

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

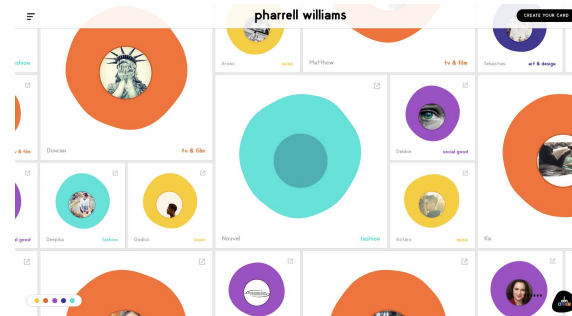
- To help with building a brand identity
- To introduce a new song / artist
- To provide information about the artist
- To show off an artists image
- To promote an artist or their song

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



WHY AUDIENCES USE WEBSITES - APPLYING THE USES AND GRATIFICATIONS THEORY

Uses and gratifications theory refers to ACTIVE audiences- audiences who seek out, chose 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 fanzine, 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

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 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

TAYLOR SWIFT - BAD BLOOD (2015) - MUSIC VIDEO & ONLINE MEDIA

BACKGROUND CONTEXT



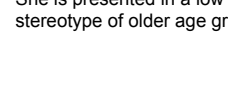
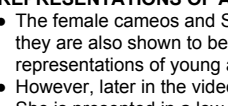
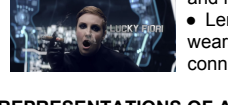
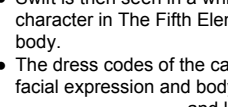
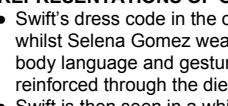
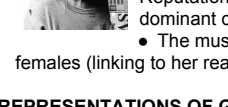
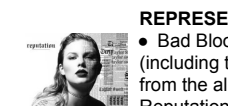
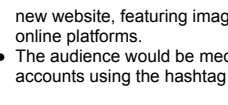
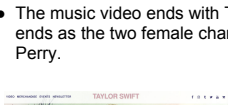
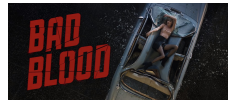
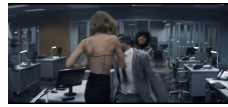
Taylor Swift is an American singer/songwriter who started producing music in the country genre and has since been producing music in the contemporary pop music genre.

- 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.

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 released teaser posters featuring the famous cameos in the video, such as Cindy Crawford and the references to films like 'Kill Bill' and 'Aliens' suggests that a secondary older audience was also targeted.



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 seen 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 music 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.

REPRESENTATIONS OF TAYLOR SWIFT

- Bad Blood comes from Swift's album 1989 which she released in 2014. 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 a more assertive and dominant compared to her more innocent image.
- The music video for Bad Blood presents Swift as a protagonist caught in a major battle between rival 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 bathing suit costume. Her costume is inspired by Milla 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.



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

- Republic Records is an American record label owned by Universal Music Group. It was founded as an independent label in 1995, and was acquired by Universal Music Group (UMG) in 2000. UMG is considered one of the "big three" music companies, along with Sony Music and Warner Music Group.



- 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.

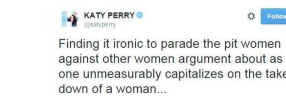
- Music videos are not regulated in the UK, however they are self regulated by the platform that they are hosted on (for example, YouTube have their own community guidelines for all videos that are uploaded to the site. Through a questionnaire with parents, it was voted #7 of music videos from 2015 that were considered unsuitable for children under the age of 15.

AUDIENCES

- The audience was targeted by the online marketing campaign. The 18 'A list' celebrities, models and artists were revealed by Swift over seven days before the video's premiere at the Billboard Music Awards and each of them received an individual poster in the style of a film poster. The age demographic of the celebrities varied from 18 to 51 to appeal to a wide demographic.
- Rumours also circulated that the song was written about Swift's relationship with fellow pop artist Katy Perry. This was unconfirmed but did prompt Perry to comment on her Twitter account.



This added to the video's appeal for audiences who enjoyed the voyeuristic nature of the controversy.



- The intertextual references create pleasure for the audience.

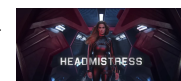
Additionally, the video uses many tropes from the Superhero/ Sci-Fi

genres which would appeal to fans of those genres. The repetition of familiar conventions engages the audience.

- The video has high production values which influences audience expectations through use of CGI and visual effects.

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 will make their own connections.
- *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.



PHARRELL WILLIAMS - FREEDOM (2015) - MUSIC VIDEO & ONLINE MEDIA

BACKGROUND CONTEXT



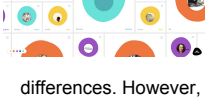
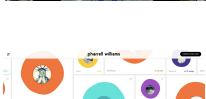
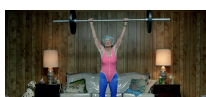
Pharrell Williams is an American rapper, singer, songwriter, record producer, entrepreneur, and fashion designer.

- The music video accompanied the Pharrell Williams 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 directed 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.

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, female catwalk models and sweatshop workers.
- In complete contrast the official music video, 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.



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 syncing 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 lego 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 is tied together with the "I Am Other" section of the website, where audiences can sign up to 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.
- The website clearly colour codes different sections of the website, making it very easy for audiences to navigate.

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 many shots, lip syncing 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' synergy with expensive or established brands on his online media, such as Chanel, Apple Music and Adidas shows that Williams is considered to be an influential figure (to influence his audience to be loyal to other brands). 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 metrosexual 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 images of children at times 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 of age - such as the shots of 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 INDUSTRY

Williams produced the music video for Freedom with Columbia Music.



- 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.

- Being signed to a major record label means that Williams' content is available across multiple platforms. Williams' website and social media feature product placement of different brands that he works with. He has had partnerships with Apple Music and Universal Pictures, showing that he has commercial intentions with his music - he intends to make a profit.
- Williams is the producer of his own music, showing that he has more creative control over his products than other artists. He often works as a producer with other artists, most notably Gwen Stefani and also has worked as producer on some film soundtracks.



- 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 the 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.

AUDIENCES

- Williams' typical target audience has changed greatly throughout his career. When he was in The Neptunes and N*E*R*D his typical target audience was young males. However, his more recent content that has seen him release songs with Universal through the Despicable Me franchise and Hidden Figures means he is now more popular with females and is most popular with millennials (born between 1982 and 1999).
- While the message of the music video for Freedom does not seem to match the theme of the film Despicable Me 3, the song itself does have a modern pop catchy beat to it. This is what most mainstream films look for and for Williams, it means that his music will potentially reach a wider audience.

- Williams' online social media and website seem to target a much more active audience. His website in particular encourages audiences to sign up to the mailing list and also share Williams' content by making a 'card' (which can only be done if they sign in through their social media).

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 audiences 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.