

The Attempt to Revitalize the Music industry by ArtistComm

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The current state of the music industry in Japan

First, I will touch upon the current state of the music industry in Japan. Japan's music software market is the second largest after the United States, constituting around 20% of the global market. (ifpi, 2014) In particular, its physical market is the world's largest, while it also has the aspect of being supported by original value added, such as tickets to participate in handshake meetings with so-called idol groups.

In terms of digital delivery, as Chaku Uta, which is a service for mobile phones unique to Japan, is in widespread use, the market for download services for PCs such as iTunes has not grown. Also, due to concerns about its harmful effects on the physical market, the full-fledged introduction of subscription-type services, such as Spotify, is lagging behind.

Previously, the record business was the center of the music industry and live concerts were mainly for the purpose of its promotion. But today, the relative importance is shifting from music sources to artist merchandising, including live concerts and T-shirts.

By the way, services that induce sales of music sources like Amazon and iTunes that are synchronized to music that plays on media such as television, radio, and Youtube, are growing. However, users want to know more about the artists and require the artist's profile, information on live performances, and other information. On the other hand, expectations are rising for high-resolution music sources, high quality sound sources (4K and 8K), and images.

Details of the establishment of ArtistComm

ArtistComm began its activities as a means of providing an information infrastructure to serve as a hub to smoothly connect users to artists, music sources, and broadcasts such as information on live performances, via the Internet and other media. Obviously, it is not "things" but "people" that create music. The goal of ArtistComm is to maximize the added value provided by the artist's talent and appeal.

As all kinds of music industry groups, including artist management, copyright management, concert promotion, and records, participate in ArtistComm, it can quickly produce results by progressing discussions for specific developments with media such as television, radio, and the

Internet, and with platform operators.

ArtistComm ID

The center of ArtistComm's activities has become the establishment, issuing of numbers, and management of an ArtistComm ID system that expands the RII, which is an international standard, and also establishing and maintaining official artist photographs and profiles to the minimum required level. Features of the ID system are that it can describe not only individuals, but also groups, and that it can describe all of the content and services related to an artist. The plan is to define and implement the ID system and carry out demonstration tests of specific services, such as broadcasting collaborations, in the summer of this year.

Japanese is a system of two-byte characters that can be written in various ways, including by kanji, hiragana, katakana (double-byte and single-byte), and the Roman alphabet (double-byte and single-byte). Therefore, an original database design is required in order to absorb inconsistencies in the writing of metadata tied to the ID, while securing interoperability with an international ArtistComm ID system like ISN (International Standard Name Identifier) will be examined for the future. Moreover, in addition to music, ArtistComm IDs can be applied to other objects and services arising from people's creative activities, like animation and fashion.

Future developments

On the platform provided by ArtistComm, services are expected that will enable users to seamlessly enjoy music suitable for their feelings at that time wherever they are, whether at home, in the street, or in the car, or that will enable them to participate in live performances. This has also brought into view the creation of a new media ecosystem by socializing technologies such as IoT (Internet of Things) and big data through music.

From the perspective of cultural preservation, Kansai University's Japanese Popular Music Archive Museum Project, for which the author is a representative, is digitizing and creating a database of cultural materials, including music videos from the first half of the 1970s to the present day, based on this ID system. In order to make these materials available to the public and share them, we are aiming to establish a network-type popular music museum that utilizes cutting-edge ITC technology in the Takeshiba District CIP (Contents Innovation Program), which is adjacent to a venue intended for the Tokyo Olympics in 2020. Through these sorts of activities, it is hoped that there will be increasing opportunities for people to encounter Japan's diverse popular music that transcends national borders and generations.