music videos, exclusive clips and interviews, where they are taken away from their everyday lives

Social Interaction
(The need or satisfaction of being able to interact with people about the artist - either in person “did you see the latest news/music video” or sharing on social media/being part of a community online)
- Fan community – eg Katy Perry fansite, websites, Twitter following, forums, podcasts. Sharing fan identity with others (eg sharing views on artist)
- To discuss with family/friends or by continuing the conversation about latest news on Twitter or Facebook
Michael Jackson was an American singer, dancer, song writer, record producer, actor and philanthropist (a person who seeks to promote the welfare of others, especially by the generous donation of money to good causes)

- Michael debuted in 1964 as one of the Jackson Five then began his solo career in 1971. By the early 80s he was a dominant figure in the music industry and his album ‘Thriller’ earned him the title of the ‘King of Pop’, as it is the best-selling album of all time.
- Michael Jackson’s music videos were so unusual that they helped to transform the medium into both an art form and a promotional tool.
- The MTV cable channel was seen as a platform for Michael Jackson to showcase his video talents and by airing his videos regularly, MTV was also able to reach greater heights.
- The music video for ‘Black or White’ premiered on 14th November, 1991, in 27 countries simultaneously. It reached an audience of 500 million – the highest ever for a music video.
- The song reached number one in 20 countries around the world, and meant that Michael Jackson was the first artist to have number one hits in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

### CULTURAL CONTEXTS

#### LAUNCH OF MTV

With the launch of MTV, a 24-hour music channel, Michael Jackson’s promotion was easy-each song came with a popular promotional video. The popularity of these videos helped make MTV famous and Jackson used it as a platform to demonstrate his talents.

#### CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1991

Jackson broke barriers of racial discrimination with ‘Black or White’ and brought a difficult subject into the public arena. This song came about around the same time as The Civil Rights Act of 1991. The Civil Rights Act of 1991 is a United States labor law, passed in response to United States Supreme Court decisions that limited the rights of employees who had sued their employers for discrimination.

### REPRESENTATION OF MICHAEL JACKSON

Jackson is portrayed as the hero (Vladimir Propp’s character theory) and represents the song’s ideology.

- Jackson’s clothing in the video could be said to mimic the song’s title and his actions – him copying the various dance moves, then them copying his-represent the ideology that ultimately we are all just the same.
- However, interestingly, Michael Jackson suffered a skin condition called vitiligo, which caused his skin to grow paler as he aged. This condition sparked all sorts of media debate about whether he purposefully bleached his skin and it was clear he also wore makeup to cover up this condition, make up which made him paler. Therefore, the statement in ‘Black or White’ could be considered a little ironic in light of this.

### REPRESENTATION OF ETHNICITY

Groups featured:
- African hunters
- Traditional Thai dancers
- Plains Native Americans
- Odissi Indian dancer
- Russians wearing Ukrainian Clothes and dancing Hopak

Black or White represents the ideology that all ethnicities are the same
- Each group of people are represented positively in the video, displaying happy faces, a sense of unity and friendship and the lyrics of the song sound like a plea for racial harmony.
- This all seems like a very positive message to promote, that race does not and should not matter to anyone.

### REPRESENTATION OF AGE

Children are represented as the future of equality
- The prologue shows a young boy who is rebellious, going against what his parents have told him to do. This reinforces the idea that children can be disobedient. However, he does this to open his father’s mind, which shows that children are more open minded than adults.
- Babies from different ethnicities, playing with a snow globe, sitting on top of the world show that they are equal and suggests prejudice is learned behaviour, not innate.
- Children of different ethnicities, rapping in the song “I’m not gonna spend my life being a colour”, looking at the camera/audience, dressed in “rap” clothing, portray children as lacking prejudice and fighting for equality. This again suggests prejudice is learned behaviour, not innate.
TAYLOR SWIFT - BAD BLOOD (2015) - MUSIC VIDEO & ONLINE MEDIA

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

Taylor Swift is an American singer/songwriter who started producing music in the country genre and has since been producing music in the contemporary pop genre. The music video accompanied the Taylor Swift single which was released on 17th May 2015. It was the fourth single to be released from the album 1989. The single was remixed and featured the artist Kendrick Lamar. It was released on the label Republic Records.

The video was directed by Korean American, Joseph Kahn who has created music videos for artists such as Britney Spears, Eminem and Katy Perry. The video won a Grammy Award for best music video and features a range of icons such as Jessica Alba, Cara Delevingne and Cindy Crawford.

MEDIA LANGUAGE (MUSIC VIDEO)

- The music video starts with a fight scene reminiscent of an action film fight scene, such as The Matrix. The characters also have their names on screen in the style of an opening to a film or a film trailer.
- Taylor Swift’s character Catastrophe is then betrayed by Arsyn (linking to the music title of ‘Bad Blood’ - suggesting a rivalry between the two).
- The title of the music video is in the style of Sin City - another intertextual reference to an action film.
- The music video then moves on to Catastrophe being healed and the male rapper, Kendrick Lamar is sitting behind a big desk.
- The rest of the female characters (all famous cameos from Taylor Swift’s friendship group) are seen in comparison to Kendrick Lamar is quite revealing clothing. However the female characters all seem quite empowered suggesting that they are not victims of the male gaze theory but actually comfortable and feeling powerful in their clothing.
- The music video continues to include more intertextual references to action films and action sequences, such as Kill Bill, Tron and The Hunger Games. This is clearly targeting a male audience, going against Swift’s traditional female audience.
- The video ends with Taylor Swift’s ‘crew’ facing off against another female crew, lead by Selena Gomez. The music video ends as the two female characters go in to attack each other - this is a clear reference to Taylor Swift’s real-life problems with Katy Perry.

MEDIA LANGUAGE (ONLINE MEDIA)

- Taylor Swift’s website used to follow conventions of her latest music, using pastel pink and blue colours. This no longer matches the style of the Bad Blood, showing that Swift’s brand image has changed since 2015 when the Bad Blood music video was released.
- The design of the website was changed when Taylor Swift released her new single Me! featuring Brendon Urie to match the style of the new music video.
- Taylor Swift’s social media accounts also feature content that matches the style and design of her new website, featuring images that include a lot of pastel pinks and blues, creating a clear star image for Swift across different online platforms.
- The audience would be media savvy as the marketing for the video was largely conducted online from Swift’s various social media accounts using the hashtag #BadBloodMusicVideo.

CULTURAL CONTEXTS

- The music industry is often criticised for its narrow representations of gender. Females are hypersexualised so it becomes normal for audiences to see this. Laura Mulvey’s ‘Male Gaze’ theory suggests that female artists are victims of being sexualised.
- Self-objectification is linked to female empowerment (females who are empowered by sexualising their own bodies). Females can be represented as strong independent women who are not devalued by their sexuality.
- The music video features many intertextual references to famous action films, suggesting that the music video is targeting males, different to Swift’s typical 16-24 year old females. Swift wears a manly black top. The object code of the cigar plays to the stereotype of a crime boss. This is reinforced through the diegetic audio codes of amplified kicks and punches.

REPRESENTATIONS OF TAYLOR SWIFT

- Bad Blood comes from Swift’s album which was released in 2015. While the design of the album (including the media that was released with it), the video for Bad Blood was quite different to other songs from the album. The style of the music video for Bad Blood was more similar to Swift’s next studio album, Reputation. The video for Bad Blood and her Reputation album stylised Swift as more assertive and comfortable and feeling powerful in their clothing.
- The females (linking to her real life feud with Katy Perry).

REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER

- Swift’s dress code in the opening sequence could be considered to fit the ‘sexy secretary’ stereotype, whilst Selena Gomez wears tight leather. Both represent femme fatale, male fantasy figures. Their body language and gesture codes show power as they fight the anonymous male henchmen, which is reinforced through the diegetic audio codes of amplified kicks and punches.
- Swift is then seen in a white satin suit, her dress is inspired by Mila Jovovich’s character in The Fifth Element. The camera pans Swift’s body which could be considered to represent a male gaze of her body.
- The dress codes of the cameos are certainly inspired by sadomasochism which points to objectification. However, the facial expression and body language codes show determination and empowerment. This is reinforced by the slow motion and low angle shots.
- Lena Durham’s character, Lucky Fiori displays typical masculine traits. Her hair is short and she wears a manly black top. The object code of the cigar plays to the stereotype of a crime boss. This connotes female power.

REPRESENTATIONS OF AGE

- The female cameos and Swift herself are presented as archetypes of young adults - strong and independent. However, they are also shown to be going into a battle with each other. This could be seen as a moral panic - a negative representations of young adults as being violent and aggressive.
- However, later in the video model Cindy Crawford is introduced as the character Headmistress. She is presented in a low angle and her name also suggests that she is older and in charge, a stereotype of older age groups.

MEDIA INDUSTRY

- Swift produced the music video for Bad Blood with both Big Machine Records and Republic Records.

- Republican Records is an American independent record label, which is distributed by Universal Music Group, specializing in country and pop artists.

- Being signed to a major record label means that Swift’s content is available across multiple platforms. However in 2014, Swift declined to allow fans to stream her fifth album, 1989, on Spotify or other streaming services. In June 2015, she also challenged Apple Music over its decision not to pay musicians royalties for music its subscribers listened to during their free three-month trial subscription.

- Many argue that this decision was due to commercial profit for Swift, as it forced fans to purchase her music, rather than stream it.

- Music videos are not regulated in the UK, however they are self regulated to films like ‘Kill Bill’ and ‘Aliens’ as Cindy Crawford and the references to famous cameos in the video, such as Britney Spears, Eminem and Katy Perry.

- The intertextual references create familiarity for audiences using the hashtag #BadBloodMusicVideo.

REPRESENTATIONS OF AGE

- The cameos in the music video appeals to fans of the celebrities, seeing them in a role they may not be used to seeing them in.
- The numerous intertextual references to action films clearly presents the music video as an entertaining piece as audiences watch these cameos.
- Personal Identity - the music video largely offers personal identity through the conflict portrayed in the music video - audiences would have been interested in the drama between Swift and Perry.

USES & GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

- Escapism - The cameos in the music video appeals to fans of the celebrities, seeing them in a role they may not be used to seeing them in.
- Entertainment - The numerous intertextual references to action films clearly presents the music video as an entertaining piece as audiences watch these cameos.
- Personal Identity - the music video largely offers personal identity through the conflict portrayed in the music video - audiences would have been interested in the drama between Swift and Perry.
The music video accompanied the single which premiered on his YouTube channel on 22nd July 2015. It was a single released by Williams but also featured on the Despicable Me 3 soundtrack and was used as the lead single to promote the film. The music video was directed by Paul Hunter who was a director of music videos for many artists, such as Jennifer Lopez, Justin Timberlake and Britney Spears. Its music video was nominated for Best Music Video at 58th Grammy Awards.

Williams' website is full of content that promotes Williams' work, such as music, film and TV, fashion, art and design and social good. Audiences can sign into their social media (Facebook) and create their own 'card' for the website to show what they like about Williams' content. This is tied together with the 'I Am Other' section of the website, where audiences can sign up to Williams' 'I Am Other' content. The part of the website celebrates that audiences can celebrate their differences. However, this is a bit contradictory, as the whole website promotes Williams' own financial interests, such as his collaboration with Chanel, his own clothing line Billionaire Boys Club and his music singles that have been released.

The music video begins with establishing shots of different locations around the world. This is used in the video to show that oppression is happening around the world each day. The video then starts to include Williams in the centre of frame lip synching to the lyrics of the song - this is a typical pop music convention however at times Williams is seen to be in the centre of scenes of oppression (such as slavery). The music video then includes close ups and medium shots of different people around the world, which are stylised in similar ways to covers of National Geographic magazines.

The video includes scenes of Williams working in a workshop followed by a shot of a young boy in a Western school. This is clearly communicating to an audience that there are massive inequalities of opportunities to people around the world. As the music video continues, the imagery becomes a little more unusual, such as a mermaid swimming through a flooded room as a man reads, an older lady who is lifting weights and an astronaut floating down a busy street. These shots in the music video are open to interpretation, but in some way could still be linked back to the concept of Freedom.

The music video for Freedom did include a wide variety of ages. Stereotypically, younger ages are used to create sympathy in media products, especially products like charity campaigns (which the music video for Freedom does seem to use a lot of conventions from). The music video does use imagery to create sympathy - such as the young boy in the sweat shop juxtaposed to the image of the young boy in school. However, in the music video Williams also includes some images that subvert the stereotypes encouraged by the older lady who is weight lifting. This adds to the overall message that audiences should not feel trapped by oppression that they may feel themselves.

The website clearly colour codes different sections of the website, making it very easy for audiences to navigate.

**CULTURAL CONTEXTS**

- Pharrell Williams began his career in The Neptunes and N*E*R*D - while The Neptunes were more alternative with their sound, N*E*R*D were more Hip-Hop and Rock. Williams' more recent music that he has released as a solo artist is more within the R&B and Pop music genre.
- Freedom is categorised as Indie Pop. While the song is catchy like a pop song, the music video features a strong political message on the freedom of social groups around the world - such as slavery, frontier catwalk models and sweatshop workers. In complete contrast the official music video for the song was also used as a promotional tool for Despicable Me 3 and Apple. This shows that Williams is still using his music as a commercial tool, despite having a strong political message in the song.
- The music video for Freedom does include a wide variety of ages. Stereotypically, younger ages are used to create sympathy in media products, especially products like charity campaigns (which the music video for Freedom does seem to use a lot of conventions from). The music video does use imagery to create sympathy - such as the young boy in the sweat shop juxtaposed to the image of the young boy in school. However, in the music video Williams also includes some images that subvert the stereotypes encouraged by the older lady who is weight lifting. This adds to the overall message that audiences should not feel trapped by oppression that they may feel themselves.
- The music video also edits together contrasting imagery, such as a young boy working in a workshop followed by a shot of a young boy in a Western school. This is clearly communicating to an audience that there are massive inequalities of opportunities to people around the world.
- As the music video continues, the imagery becomes a little more unusual, such as a mermaid swimming through a flooded room as a man reads, an older lady who is lifting weights and an astronaut floating down a busy street. These shots in the music video are open to interpretation, but in some way could still be linked back to the concept of Freedom.

**REPRESENTATIONS OF PHARRELL WILLIAMS**

- Williams is presenting himself across the music video for Freedom and his website/social media as a pioneer of change. The music video represents Williams as the protagonist who is bringing awareness to different social injustices around the world. This is done through placing Williams in the centre of the frame in may shots, lip synching to the song. Williams becomes more animated as the music video progresses, showing that he is passionate about being a pioneer of change.
- On the other hand, Williams' sympathy with expensive or established brands on his online media, such as Billionaire Boys Club and his music singles that have been released. This shows that Williams is an online influencer.

**REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER**

- In the music video for Freedom, Williams features images of oppression with very typical gender roles. For example, the scenes of slavery only features men completing hard labour, while a scene in a sweatshop only features women (who are all sat at sewing machines). While this does feature typical gender roles, it could also be argued that both women and men are shown to be oppressed, so it is debatable if this typical representation is not creating an inequality of power between the genders.
- On his online media, Williams is being presented as a modern heterosexual male - a man who is especially meticulous about his grooming and appearance, typically spending a significant amount of time and money on shopping as part of this. This is primarily seen through his promotion of clothing brands (such as Billionaire Boys Club) and magazines (such as Harper’s Bazaar).

**REPRESENTATIONS OF AGE**

- The music video for Freedom does include a wide variety of ages. Stereotypically, younger ages are used to create sympathy in media products, especially products like charity campaigns (which the music video for Freedom does seem to use a lot of conventions from). The music video does use imagery to create sympathy - such as the young boy in the sweat shop juxtaposed to the image of the young boy in school. However, in the music video Williams also includes some images that subvert the stereotypes encouraged by the older lady who is weight lifting. This adds to the overall message that audiences should not feel trapped by oppression that they may feel themselves.

**MEDIA LANGUAGE (MUSIC VIDEO)**

- The music video begins with establishing shots of different locations around the world. This is used in the video to show that oppression is happening around the world each day.
- The video then starts to include Williams in the centre of frame lip synching to the lyrics of the song - this is a typical pop music convention however at times Williams is seen to be in the centre of scenes of oppression (such as slavery).
- The music video then includes close ups and medium shots of different people around the world, which are stylised in similar ways to covers of National Geographic magazines.
- The music video then features intertextual references to social issues, such as the logo remake of the 1989 protest in Tiananmen Square in China (where a man faced off against a tank).
- This intertextuality is clearly targeting a more educated audience who would be aware of the social issues that the music video is referring to as well as the social political message that Williams is communicating through the lyrics.
- The music video also edits together contrasting imagery, such as a young boy working in a workshop followed by a shot of a young boy in a Western school. This is clearly communicating to an audience that there are massive inequalities of opportunities to people around the world.
- As the music video continues, the imagery becomes a little more unusual, such as a mermaid swimming through a flooded room as a man reads, an older lady who is lifting weights and an astronaut floating down a busy street. These shots in the music video are open to interpretation, but in some way could still be linked back to the concept of Freedom.

**MEDIA LANGUAGE (ONLINE MEDIA)**

- Williams' website is full of content that promotes Williams' work, such as music, film and TV, fashion, art and design and social good. Audiences can sign into their social media (Facebook) and create their own 'card' for the website to show what they like about Williams' content.
- This part of the website celebrates that audiences can celebrate their differences. However, this is a bit contradictory, as the whole website promotes Williams' own financial interests, such as his collaboration with Chanel, his own clothing line Billionaire Boys Club and his music singles that have been released.

**MEDIA INDUSTRY**

- Williams produced the music video for Freedom with Columbia Records.
- Columbia Records is an American record label owned by Sony Music Entertainment, a subsidiary of Sony Corporation of America, the North American division of Japanese conglomerate Sony.
- Sony Music is considered one of the "big three" music companies, alongside Universal Music Group and Warner Music Groups.

- Music videos are not regulated in the UK, however they are self regulated by the platform that they are hosted on (for example, YouTube have their own community guidelines for all videos that are uploaded to their site). Williams' Freedom music video does not contain much content that would cause offense or discomfort - apart from the quick shot of two women stripping off and the conflict portrayed in the scenes of slavery.

**USES & GRATIFICATIONS THEORY**

- Education - The music video does highlight social issues that audiences may or may not be already aware of. This is because the music video takes the form of a charity advert to raise awareness of oppression that many face around the world.
- Entertainment - The music video for Freedom also still offers entertainment, as Williams is still a central figure throughout the music video, which is common of many pop music genre videos.
- Social Interaction - The website is the main source of social interaction, encouraging visitors to use their social media to share Williams' content. His social media account has nearly 11 million followers (Twitter), showing that there is a large community of his fans.