

Title:

New Sites Help Indie Musicians Find Audiences on the Web

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Summary:

Today, indie musicians have a much more direct link with their potential audiences: the Internet.

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Article Body:

It wasn't all that long ago that musicians and bands had to pound the pavement with their biographies and demos in hand, trying to get the ear of a music industry scout. If they lucked out, the band would sign a recording contract and - hopefully - get the promotional power of the record label to find an audience. Indie musicians have always been a breed apart, sometimes because they have chosen to create their music outside of the mainstream and other times because they have not had access to the movers and shakers in the music world.

Today, of course, indie musicians have a much more direct link with their potential audiences: the Internet. In order to succeed, they're no longer dependent entirely on word-of-mouth and the patronage of like-minded people. Instead, they can easily reach those who want to buy indie bands' music. They do, of course, have to record their music, but technology has leveled the playing field there as well. Today's digital music software allows indie musicians to record their music inexpensively, without the backing of major labels.

Many indie musicians have used social networking as one aspect of their Internet marketing efforts. Most bands, for example, have MySpace or Facebook pages. Those who have created videos might also place them on YouTube. This kind of viral marketing is completely aligned with the traditional, word-of-mouth promotion that indie bands have used for decades.

The major departure from the past, however, is the advent of websites dedicated to promoting indie music. Typically, these sites enable musicians, bands, signers, songwriters, DJs, and MCs to sign up for one of three types of accounts. Usually, a free artist account gives musicians the opportunity to

upload their music, write blogs, post upcoming gigs, and become part of the site's review and rating system. A standard account gives them the opportunity to sell digital content under one umbrella. For example, indie musicians are able to sell MP3s, videos, and photographs, and receive 70 percent of all sales. A professional account often enables musicians to use their own payment gateway (like PayPal) and retain 100 percent of all sales.

Typically, the site does the marketing, advertising, and promotion that draw those who wish to buy indie bands' MP3 recordings. But indie fans are really the fuel that drives the engines of these kinds of sites. Listeners can stream MP3 and video from their favorite indie musicians, as well as discover new bands. Often, visitors can search the site by artist name, artist's influences, and artist blog entries. They can also search by genre, such as a cappella, alternative, electronic, slow rock, and so forth.

These kinds of sites are breathing new life into the indie scene. They complement the "go your own way" thinking of indie musicians, while allowing them to leverage new technology and become part of a collective that promotes the common good. At the end of the day, both musicians and fans come out winners.