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# #PopJustice: Volume 4

## Understanding the Entertainment Industry

by Thelma Adams, Michael Ahn, Liz Manne  
with Ranald T. Adams IV, Meredith Osborne



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“I believe TV shows can and should play an important role in humanizing communities of concern to social justice advocates. Many would argue that TV did play a critical part in moving this country towards marriage equality, and I agree.”

— **David Henry Hwang**  
*Tony Award-winning playwright and screenwriter*

“In 1999, when President Bill Clinton bestowed upon Norman the nation’s highest cultural honor, the National Medal of the Arts, he summarized Norman’s impact in a beautifully accurate and succinct way: ‘Norman Lear has held up a mirror to American society and changed the way we look at it.’ ”

— **Caty Borum Chattoo**  
*Center for Media and Social Impact*

# Introduction

In Volume 1 of the *#PopJustice* report series we outlined our case for popular culture as a vital tool for achieving transformational social change, and we presented our recommendations for grantmaking investments to hitch social justice values and goals to the powerful megaphone that is pop culture. We broke down the idea of popular culture, and explained why we believe entertainment is the element of popular culture that holds the most potent and scalable points of leverage in the path toward equality, fairness, and justice for all people. Within the broad category of “entertainment,” we identified five creative business sectors we believe are most ripe and ready for intervention, and thus, investment: film and TV, music, social media, video games, and celebrity.

For those interested in engaging with the entertainment industry, this volume, *#PopJustice, Volume 4: Understanding the Entertainment Industry*, offers a closer look at these sectors while also providing context for our recommendations in Volume 1. There are separate chapters for each category—in order, Film and Television, Music, Social Media, Video Games, and Celebrity—some of which incorporate interviews with industry insiders. Within each chapter, we have sought to provide practical nuts-and-bolt information and insight into where that industry stands in today’s constantly evolving media environment—the challenges it faces and the opportunities that have opened up. The chapters end with “key takeaways,” short summaries of our findings and, where applicable, recommendations going forward.

This particular volume is somewhat technical, written by industry professionals, and is intended as a deep dive into the inner workings of these particular business sectors. Its narrative complement is *#PopJustice, Volume 5: Creative Voices & Professional Perspectives*, a collection of essays by and interviews with professionals working in the entertainment industry and at the crossroads of pop culture and social justice.

In the process of compiling this volume, we learned many interesting, surprising, inspiring, and occasionally alarming facts—all of which served to strengthen our belief that tremendous opportunities exist for social justice advocates working in the pop culture space. We hope this volume leads you to that same conclusion.

# 1. Film and Television

by Thelma Adams with Randal T. Adams IV

## Industry Overview

Technological innovation and the advent of the digital age have changed the film and television industries. One major change is in the multiplicity of distribution channels enabled by that technology. The other is the quality of experiences these new outlets can offer. In the past, a handful of low-definition broadcast television stations might cut into movie attendance, but they could not compete as purveyors of high-quality film production to audiences.

Audiences have many more options now. Digital content creation and distribution has driven, and will continue to drive, the creation and expansion of markets. Starting with home videotape and DVD players, product options and quality have continued to increase. High-definition, large screen televisions, often with theatrical-quality sound systems, are becoming more common; the race for higher quality, more cinematic experiences at home has not cooled down. Digital broadcast television has arrived and DVD and Blu-ray are well established, but more importantly, cable television has bloomed, providing hundreds of channels of high-definition content. Similarly, new services have arrived with high-speed broadband connectivity that can deliver high-definition content on demand via the Internet.

In an article in *The Economist* in January 2015, the results of a YouGov survey on movie audience preferences reported that survey respondents overwhelmingly preferred to wait for a movie to come out in home release (57%) as opposed to in a movie theater (12%), or both equally (24%). Six percent replied “Neither” and only 2% “Weren’t sure.”

While this may not have been particularly good news for movie theater owners or conventional broadcast TV stations, it has increased opportunities for high quality content providers, like the studios, to reach customers with more choices without having to compromise as much on the qualities that have made the movie going experience special.

As TV becomes more of a “movie experience,” the lines demarcating movies and TV have started to blur. Movies made for TV (or cable or Internet) distribution call for the same level of production as was traditionally found only in the theater. TV shows beget movies. Movies beget TV shows. Actors, directors, production crews, and studios move transparently back and forth as distribution channels increase and delivery systems continue to improve in quality.

Along with new, higher-quality content delivery, the technology has also opened doors to new creators. The (relative) cost of equipment that can produce high-quality content has empowered independent filmmakers, as has the availability of new distribution channels—Internet streaming services like Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, and YouTube—to reach audiences more directly, bypassing traditional studios. YouTube videos, made with consumer equipment, have been able to grab significant audience share and have already proven a path, not only to more traditional TV production and distribution deals, but even to the large screen in theaters. Though traditional TV continues to dominate in terms of audience numbers, outlets like YouTube could very well prove particularly significant to groups traditionally underserved by—or with limited access to—the main studios and networks. This is very similar to what has been happening in the music industry.

Finally, as with other industries, the film and video industry is globalizing. As incomes rise worldwide, more discretionary spending is available for film and TV entertainment in areas traditionally underserved. As more content moves off the air and out of the theaters onto connected digital devices (such as personal computers, smart TVs, mobile, and game consoles), traditional barriers to distribution start to collapse and a national audience turns into, potentially, a global audience.

While US and Canada box office sales have remained relatively flat, if not actually declining, internationally there has been tremendous growth:

Global Box Office - All Films (US\$ Billions)				
	US/Canada	International	Total	US/Canada Share
2010	10.6	21	31.6	34%
2011	10.2	22.4	32.6	31%
2012	10.8	23	34.7	31%
2013	10.9	25	35.9	30%
2014	10.4	26	36.4	28%
<b>Percent Change (2010-2014)</b>	-2%	24%	15%	

Source: MPAA, 2015

Looking at international markets, it is the traditionally underserved regions that are primarily driving this:

International Box Office by Region (US\$ Billions)				
	EMEA	Asia Pacific	Latin America	Total
2010	10.4	8.5	2.1	21
2011	10.8	9	2.6	22.4
2012	10.7	10.4	2.8	23.9
2013	11.1	11.1	3	25
2014	10.6	12.4	3	26
<b>Percent Change</b>	2%	46%	46%	24%

Source: MPAA, 2015

As spending in the US combined Film/Video industry has increased, revenues have more than kept pace:

Est. Revenue vs. Expense US Film/Video Production and Distribution (US\$ Billions)			
	Revenue	Expense	Net
2005	56.83	61.3	4.47
2006	59.17	63	3.83
2007	61.91	66.3	4.39
2008	62.16	68.7	6.54
2009	57.91	64.9	6.99
2010	62.57	67.3	4.73
2011	63.84	69.1	5.26
2012	67.08	70.4	3.32
2013	70.02	74	3.98
<b>Net Change</b>	23.21%	20.72%	

Source: US Census

In part, this may be the result of a slightly greater increase in ticket prices over the same period (25%), but the real reason for the discrepancy between traditional theatrical box office revenue and overall industry revenue is the increased availability of alternative methods of distribution, and change in viewing habits.

One interesting result from all of these changes in how films and videos are created and distributed is the substantial change in the number of releases. As the number of releases by the major studios and their subsidiaries has declined, the number of releases by independents, those who have perhaps been most motivated to move outside of traditional methods of production, financing, marketing, and distribution, has significantly increased:

Films Released US by Studios					
	MPAA Studios	MPAA Subsidiaries	Independent	Total	
2005	194	81	313	588	
2006	204	80	390	674	
2007	189	82	422	693	
2008	168	60	470	698	
2009	158	47	399	604	
2010	141	37	422	600	
2011	141	37	468	646	
2012	128	34	549	711	
2013	114	30	545	689	
2014	136	36	571	743	
<b>Net Change</b>	-29.90%	-55.56%	82.43%		

Source: MPAA, 2015

What should be apparent from this is that the relative role of the major studios—i.e., Disney, Paramount, Sony, 21st Century Fox, Universal, and Warner Bros., who together comprise the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA)—in the number of releases, at least— is in decline. This parallels what is also happening in the music industry with major record labels. Structural changes (in large part driven by technology) are driving this shift, especially those that reflect increased options for choice among audiences. Audiences have more options about how and when they can consume film and TV, in ways that take it out of the hands of major studios. Filmmakers have more choices about how they can finance, produce, and distribute.

One measure of audience engagement with traditional film production and distribution is the number of tickets sold per person. Today's numbers illustrate a "flatness" in the US/Canada market, as well as give some insight into further trends in audience makeup. A 2015 MPAA report looked at movie attendance for the period 2010–2014. Attendance declined among the four youngest age groups, spanning the ages of 2–39, including a 26% decline in the 25–39 age bracket. The only age group that saw significant growth was 40–49, with a 20% increase in attendance.

We see that ticket sales per capita—an indicator of the most enthusiastic moviegoers—is generally flat or declining. This is particularly the case with the age groups 12–17, 18–24, and 25–39, which represents the highest percentages per population of frequent moviegoers.



Breaking out according to ethnicity, we see even more striking results:

Per Capita Attendance by Ethnicity (Millions)				
	African American	White	Hispanic	Asian/Other
2010	3.7	3.5	6.8	4.2
2011	3.7	3.5	5.3	5
2012	3.8	3.6	6.4	4
2013	4.2	3.4	6	4.3
2014	3.6	3.2	5.1	5.2
Net Change	-2.70%	-8.57%	-25.00%	23.81%
% of Population 2014	12%	63%	17%	8%
% of Frequent Moviegoers 2014	10%	56%	25%	9%

Source: MPAA, 2015

The highest percentage of frequent moviegoers resides among Hispanics and Asian/Other. While the Asian/Other category has moved into first place and shown tremendous growth, the past top category, Hispanics, has seen the most precipitous decline. African American and white categories continue to “underperform.” The only group with growth is Asian/Other.

Men and women, who generally split overall attendance 50/50, also show declines in attendance, with the most pronounced being among men.

### Diversity in the Film and Video Business

In the report *The Latino Media Gap* by Frances Negrón-Muntaner and others, commissioned by the National Association of Latino Independent Producers, The Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race at Columbia University, and the National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts, the concept of the “comfort zone” is addressed. Regarding decision making in the media industry:

There was a strong consensus that the “comfort zone” of decision makers played a significant role regarding who is offered opportunities in the media industry. All interviewees agreed that producers and executives tend to hire people they know, who are recommended by acquaintances, and/or with whom they feel comfortable. In the words of one guild advocate: “The industry is hostile, dog-eat-dog, and very stressful. In that world, you want people who have your back” Since the vast majority of top industry management is currently white and male, this results in hiring along the same racial and gender lines. The assumption is that people outside the network will both be loyal or supportive to those already inside.

One anonymous diversity executive said, “Writers tend to write what they know. And what they know is Beverly Hills to car to studio and back, always surrounded by people like themselves.”

Another diversity executive reported:

A diversity executive will ask a writer to add diverse people to the script and the white writer will flip out and say, “The character is everything. I can’t change him.” When the writer says “I don’t feel it,” the showrunner generally sides with him. At best, you will get a diverse sidekick character or “fruit salad” background where the characters do not make significant contributions to the story. Showrunners themselves are almost always from the same background as the writer.

Or as one executive stated, “Diversity recruitment events do not produce the best candidates. We hire through internal networking.”

To publicly advertise a job opening can count as an effort toward diversity; meanwhile, the hiring decisions are still the result of the aforesaid internal networking. It’s a media version of the practice of corporate greenwashing—that is, when a company launches and sustains a very public campaign about its commitment to being green while showing little significant change in its real practice across the majority of its activities, as in BP’s ad campaigns following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

In the film and television industry, much of the official diversity and inclusion effort is similar. One guild advocate said, “Ultimately the companies control everything. They choose the executives; the diversity departments serve at their pleasure, and cannot implement policies autonomously. They also choose the showrunners and producers. If the networks and studios really wanted more diversity, it would happen.” One executive said in an interview, “Diversity has never been an intrinsic part of the institutional fabric. Diversity is like a Christmas ornament that you bring out and, after it’s over, you put it away.” One production studio diversity officer stated, “Diversity officers are managers of discontent and get paid well for it.”

Since the players see this as a zero-sum game, forming coalitions across, and even within, the boundaries of marginalized identity groups is difficult. With the emphasis on personal networks and comfort zones as tools for both success and survival, any alternatives threaten personal security. One producer who was interviewed for the Negrón-Muntaner study stated, “There is a fear of black displacement because black had been standing in for all diversity until now.” Not only is the size of the pie finite and fixed, but the diversity slice reserved for underserved groups is smaller still, and neither is going to grow.

Examples of spectacular success are not hard to find, and have been relentlessly publicized. Yet for individuals (and their projects) who are not white and male, little has changed when looking across the film and television industries over time.

In her study, *Race/Ethnicity in 600 Popular Films: Examining On Screen Portrayals and Behind the Camera Diversity*, Dr. Stacy Smith observed that, despite the success (in terms of both attention and revenue) of films like *12 Years A Slave*, *The Butler*, *42*, and *Best Man Holiday*, attributed as a “renaissance year for black actors in film,” “no meaningful change has been observed in the frequency of any racial/ethnic group on screen in popular films between 2007 and 2013.”

In the same study, the number of women appearing on screen in the top-grossing films for 2013 shows another peculiarity. Despite the roughly 50/50 distribution between male and female in the overall population (tilted toward female) and among moviegoers, the distribution on screen, across all ethnicities, was typically greater than 2 to 1 in favor of men. (Hispanic women did a little better at 1.68 to 1.) On screen, it’s truly a man’s world.

This has been true (and much worse) for women behind the camera as well. Despite high profile wins by individual female directors, the numbers across the industry have been pitifully small, with no discernable upward trend. Between 1998 and 2014, the share of female directors in Hollywood never climbed above 9%.

Women haven't done much better across all behind the scene" production roles, holding less than 20% of those jobs.

The top ten highest-paid actors in Hollywood in 2014 were paid a total of \$419 million. The top ten highest-paid actresses in Hollywood were paid a total of \$244 million, 42% as much. Among the top ten highest (film) grossing actors and actresses in Hollywood for 2014, four were women, totaling \$3.344 billion, averaging \$836 million each. The six men totaled \$5.240 billion, averaging \$873 million each. Looking at this from the perspective of gender, the women showed roughly equivalent bankability to the men. Unfortunately, this is not reflected in the relative payments made by studios to men compared to women.

The women in question might be outliers. The ability of actresses to carry a picture, overall, might be questioned, especially given the roles they are given, in their under-represented state, to play:

Percentage of On-Screen Jobs held by Women Characters (1995-2015) vs. Percentage of US jobs Held by Women (2014)		
	On-Screen Jobs	Real Jobs
Nurse	89%	90%
Secretary	81%	94%
Teacher	57%	74%
Waiter/Waitress	53%	72%
Cashier	47%	72%
Sales	40%	49%
Clerk	31%	50%
Scientist	25%	46%
Business	19%	56%
Bartender	15%	58%
Lawyer	11%	33%
Doctor	10%	37%
Police	10%	12%
Engineer	5%	15%

Source: Five-Thirty Eight

However that may or may not reflect the actual distribution of women across careers in the real world, it certainly reflects their distribution in the world of the development executives, writers, directors, and producers who were developing, making, and distributing film and video over those years.

For Hispanic actors, we have numbers that do, in fact, let us compare movie and video life with real life.

Hispanic Character Roles vs. Actual Population	Movies	Reality
Maids/Housecleaners	69%	44%
Criminals (Blue Collar)	24%	19%
Law Enforcement	23%	13%
Creative Types	0%	9%

Source: Latino Media Gap

Lest one say that the distribution of roles to Hispanic actors is simply the result of the kinds of roles available in movies today, let's look at the breakdown for actors generally in the top ten grossing movies of 2013 and how they were distributed between Hispanic and non-Hispanic actors.

% Hispanic Actor Roles vs. All Actors Top Ten Films 2010-2013		
	Hispanic	All Actors
Criminals (All)	17.7%	11.3%
Criminals (Blue Collar)	17.7%	10.8%
Law Enforcement/Military	19.1%	13.8%
Blue Collar/Service Workers	16.2%	5.8%
White Collar/Education	14.7%	14.9%
Creative Types	0.0%	3.4%

Source: Latino Media Gap

Clearly what we are seeing here is stereotypical thinking on the part of whoever is making these casting decisions. For African Americans, the key to screen representation seems to be tied to the presence of an African American director. In film or video releases without an African-American director, African Americans received 10.8% of speaking parts. In film or video releases with an African-American director, African-American speaking parts increased to 46% (Source: Stacey L. Smith). Whether this represents the choices of those directors regarding the actors they prefer to work with or the types of projects they choose to work on, or the types of projects that are made available for them to work on is impossible to say.

Still, how well are Hispanics represented among those who make these sorts of decisions behind the scenes and set the tone?

Among 53 radio, TV, and film studio executives with greenlight authority, only 1.9% are Hispanic. Even at PBS, the numbers aren't that great. Of 27 PBS Board Members, three are Hispanic. Of 15 PBS corporate officers and senior executives, two are Hispanic and neither works in a creative or programming capacity. At PBS, among directors, 2.3% are Hispanic (all are Latin American and not US nationals). Among producers, 2.7% are Hispanic (50% are Latin American). Among writers, 6% are Hispanic (75% Latin American). (Source: Latino Media Gap)

This continues even in the newsroom. While only 1.8% of TV news producers are Hispanic, less than 1% (and declining) of stories on news and talk shows are Hispanic-related and of those 66% focus on crime, terrorism, and illegal immigration. Guests on TV news and talk shows are well over 80% white male—Fox News (88%), CNN (83%), MSNBC (83%), PBS (82%)—while Hispanic guests total no more than 2.7%. (Source: Latino Media Gap)

Industry representatives will describe the lack of diversity on screen (and even behind the screen) as driven purely by audience demand. While the numbers given above for actresses in major screen successes compared to income may make one suspicious of that, the numbers for black films compared to others may make that claim plausible. Global box office revenue for African-American movies (those with an African-American themed storyline, lead actor or cast, director, writer, or producer) for the years 2012–2013 (*Django Unchained*, *42*, *Flight*, *Tyler Perry's Temptation*, *The Call*, *Snitch*, *A Haunted House*, *Alex Cross*, *Tyler Perry's Peeples*) totaled \$573 million (Nielsen). Box office revenue for the highest grossing movies in North America for 2013 alone (*Hunger Games: Catching Fire*, *Iron Man 3*, *Frozen*, *Despicable Me 2*, *Man of Steel*, *Gravity*, *Monsters University*, *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug*, *Fast & Furious 6*, *Oz The Great And Powerful*) totaled \$3,157.37 million. (Box Office Mojo)

Consequently, studio executives will jump through hoops to avoid having a movie appear to be a black movie.

In his paper, “The Role of Actors’ Race in White Audiences’ Selective Exposure To Movies”<sup>1</sup> Andrew J. Weaver relates Will Smith’s experience of how the studio cast his co-star (and romantic interest) in the otherwise race-neutral movie *Hitch*. When producers of the 2005 hit Hollywood film *Hitch* chose to cast Will Smith as the leading character, they found themselves with a problem. Smith, who is black, is a proven commodity at the box office. But central to the *Hitch* story was a romantic relationship between the male and female leads. The race of the actress to play opposite Smith became an issue for producers. According to Smith, “There’s sort of an accepted myth that if you have two black actors, a male and a female, in the lead of a romantic comedy, that people around the world don’t want to see it. We spend \$50 million making this movie and the studio would think that was tough on their investment.”

Casting a white actress opposite Smith was also seen as a significant risk because of the lingering taboo among some audience members against interracial relationships. The producers in this case tried to resolve the issue by casting Eva Mendes, a Cuban American, in the female lead. A similar problem, with a similar solution, arose when Smith was cast for the lead in the 2008 film *Seven Pounds*.

### In Summary

From the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA, as detailed in its 2015 Hollywood Diversity Report, the following is a current summary breakdown of underrepresentation of women and minorities in Hollywood:

Arena	Minorities	Women
Film Leads (2013)	>2 to 1	2 to 1
Film Directors (2013)	2 to 1	8 to 1
Film Writers (2013)	3 to 1	<4 to 1
Broadcast Scripted Leads	<6 to 1	<Proportionate
Cable Scripted Leads	<2 to 1	<2 to 1
Broadcast Reality/Other Leads	>2 to 1	2 to 1
Cable Reality/Other Leads	>2 to 1	<2 to 1
Digital/Syndicated Leads	<2 to 1	Proportionate
Broadcast Scripted Creators	>6 to 1	<2 to 1
Cable Scripted Creators	>3 to 1	>2 to 1
Digital/Syndicated Creators	>7 to 1	>4 to 1

## Paths toward Solutions

In Andrew J. Weaver's study, he came to the general conclusion that white audiences aren't any less likely to watch films and shows with black casts if they aren't marketed specifically, and exclusively, to black audiences. This is in parallel with the idea that men won't necessarily take an interest in movies branded as "chick flicks," as audiences who are told from the get-go that a product isn't for them will be less likely to consume it.

In the 1974–75 season, three of the top ten shows on broadcast television were family situation comedies featuring African Americans—*Sanford and Son*, *Good Times*, and *The Jeffersons*—which were recognizably about African American families, without resorting to stereotypical behavior. From 1984 until 1992, the biggest hit on broadcast TV was *The Cosby Show*, which, according to *TV Guide* "was TV's biggest hit in the 1980s, and almost single-handedly revived the sitcom genre and NBC's ratings fortunes. From the mid-70s to the mid-90s, a period of 20 years—a generation, in fact—African-American families were a constant and popular presence on the small screen, with audiences that crossed racial boundaries.

This was done without indulging in stereotypes on the part of the characters, except, perhaps implicitly, to confront and confound them (without announcing it). An example can be found in the show *Family Matters*. In the 12<sup>th</sup> episode, a new character, Steve Urkel, appeared. Urkel was energetic and funny. As an over-the-top uber-geek and super-nerd, he also completely confounded all stereotypes about young black men. Whereas white nerds were (and are) a dime a dozen, the appearance of one played by an African American actor on a show about an African-American family, not only exhibited that classic comedy theme of confounding expectations, but highlighted the character in ways that eventually caused the popularity of the show to soar. This sort of thing isn't happening much anymore, though not for lack of successful models. Margaret Cho's short-lived sitcom *All American Girl* failed. Cho reports that producers alternatively criticized her for being either too Asian or not Asian enough. They even went so far as to hire a coach to help her become more Asian. This sort of inauthenticity fools no one, and the show died.

Currently, another Asian-American situation comedy, *Fresh Off the Boat*, is enjoying success, showing the same sort of strengths as the black family sitcoms of the 70s, 80s, and 90s. In the same way that Cosby's show was based on successful stand-up stories about his family, this show is based on Eddie Huang's successful book, which is in large part about his life and family. The book attracted the attention of TV executives, and Jacob Kasdan, a successful producer and director as well as the son of producer and director Lawrence Kasdan, signed on as a producer. This brought the project inside established entertainment industry circles. The show also used methods clearly influenced by previous successful shows, most clearly Chris Rock's *Everyone Hates Chris* and, for the narrative structure, *The Wonder Years*. The character of Eddie also confounds accepted stereotypes of Asian Americans, while the rest of the family can be authentic, acting in ways recognizable to families from other ethnicities. This establishes a comfort level that, while not forced, is not alienating, and the stereotype-confounding character of Eddie is, in a different way, a tried-and-true strategy for comedy success.

Still, the mainstream studio production system today supports an image of women and minorities, and associated specialty sub-genres, that takes a step backward from conditions in the 70s, 80s and 90s to something much earlier. Non-white actors in particular are less visible in the mainstream, except as they appear in stereotypical roles or in their own sub-markets. This is similar to the studios, directors, and distribution channels that were built and maintained by African-American filmmakers and producers for those audiences in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Recent changes driven by technology have called into question even the relevance of the film and television industry as traditionally constituted. Lower production costs, new distribution and consumption paths, and an expansion of audiences have undercut the role of mainstream film and TV studios. Even new methods have cropped up and proven successful—crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter, for example.

This trend can be seen in the collapsing share the major studios have of new releases. Exploiting these new features has created real opportunities for content creators. A prominent example of how this can work is *Broad City*, a critical and popular hit series on Comedy Central that was renewed for a third season. Conceived with a vision of empowering women, the co-creators and stars started off with a series of YouTube shorts produced in a professional manner, building a solid and professional base that attracted the notice of industry insiders like Amy Poehler. That led to their jump to TV, with Poehler as the series' executive producer. In this way, they used new technologies and distribution channels—online shorts, through YouTube—as a proof of concept to break into conventional television.

## Key Takeaways

Technology has given the public an abundance of new options for watching films and television, leaving the consumer with much more discretion over what they watch and how (e.g., a theatrical movie vs. a web series; a home theater system vs. a tablet). Lower production costs, new distribution/consumption paths, and an expansion of audiences have undercut the role of mainstream film and TV studios, making it possible for unknowns to break through to the public.

Diversity is sorely lacking throughout the film and television industries: in front of the camera, behind the camera, and in executive suites (not to mention amongst Oscar voters). Virtually every publicly held entertainment company has a diversity program, but hiring remains largely a matter of those in power working within their comfort zone—hiring people they already know or who are recommended to them through their preexisting networks.

When films and television shows have feature characters that are female and/or people of color, these characters are often stereotyped professionally (e.g., women as nurses, Hispanics as maids).

Among 53 radio, TV, and film studio executives with greenlight authority, only 1.9% are Hispanic. Social justice organizations should find effective ways to monitor and gauge the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion programs at entertainment companies (see Appendix A: Hollywood's Diversity Programs).

To achieve representation in our film and TV content that is authentically reflective of our society at large, social justice advocates should partner with entertainment companies to increase the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion programs. Together, we should aim to boost diversity throughout all sectors of the entertainment business—behind and in front of the camera, and at all career stages, from internships to the boardroom.

## 2. Music

by Thelma Adams with Ranald T. Adams IV

### *Audience for Music*

Popular music in the United States plays a role in people's lives closely tied to how they identify themselves. Americans don't just listen to music; they dress, walk, and talk in identifiable ways that often reflect the genre—even the sub-genre—to which they show the most dedication.

In addition, how they acquire and listen to music, whether they even own it or not, varies between different groups. This has especially become the case since the blossoming of digital recording, storage, and delivery. Digital methods have become commonplace with the accelerating decline in cost of computing power; witness the near ubiquity of smartphones. Despite the recent, very real surge in sales of vinyl records (over the last two to three years), today music sales mean some sort of digital format.

Below is a chart that shows the distribution by several demographics for 2013, with relative percentages of populations of Internet users as well as of music consumption; peer to peer (p2p) downloaders referring to torrent-enabled piracy, and stream rippers referring to pulling music files from videos. At the bottom are listed the top three favorite genres in each total population.



2013	Total Internet Population	Music Buyers	CD Buyers	Digital Buyers	P2P Down-loaders	Music Streamers	Paid Subscribers	Stream Rippers
Men	49%	46%	47%	47%	50%	49%	39%	65%
Women	51%	54%	53%	53%	50%	51%	39%	35%
13-17	10%	9%	8%	12%	17%	14%	5%	19%
18-25	15%	17%	15%	22%	30%	29%	18%	33%
26-35	18%	18%	17%	21%	27%	21%	31%	23%
36-50	26%	27%	26%	26%	17%	24%	34%	18%
51+	30%	28%	34%	18%	9%	22%	12%	7%
White/ Caucasian	75%	79%	80%	77%	59%	71%	64%	58%
Black/ African American	11%	8%	8%	10%	18%	12%	10%	16%
Asian/ Pacific Islander	5%	3%	3%	5%	7%	5%	6%	11%
Native American /Eskimo	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%	3%	1%
Other	8%	7%	6%	7%	15%	10%	17%	15%
Hispanic	14%	12%	11%	11%	18%	16%	21%	20%
Non- Hispanic	86%	88%	89%	89%	82%	84%	79%	80%
#1	Country	Country	Country	Pop/Top 40	Pop/Top 40	Pop / Top40	Pop/Top 40	Pop /Top40
#2	(60s-80s) Classic Rock	Pop/Top 40	Classic Rock	Country	Rap/Hip Hop	Country	Rap/Hip Hop	Alt/Indie Rock
#3	Pop/ Top 40	Classic Rock	Pop/ Top 40	Alt/Indie Rock	Alt/Indie Rock	Classic Rock	Classic Rock	Rap/ Hip-hop

Source: The NDP Group, Inc. via RIAA (2014)

Any discussion of genre becomes difficult, in part because of the rapid fragmentation into sub-genres, each with its own population of dedicated fans, whose dedication seems to become stronger as the specificity of the sub-genre increases. Definitions are fluid; there is no single authoritative list or standard definition. Crossover between genres isn't uncommon (e.g., a Beyoncé release will reliably chart as pop and R&B) and authoritative figures on population and economic impact can therefore be hard to measure. Where crossovers occur, it can be the result of some shared value between members of the genre fan base, whether musical or not. What constitutes an instance of a genre depends, more often than not, on who is answering the question.

At last count, Wikipedia had separate articles for 787 different genres of popular music, each genre with the potential to reach beyond simple musical values to include a broad range of implications for overall value system and lifestyle.

Except for the broadest categories, hard numbers are rare. Genre selection can be driven by the interests of the questioner, while the respondent then fits him or herself into choices offered.

A sample of teenage Internet users was approached for one survey and responded as follow:

If you could only listen to one genre of music for the rest of your life, what would it be?	
Pop	18.4%
Country	15.3%
Other	13.6%
Rock	13.1%
Christian	9.0%
Folk / Singer-Songwriter	7.7%
Hip Hop / Rap	7.3%
Blues / R&B	4.6%
Classical	3.9%
Easy listening	3.4%
Jazz	2.4%
Electronic	0.7%
Ska	0.2%
Worldbeat	0.2%
Latin American	0.2%

Source: Stage of Life Music Survey, September 2012

When a sample of Millennial Facebook users was approached with a different genre list, they replied as follows:

Most popular music genres according to Millennial Facebook users as of September 2013	
Hip Hop	26.6%
Pop	20.8%
Rock	18.3%
Country	15.3%
Classic Rock	8.6%
R&B	6.8%
Hard Rock	1.8%
Reggae	1.8%

Source: Social Media Today 2013

The following is a summary of Nielsen/Billboard data on album sales per genre for the years 2008-2014. Remember that album sales only reflect one aspect of music consumption. Some categories are empty because they were not collected (Pop) or because they were folded into another genre in a different year. Note below, the significant decline in Latin Music, year after year from 2008 to 2014 (\$25.3 million down to \$6.26 million).

Music album sales in the United States from 2008 to 2014, by genre (in \$ millions)							
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Christian / Gospel*	29.79	27.82	24.23	23.73	22.9	19.53	17.36
Country	47.66	46.13	43.72	42.92	44.6	36.46	30.46
Dance / Electronic	-	-	8.74	10.05	8.7	7.11	5.26
Latin	25.13	16.5	12.35	11.81	9.7	8.27	6.26
R&B	77.01	69.89	57.87	55.44	49.7	47.78	35.75
Rock	139.67	124.16	103.71	105.69	102.5	92.93	85.25
Pop	-	-	-	-	-	24.62	27.71
Alternative	80.92	68.2	53.73	55.03	52.2	-	-
Classical	13.32	12.14	8.96	9.57	7.5	-	-
Jazz	11.79	11.78	8.78	11.08	8.1	-	-
Metal	50.48	38.73	32.55	32.21	31.9	-	-
New Age	2.94	2.35	1.66	1.93	1.7	-	-
Rap	33.41	26.44	27.33	28.25	24.2	-	-
Soundtrack	20.85	18.98	16.41	13.23	12.3	-	-

\* Titles may appear in more than one genre. Dance/Electronic data unavailable prior to 2011. Pop data unavailable prior to 2013. In 2013 and 2014 the R&B category included Hip-Hop. Data regarding 2010 and 2011 were published in the 2011 Music Industry Report, figures regarding 2008 and 2009 in the 2009 Music Industry Report. If a figure is missing, it was not provided by the source.

Source: Nielsen, Billboard 2015

## Music Business Scope

In 2005, the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry estimated that the music industry globally was worth \$132 billion. This increased to \$139 billion in 2006, \$150 billion in 2007, \$151.5 billion in 2008, dropped to \$140 billion in 2009, and then climbed to \$168 billion in 2010. This was accomplished in the face of several trends (along with the global slowdown that started in 2008) that were in large part technology driven—from the availability of digital downloads and streaming to the reduced cost (and increased availability) of recording and distribution options to artists. Ticket revenue from concerts tripled over roughly the same period (1999 to 2009) from \$1.5 billion to \$4.6 billion, along with merchandising. That the growth in concert revenues only grew three-fold over that period, may have been limited by the relative lack of scalability in concert ticket sales compared to physical media and digital distribution.<sup>2</sup>

Over that same period, for the US market, Nielsen Soundscan reported overall year to year growth in sales transactions (any consumer purchase of any music selection in any medium) from 2000 at \$845 billion, 2001 at \$800 billion, 2002 at \$693 billion, 2003 at \$687 billion, 2004 at \$848 billion, 2005 at \$1,003 billion, 2006 at \$1,198 billion, 2007 at \$1,369 billion, 2008 at \$1,513 billion, 2009 at \$1,545 billion, and 2010 at \$1,507 billion. After a serious drop in 2002 and 2003, this represents recovery and growth of 178%, much of it at the height of the recent downturn, showing relative independence between overall economic conditions and levels of consumer spending.<sup>3</sup>

The reliability of Nielsen numbers for measuring total activity in the US market has been called into question in a number of areas, especially regarding under-reporting actual productivity and sales. Nielsen recently announced that it would no longer count transactions under \$3.49, thus ignoring digital single sales. There is also concern in the areas of independent sales, either cash transactions (CD sales by independents at concert and festival venues) or the activities of independent (non-major) distributors. While Nielsen reported 38,000 new albums in 2003, 80,000 new albums in 2007, 106,000 new albums in 2008 and 75,000 new albums in 2010 ...

“... CDBaby.com founder Derek Sivers estimated that his company (before he sold it in 2008) was producing music at 70,000 new albums in a year. More recently, TuneCore has argued that it produces a significant amount of music that Nielsen ignores—an amount that could possibly double the size of the production of music in the US, with 90,000 new releases in 2009. (On top of that, other independent music distributors are also not counted in Nielsen SoundScan’s reports—e.g., Jamendo, SoundClick.)”<sup>4</sup>

This speaks to a dramatic change in the music business over those last few decades—the decrease in dependence on conventional recording studios in order to get music recorded and mastered, the rise of truly independent distribution (CD Baby, Reverb Nation, the Orchard, and others), options for funding outside of the major labels (Artist Share and Kickstarter, for example), and a dramatic change in media (YouTube, iTunes, Spotify, Pandora, Rdio, Deezer, Slacker, and others) with the advent of both purely digital media and distribution (downloads) and streaming media.

The result is that conventional business models in the music business have changed out of necessity, and that conventional models for even measuring that business (scope, revenue, and profitability) have also changed drastically.

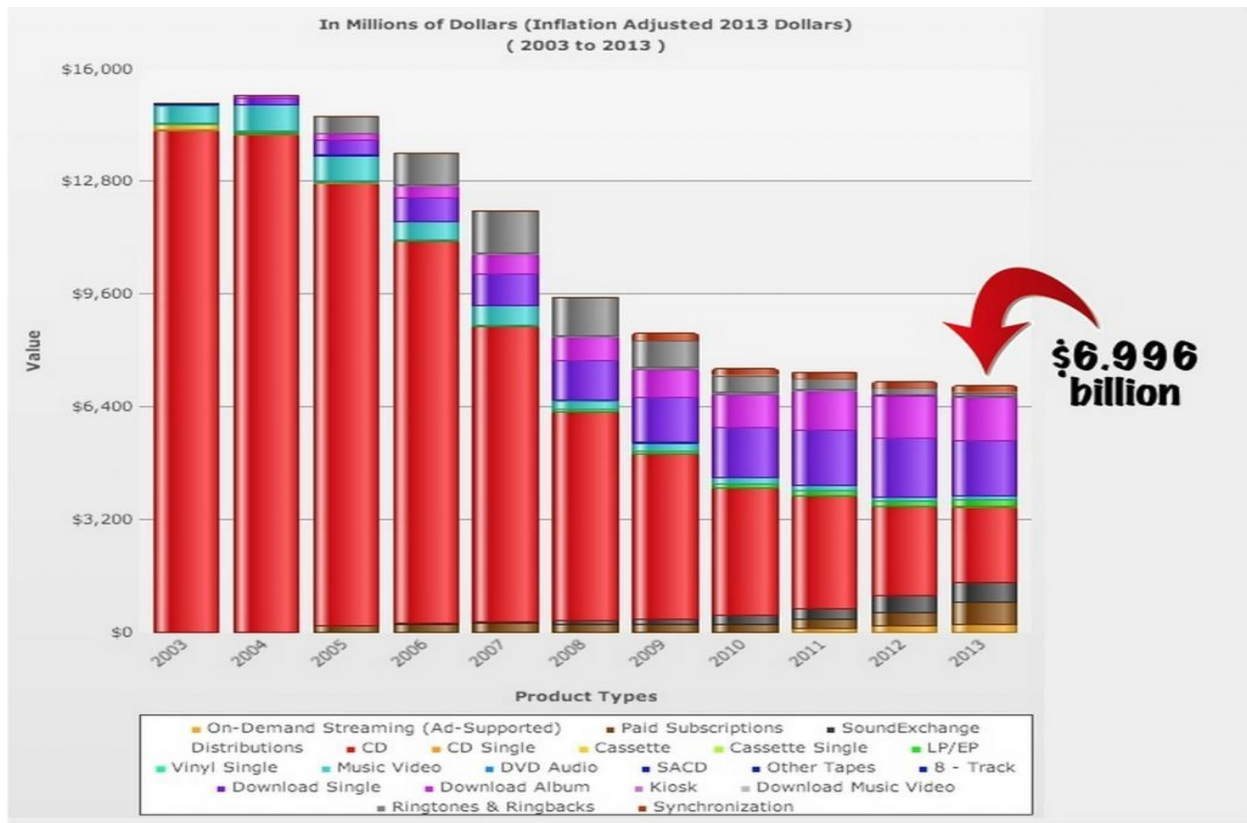
### The Major Labels

By conventional measures, the largest part of the US recording market is dominated by four labels: Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment, Warner Music Group, and EMI Music (now part of Warner).

Market share of record companies in the United States from 2010 to 2012, based on digital album sales (%)						
	Universal Music Group	Sony Music Entertainment	Warner Music Group	EMI	Others	
2010	27.47	24.18	22.6	10.71	15.03	
2011	28.35	25.36	19.91	10	16.37	
2012	30.52	27.03	20.08	7.22	15.14	

Source: Nielsen

The following graphic is fairly typical of published statements about the state of the music business today:



Source: Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA)

Given as evidence of the collapse of the music business in the US, it seems to contradict the global trends described above. Note, the numbers above include revenue from licensing, which is use of music in advertising, TV, movies, etc. These are divided into two types: Synch, which is basically the use of music as part of the soundtrack to visuals, and Mechanical, which is the right to distribute songs or albums (CDs, Records, Files, etc.). For Mechanical licenses, recent years have seen a precipitate decline in the revenue generated by conventional product-like CDs (except for the recent increase in vinyl sales) in favor of digital streaming. Combined income from all digital products is now over twice that of conventional physical products.

The other big change is that record labels used to show a great deal of vertical integration. They controlled recording, production marketing and distribution—and also pricing—to a very great degree. Music from the studio through to final retail destination was in the hands of the record companies. New technology allowed the downsizing of the recording end—through less expensive, professional quality recording equipment at new consumer prices (spawning a new prosumer label), thus lowering barriers to entry and fostering an explosion of smaller scale, lower cost, and independent recording venues. New technology also generated new formats for music delivery and new channels for distribution—which perhaps made the biggest difference.

After some years now, no major label has been able to successfully compete on these terms. One result was a shift in buying habits from the \$15 CD distributed by a record company to a \$0.99 single (remember the lower limit for Nielsen Soundscan is now \$3.49) sold by Apple. No one has to buy a whole CD to get the song(s) they really want to hear (or hope for a single release) anymore.

The key is that more choices and lower entry-barriers enable musical diversity as never before. The musical (popular) culture has the chance of becoming much less monolithic. With fewer tastemakers as gatekeepers, the drivers for what enters the popular culture, for what constitutes popular culture, and for the creation of numerous subcultures has escaped “into the wild” unlike at any time before.

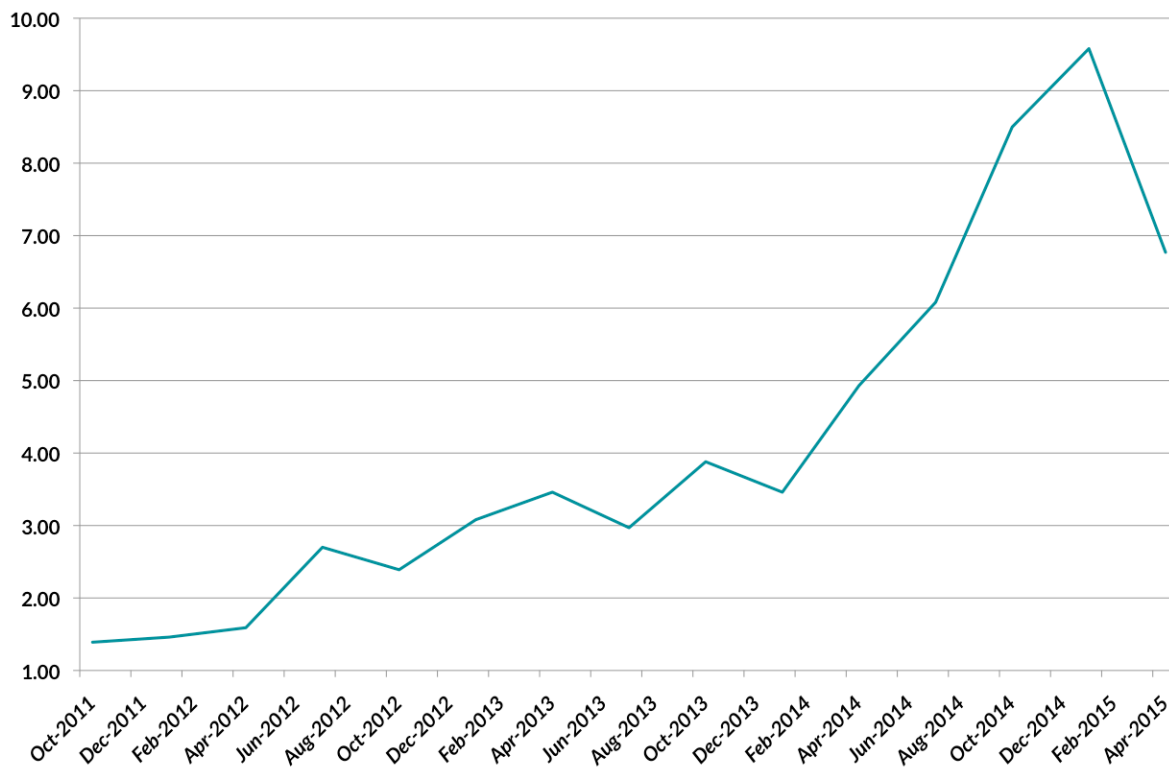
### New Methods of Distribution and Sale

Let’s look briefly at one of these new channels for distribution and sale: Spotify.

Spotify is a streaming music and video service that provides music, podcast, and video content with full digital rights management protections to users. Users can browse and select based on artist, album, genre, playlist, or record label. It provides free, ad-supported listening plus a paid subscriber service that is ad-free.

### Spotify

Unique US Visitors 2012-2015 (millions)



Source: Spotify

Spotify's global revenue and net income/loss from 2008 to 2013 (in million euros)

	Revenue	Net Income
2008	0.4	-0.33
2009	12.77	-18.8
2010	73.85	-28.45
2011	187.83	-45.4
2012	430.3	-86.7
2013	747	-57.8

Source: Spotify, The Guardian

The following may help to explain the persistent losses as the user base continues to climb at such a high rate:

### Spotify: cost of revenue share 2011-2013

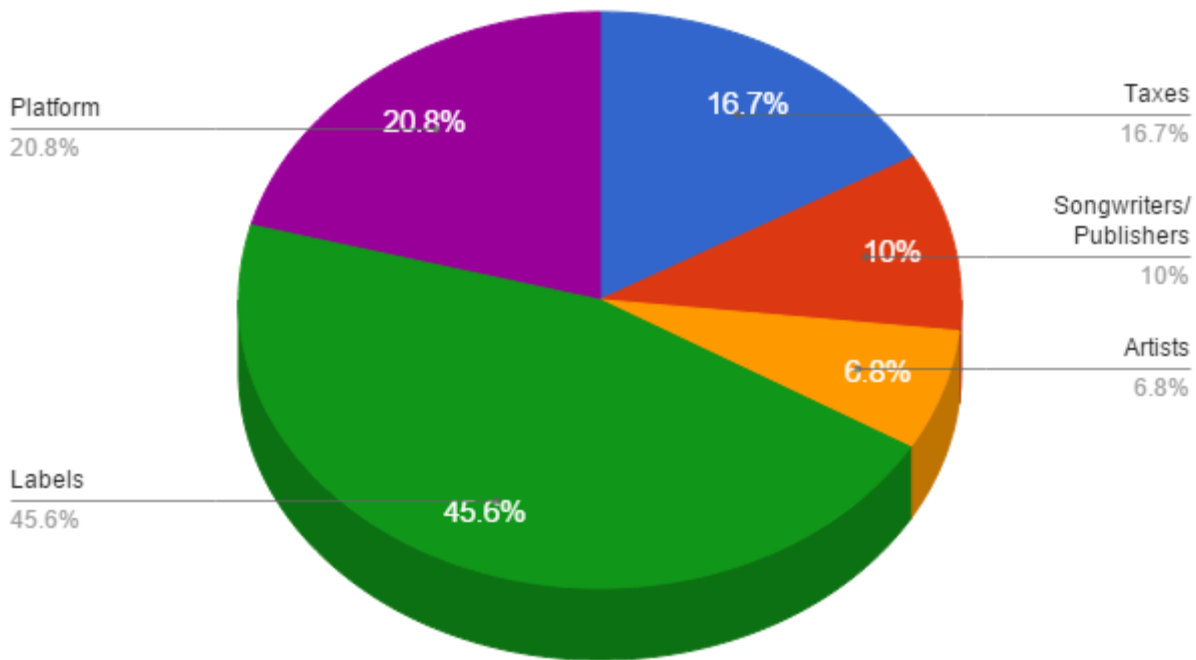
#### Share of Spotify's cost of revenue from 2011 to 2013

2011	97.7 %
2012	90.5 %
2013	82.5 %

Source: Spotify, The Guardian

These are the percentages of revenue sent back to the content providers as royalties. In more detail, here is a graphic, from a study done by Ernst & Young for the French record label trade group SNEP in 2014–2015, showing the typical distribution for Spotify and Deezer, another streaming service, in terms of what percentage of each subscription goes where:

### Share Of Streaming Revenue



Notice the small percentage of the payout that goes to artists.<sup>5</sup>

There are two important things to know about the streaming music business: (1) Most of the major streaming sites continue to lose money. Their cost structures are fairly high, and actual margins are slim. This may have something to do with the high proportion of expense dedicated to paying content providers for rights; (2) In each case, the companies only accept submissions from third parties. Artists cannot approach them on their own and make their own deals, but must work through other labels or aggregators, such as CDBaby. What this means for artists is that the share-out of royalty payments will necessarily reflect how the label/aggregator structures its own royalty deal with the artists.

However, this can vary wildly, depending on who the artist has signed with. Mentioned above are several label/aggregators—CDBaby, Reverb Nation, and the Orchard—that have risen up in response to new business models the online economy can provide.

### **Sales and Distribution Economics**

Artists & Repertoire (A&R) is the business unit of a record label that finds and manages relationships with artists. It can be considered the research and development (R&D) division of a label, since that is where product development occurs. Looked at that way, as an industry, the record business has one of the highest rates of R&D investment as a percentage of sales, 15.6% in 2014. This is a higher percentage than either software and computing (~10%) or pharmaceuticals (14%-5%).<sup>6</sup>

A&R is a high-risk activity, too. Numbers from RIAA (2015) for 2011 (the most recent available) show that 80% of released albums sold less than 100 copies and 94% sold less than 1,000. Of 8 million digital singles that sold, 7.5 million sold less than 100 copies. Only 0.5% of all albums that sold even a single copy sold more than 10,000. Record companies typically recovered their investments in only 17% of new albums released.

Conventionally, all new artists gain entry through an A&R person who is then the face of the record label to the artist. He—and it is an overwhelmingly male-dominated profession—shepherds new talent from discovery to recording and touring. Identifying talent is primarily in his hands, using whatever methods he chooses—usually through attendance at concert venues, clubs, through the recommendations of contacts or the grapevine, or whatever he hears online or from other labels.

There is no point of entry for artists, no way for them to engage with major labels on their own. It is closed, non-transparent, and one-directional (from the label).

If, for example, you go to the Atlantic Records website, on a page labeled “Contact Info,” you will find no information on how to contact anyone.<sup>7</sup> There is no e-mail address, no list of people with phone numbers, e-mail addresses, or contact forms. Rather there is this simple statement:

“Please note that Atlantic Records does not accept unsolicited music demos and we are not responsible for any such artistic material that is sent to us.”

By comparison, if you go to CDBaby’s site,<sup>8</sup> you’ll find a page that not only allows an artist to sign up and start selling his or her work, but he or she can do this at several different levels.

The CD and Vinyl major distribution partner of CD Baby is Alliance Entertainment, which is the largest wholesale distributor of CDs and DVDs with global reach in the US. Alliance also distributes Universal, Sony Music, Warner, and many others, to 15,000+ brick and mortar locations.

Other independents like Reverb Nation, the Orchard, and ArtistShare offer a similar range of services (some branch out into video and film), while ArtistShare bases its activities on end-to-end financing, including production, based on a subscription/crowd funding model per project.



The advantages of independent distributors are low barriers to entry, low cost, nearly instantaneous market entry, high royalty rates, plus participation in a direct distribution/sales channel managed by the independent in addition to access to the same distribution channels used by the majors.

The advantage with the Big Four is the scale of resources for production, marketing, and distribution, plus substantial financing. However, other costs such as marketing and production fees can result in artists actually owing money as a result of a deal. In a still widely read and referenced article published in *The Baffler* in 1993, musician/producer/engineer Steve Albini described how the high-powered major label approach might net less than nothing for the artists:

"These figures are representative of amounts that appear in record contracts daily. There's no need to skew the figures to make the scenario look bad, since real-life examples more than abound."

This is how much each player got paid at the end of the game.

<b>Record company:</b>	\$710,000
<b>Producer:</b>	\$90,000
<b>Manager:</b>	\$51,000
<b>Studio:</b>	\$52,500
<b>Previous label:</b>	\$50,000
<b>Agent:</b>	\$7,500
<b>Lawyer:</b>	\$12,000
<b>Band member net income each:</b>	\$4,031

This section of the discussion has emphasized the extreme ends of the production/marketing/ distribution food chain. There are a range of positions in-between major labels and pure independents. Similarly, there is constant flux between those degrees as labels are formed, absorbed, or go defunct, and artists move around the industry.

### **Finding People And Getting In**

Specific recommendations for avenues of foundation investment are addressed in *#PopJustice, Volume 1: Social Justice and the Promise of Pop Culture Strategies*, but here's a key point to think about:

The music business is very people-driven, and relies on interpersonal relations both on the business side and in community building and membership. For that reason, there are two major guidelines for interacting with the music industry:

1. Identify your target audience, and the shared values and collective identifiers. Tailor your message to this, and strive to speak from an insider's perspective, i.e., be a metalhead to the metalheads.
2. Figure out who the movers and shakers are within that group—popular or up-and-coming musicians, tastemakers, producers, A&R executives responsible for that genre—and make specific, personal relationships. Fostering long-term relationships can pay dividends when individual players become more successful down the road.

In short, make yourself an insider, and put yourself in a position where the people with real cultural leverage are your friends.

## Key Takeaways

Combined income from all digital music products is now over twice that of conventional physical products.

New consumer technology, including affordable, professional recording equipment, has fostered an explosion of smaller scale, lower cost, and independent recording venues.

Affordable consumer technology and proliferating digital platforms has made it much easier for unknown artists to reach and build an audience (assuming they can break through the clutter). The potential for any artist or style of music to become part of, and shape, popular culture is greater than ever before.

The music industry is people- and relationship-driven. There are two major guidelines for engaging with the industry:

- Identify your target audience, and tailor your message to its shared values and collective identifiers. Strive to speak from an insider's perspective, i.e., be a metalhead to the metalheads.
- Identify the key players in that genre—popular or up-and-coming musicians, tastemakers, producers, A&R executives—and cultivate specific, personal relationships that will pay off long-term.

# 3. Social Media

by Thelma Adams with Randal T. Adams IV

Social media consists of any online service devoted to facilitating social interactions—from general websites and applications (or apps) like Facebook, to more specialized websites and apps like Tinder or LinkedIn. The range of formats, intents, functionalities, and cultures unique to each service speaks to how loose and diverse—and dynamic—a category social media really is. Not to mention how popular.

## *The Commons*

Numerous developments contributed to the rise of today’s social media: the collapse of the cost of hardware capacity (known as Moore’s Law); the movement of technology development away from hardware on to software, of which the key pieces were publicly available; free standards; and the slow elimination of any technical requirement for participation, backed by the existing collaborative, rather than hierarchical, tradition of the online worlds users.

It is important to keep in mind, in any discussion of social media and other Internet technologies, that the fundamental architecture—how it is created, stored, connected, and maintained—is based on technology that has been intentionally placed as part of the commons, that is, as a shared public good, accessible and available to all. The fundamental standards—how things work, what the features are, and how they interact—are set and maintained by the (Internet Engineering Task Force) (IETF), which describes itself as a “large open international community of network designers, operators, vendors, and researchers concerned with the evolution of the Internet architecture and the smooth operation of the Internet. It is open to any interested individual.” These are described in Requests For Comment (RFC), maintained and controlled by the IETF while their use is placed in the public domain. Similarly, most of the actual software applications, even operating systems, in use are free and open source, developed and maintained by groups of individuals, including but not primarily consisting of businesses and government, but all placed in the domain of the public good.

These open-source efforts include various flavors of UNIX and its derivatives, such as Linux and BSD. If a web browser or other application can connect and display the content provided by a web server, it is because the browser/application and the server both conform to the open-source standards and even use the actual code made freely available, regardless of whether or not it is made commercially available. Apple OS/X and IOS are in fact derivatives of BSD.<sup>9</sup> Google Android, arguably the most popular environment for smart phones, and increasingly for laptops, is based on Linux. Nothing on the Internet or social media will work without implementing this (so far) freely available intellectual property. Microsoft Windows is the most completely proprietary environment, among those with real market presence, yet all of its interfaces, operating systems, and applications have been forced to conform to public, free standards. All attempts at forcing proprietary methods of communication have failed, or have been implemented in free and open-source versions.

Much of the work on both applications and standards was done by the Free Software Foundation. One of the most important initiatives concerned licensing. The most popular licensing scheme is the GNU General Public License, which is designed to retain ownership by the person or organization who owns the license (to avoid expropriation) while making the use (including code copying and modification) freely available.<sup>10</sup>

Much time and money of these organizations is devoted to stopping expropriation of these common goods, primarily through trademark, patent, and Internet governance legislation and litigation. An early case (1996) was when William R. Dellacroce, Jr. trademarked the name “Linux” (developed and maintained by Linus Torvalds) and proceeded to demand royalties from all users. This was settled via litigation and the lesson was learned. The Linux trademark was assigned to Torvalds. The nonprofit organizations that voluntarily

monitor expropriation are chronically underfunded, and much of the outcome is based on who has the money to lobby or litigate. Organizations deeply involved in maintaining free availability—and thus keeping costs down for potential users and ensuring the viability of individual and community access—include Voices for Internet Freedom, a racial justice coalition organized by Free Press, and Center for Media Justice.<sup>11</sup> The list of important players is long, and includes the Electronic Frontier Foundation and Prometheus Radio Project in the areas of free speech, fair use, continued innovation, privacy, and transparency.

## Devices

The device through which people access this public resource has grown from terminals on large-scale systems, to desktop personal computers, to handheld mobile devices that connect wirelessly, like the smartphone. Physical location (especially via satellite wireless access) has become increasingly irrelevant. Even someone who is homeless—or a stateless refugee, for example—can participate online, as long as he has a smartphone with a data plan.

Aside from freedom of access and use, one of the goals of the people who develop and maintain the software infrastructure of the Internet has been to insure that usability continues across the broadest range of devices, in order to foster access to as wide a population as possible without restriction. Through a fully functional computer that can run full-featured, free versions of all software required (as described above, client or server) can be purchased new for as little \$40 (plus keyboard, mouse, monitor, or TV and Internet connection)<sup>12</sup> or repurposed from discarded equipment. Similar efforts are ongoing with smartphones and tablets.<sup>13</sup> Low-priced hardware devices, using free software, have been developed to extend wireless data and voice access to underserved communities in the developing world with great success.<sup>14</sup> Only recently has a similar pilot project been launched in the US, in Oklahoma City.

## Users

The current global number of Internet users totals about 2.7 billion, with three of the top five populations in BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China, which are grouped together as newly arisen economic powers). Of that total, the US has about 269 million users, or 87.36% of the US population. As a percentage of the population, this puts the US behind (in order): Iceland, Bermuda, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Andorra, The Netherlands, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Finland, Monaco, Bahrain, the Faroe Islands, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, the Pacific island of Niue, Switzerland, Japan, Canada, Qatar, and South Korea. Even given its size and wealth, the US stands third in total WiFi access points, behind South Korea (number one) and the United Kingdom.

The reason to include the global references is to make a point about the relatively sad state of US social media penetration overall. “We’re No. 1”—not exactly. Relying on social media as a carrier for popular culture depends on the level of participation across the whole population. In that regard, the US definitely has room to improve. This is an infrastructure issue (like roads, bridges, healthcare delivery systems, etc.). Finally, social media populations are, in fact, global in reach, and the local US impact is dependent on the entire audience. A good example is Reddit, whose content about US issues is often in the news, but whose population of users is predominantly based in the Asia Pacific region; this has tremendous implications for domestic US social media and communications strategies for social justice. With social media, nation state boundaries fall apart, but the impact remains localized.

Social media use in the US is heavily biased toward the young:

**Social networking time per US user in July 2012, by age group (in hours and minutes per day)**

	PC	Mobile web and app
18-24	11.01	10.15
25-34	9.04	11.05
35-44	8.12	8.46
45-54	8.34	5.2
55-64	6.57	4.06
65+	4.18	3.42

Source: Nielsen

Among all users of social networks, distribution by ethnicity shows a higher proportional representation among African American and Hispanic users than among white or Asian users.

Comparing African American to white users, this higher level of participation holds especially true among people in the 18–29 age group, where white users participate at 90% while African Americans participate at 96%. This also holds at lower income levels: 76% vs. 74% at less than \$30,000 household income and 76% vs. 72% at \$30,000 to \$74,000. At different education levels, African-American participation is higher across the board. (Source: Pew Research Center).

The major area of increase in new users and new methods of access within the US has been driven by increases in smartphones with data access. This has especially been the case with the use of smartphones for social media access (later years projected).

**Number of smartphone social network users in the US from 2011 to 2017 (in millions)**

2011	55.7
2012	82.0
2013	97.9
2014	115.8
2015	131.2
2016	145.9
2017	160.5

Ownership share among African American and Hispanic users was higher over the first three years listed above than among white users:

**Share of adults in the United States who owned a smartphone from 2011 to 2013, by ethnicity**

	2011	2012	2013
White, non-Hispanic	30%	45%	53%
Black, non-Hispanic	44%	49%	64%
Hispanic	44%	49%	60%

Source: Pew Research

Not surprisingly, a study of time spent in 2012 on social networking on mobile, web, and apps showed significantly higher numbers among African Americans (8.2%) and Hispanics (11.13%) than whites (7.47%) or Asian Americans (6.42%). Higher proportions of African Americans and Hispanics used their phones for texting than white users (and at increasing rates).

The most popular social media websites across all users in the US are:

Most popular social media websites in the United States in June 2015 (based on share of visits)	
Facebook	46.50%
YouTube	21.20%
Twitter	45.80%
Reddit	39.20%
Pinterest	15.00%
Tumblr	14.30%
LinkedIn	13.30%
Yahoo! Answers	12.80%
Google Plus	12.80%
Instagram	12.30%

Source: Experian

While among teenagers, a similar but slightly different list:

Social networks accessed by teenagers in spring 2014 and fall 2014		
	Spring 2014	Fall 2014
Instagram	69%	76%
Twitter	63%	59%
Facebook	72%	45%
Pinterest	21%	22%
Tumblr	21%	21%
Other	30%	21%
Google+	29%	12%
Don't use social networks	-	8%
Reddit	7%	7%

Source: Piper Jaffrey, Forbes

Not on the list but still part of the social media network are blogs, which may include some of the sites above.

## The Platforms

### Blogs

Blogs (or web logs) are journals or magazines that combine articles (posts) with, in most but not all cases, a connected comment thread from readers. In addition to what may be a conventional news function, blogs typically add an interactive discussion among readers and the author appended to the article.

The first blogs appeared around 1994, combining features of earlier online communities with underground print media known as zines. Each blog typically has one or a team of owners and, if successful, builds a community of regular readers and commenters who post to the discussion sections of each blog. Between October 2006 and October 2011, the number of blogs worldwide jumped from 35.8 million to 173 million (source: NM Incite). The number has continued to grow exponentially. As of 2014, there were approximately 172 million Tumblr and 75.8 million Wordpress blogs worldwide.

While not releasing figures publically, Blogger is generally acknowledged to be the most popular platform. Currently owned by Google, it is free to users and features a proprietary blogging system hosted at only blogspot.com. Blogs appear as either XXX.blogspot.com or can be linked to an individual domain name: www.XXX.com.

Wordpress uses a system that they maintain as free and open-source software. The entire software stack for running a Wordpress-based site is free and open source, and can be run on either the Wordpress hosting site (free with chargeable enhancement options), www.wordpress.com, or can be downloaded and run on other hosting services or nearly any minimal hardware system (including some obsolete hardware) with Internet connectivity. There is a very large ecosystem of developers offering plugins (including embedded video), enhancements, and themes, including read and edit from smartphones, with both free and commercial available.

Examples of Wordpress blogs include sites by CNN, Time, UPS, Bloomberg, Facebook, 538, Mercedes Benz, Re/Code, Martha Stewart, *Glamour*, Malala Yousafzai, Snoop Dogg, Katy Perry, BBC America, and the Official Site of the Country of Sweden, down to small individual sites with few users. The Wordpress software stack, since it is software-standards based (no proprietary, commercial standards for creation, storage, communications, and display), free and open source has become ubiquitous.

Blogging has become particularly important in the realm of news and politics, creating real impact on national and international levels, starting around 2002, when a political blog published quotes from Trent Lott advocating for Strom Thurmond as presidential material while at a dinner event. This was picked up, researched, reported, and discussed by other blogs, creating a firestorm of public opinion, which resulted in Lott's resignation. This phenomenon of the political blogosphere continues to this day, and blogs with a political focus, as well as their online communities, are now important public players in embedded political life.

## **Facebook**

Facebook introduced the concept of micro-blogs. Micro-blogs are similar to blogs, only with limited feature sets, and limitations to posting options or file sizes. Facebook is a micro-blogging service with social networking extensions. It is a proprietary system that runs entirely on Facebook's hardware infrastructure.

Facebook is arguably the most popular social networking site worldwide (900 million unique monthly visitors), most popular in the United States (46.5% share of total visits), and third most popular (and declining share) after Instagram and Twitter among US teenagers.

Facebook entries come in two formats: profiles and pages.

Profiles are geared toward individuals, a list of "friends" who must be approved manually, with whom you can communicate—via web, e-mail, SMS, and application programming interface (API) used by third-party developers. Profile pages consist of a "wall" for posting messages, a photo gallery, and a page for personal information. There is a limitation on the number of people to whom messages can be sent at one time.

Pages start out resembling a profile. From there one can build a custom layout, content, and even applications reflecting the look and feel across other organization sites and publications. Users have built contests and surveys targeting "fans" (who can be anyone who accesses the pages) for special attention. Page customization can be done via programmers using Facebook-provided APIs, so look, feel, and features are primarily a function of programmer talent, rather than any templates or themes imposed by Facebook. Facebook's real innovation, and its real business value, comes from its advertising. Facebook uniquely allows very precise micro-targeting of its universe of users, based on profiles, posts, history, and friends' profiles, posts, and history, to a degree no other Internet resource can provide. When targeted to friends of current fans, a friend endorsement appears on the ad.

Facebook share among all US Internet users is quite high, though lower among African Americans than overall usage might predict:

#### Percentage of US Internet users who use Facebook in September 2014

Ethnicity	
White, non-Hispanic	71%
Black, non-Hispanic	67%
Hispanic	73%

Source: Pew Research

One area of controversy surrounding Facebook has been around content ownership and the data mining of user's information for reuse by commercial partners. What goes on Facebook is owned by Facebook, stored in their proprietary systems, and while user access to the profile can be controlled by the profile owner" it is still available for Facebook's commercial activities. This can present as intrusive or insecure to Facebook users. The overall topics of security and privacy have become increasingly contentious, in part as a result of Facebook's commercialization of its user info, as well as revelations of government surveillance activities (Snowden revelations), nation-state political and commercial espionage activities, and the actions of private, and sometimes criminal, hacker organizations.

One result of this is that Internet users, especially cell phone users, have increasingly refused to install applications for access based on privacy concerns. This is especially true among African Americans:

#### US app users who have uninstalled or decided not to install an app due to data privacy concerns in 2012

Ethnicity	
Black, non-Hispanic	50%
Total Population	43%
White, non-Hispanic	40%

Source: Pew Research

## Twitter

Twitter is a messaging service with approximately 310 million monthly visitors and is the second most popular social networking site among US teens. Very similar in use to the longstanding Internet Relay Chat service, messages called tweets can contain photos, videos, links, and up to 140 characters of text. They can be created via web, SMS, or third-party software using Twitter APIs. Tweets are published on an account's timeline and to other users who have signed on to follow the originating account. Tweets can be retweeted by a user to that user's followers. Tweets can be searched (and organized) according to embedded hashtags—#<xyzz>. Tweets are public, except for direct messages. Advertising is implemented via Promoted Accounts (which appear as recommendations in user timelines and other recommendations), Promoted Trends, and Promoted Tweets. Each is clearly labeled.

Besides messaging, Twitter can be particularly useful for discovering and listening in on trends, reactions to news, and reactions to actions and positions taken by users and organizations. This can then be taken as an opportunity for direct contact and action on some agenda.



Tweets, even if not directly pointed toward an agenda, have been described as a pathway for “social grooming.” People read and follow tweets to maintain interest in themselves, to discover networked communities that may reflect their own membership (or desired membership) in these communities. While this doesn’t necessarily involve direct engagement, it can prepare the way, and has proven a particularly effective method of recruitment for terrorists like Al Qaeda and ISIS, or sexual predators, on the side of evil;<sup>15</sup> or the Howard Dean (2004) and Obama (2008) presidential campaigns as well as Arab Spring on the side of good.

How many followers an account on Twitter has is often taken as a measure of popularity, importance, and social success.

As in many instances on the Internet, it is hard to tell if the person (or account) is truly representative of someone on the other end, or if it is even a person at all. While this is true for all account-driven Internet activity, it is especially true with Twitter. Twitter Counter (and similar counters) measure raw numbers of tweets and responses. These do not differentiate between actual people and clicks or responses generated by automated, scripted systems, as illustrated below:

<b>Twitter Celebrity Followers (inactive means likely real, but no discernible individual activity)</b>				
	<b>Total (Mill.)</b>	<b>% Fake</b>	<b>% Inactive</b>	<b>% Good</b>
Kim Kardashian	15.9	19%	38%	43%
Nicki Minaj	14.3	24%	39%	37%
Ellen DeGeneres	13.0	27%	40%	33%
Barack Obama	18.8	30%	39%	31%
Justin Bieber	27.0	29%	41%	30%
YouTube	15.4	30%	40%	30%
Lady Gaga	28.7	27%	44%	29%
Taylor Swift	17.7	33%	38%	29%
Justin Timberlake	13.3	27%	44%	29%
Oprah Winfrey	13.3	31%	43%	26%
Rihanna	24.6	35%	40%	25%
Katy Perry	25.4	36%	41%	23%
Twitter	12.7	37%	40%	23%
Britney Spears	19.7	36%	42%	22%
Shakira	17.9	35%	44%	21%

Source: Forbes

Impersonation and fake accounts violate Twitter’s terms of service. Considering the scale at which Twitter operates, policing this must be done largely through algorithms—automated rules that look for particular profiles. Once understood, these profiles can be defeated. Less than \$10 can provide 1,000 followers. \$3-4,000 can provide a million, with gradual buildup over some period of months in order to mask the purchase. Different pricing for these fake zombie accounts purchased through third party agents produces not just different quantities but also different qualities of followers, with characteristics all designed to look real. Individual profile photos can be picked from file libraries of images, along with other profile information. Fake followers can be made to both retweet and follow other accounts, including other fake accounts, all to build the illusion.

While the purpose has mostly been to indicate popularity or significance, another purpose has been to sow confusion and create panic by tweeting false news or information to targeted accounts. Recently, residents of a series of neighborhoods and towns in New Orleans received tweets from a plausible account of a local chemical plant that claimed to be suffering a toxic environmental disaster. Subsequent analysis of the fake account’s tweets pointed to an address in St. Petersburg, Russia. This weaponization of Twitter can be expected to become a commonplace capability in the future.

This is a problem across all social networking services, particularly on Twitter.

Third parties also sell targeted lists of potential followers to organizations for direct messaging. This is the Twitter version of a longstanding practice in direct mail fundraising for nonprofits, where one organization purchases donor lists from another, similar organization.

Among US teenagers, Twitter use is particularly strong among African Americans.

#### Percentage of teenagers in the United States who use Twitter as of March 2015, by ethnicity

White, non-Hispanic	31%
Black, non-Hispanic	45%
Hispanic	34%

Source: Pew Research

Tweets get organized into ongoing threads or conversations around some shared topic or interest via hashtags. Reflecting the high level of participation by African Americans on Twitter, and the ease with which people can candidly communicate in organized ways via the hashtag convention, much of the discussion on Twitter has naturally reflected African-American concerns. This phenomenon has recently been dubbed in discussions in other media as “Black Twitter.” Unfiltered, candid, and broadly available to a large user community, Black Twitter has become increasingly important, not only as a medium for a wide range of popular black issues and concerns, but as a potent tool for effecting change. It is an unmediated voice.

The Movement for Black Lives, which has proven especially influential in response to racially based police brutality, has its origins in the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter. This hashtag was started by three women—Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi, and Patrisse Cullors—after the not-guilty verdict in the trial of George Zimmerman for the murder of Trayvon Martin. While it started as a hashtag, Alicia Garza writes that it was always meant to be a call to action. “Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks’ contributions to this society, our humanity, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression.”<sup>16</sup> The hashtag gained momentum after the police killings of Mike Brown and Eric Garner, when it appeared on signs and gave a newly ignited generation of activists a way to track actions and conversations throughout social media about the movement they were building. While the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag was perpetuated in its early stages by the Black Twitter community, its ability to be used offline by a growing political and advocacy movement, and then put back online attached to photos and content to continue building that movement, is critical to understanding the staying power of both the hashtag and the movement in the world of memes by the minute.

## LinkedIn

LinkedIn, which has 364 million accounts and 255 million unique monthly visitors, started as an online board for posting resumes along with a social media aspect for building networks of people who share interests and career goals. It quickly became a mine of information for recruiters to locate potential employees. More importantly now, it has become the premiere career networking site online. It is available globally, in over 24 languages.

As it has grown, LinkedIn has become as much a social network as a résumé database. Those looking to hire, or simply advertise their organizations as sources of opportunity, have established accounts and actively engage in the social networking aspects. Users message each other, sharing personal messages, tips, articles, and promotional information back and forth. Groups have been established around shared goals and interests with their own messaging streams.

Connections are created by one user sending a request to another, which must be accepted by that user. If a user creates too many requests that are marked “I don’t know” or “SPAM,” that user’s account can be deactivated.

## ***Pinterest***

Pinterest has about 47 million accounts and roughly 250 million unique monthly visitors. It is particularly popular with women (83% of its global users) and is the fourth most popular social networking site among teenagers in the US

Pinterest is another micro-blogging site with strong social networking features. Image-oriented accounts each have a board to which users can pin personal images or images (and links) from other sites and other Pinterest boards. Pinterest users can like and follow other Pinterest users, which then integrate with the users pinfeed. Boards and pins are sorted and searchable by topic and area of interest as well as popularity.

While normal user accounts are free, Pinterest offers fee-based accounts and services for businesses and other organizations. Businesses can use these to create virtual storefronts that have proven to be effective at creating sales, especially in Food, Fashion, and Lifestyle industries.

Pinterest collects user data and resells that to a small group of marketing companies that then aggregate, analyze, and resell this information to others. This has proven particularly useful for following customer attitudes about company products, overall trends, and even likely sales down to the day, hour, and minute. If the company has a strong Pinterest presence, this information can be implemented directly on that site with nearly instantaneous results and continuing feedback.

One unfortunate result of the ease of use and the popularity of commercial use has been the presence of scammers harvesting personal information on Pinterest. Branded images are pinned on boards with their URL attached. These advertise contests, sweepstakes, and surveys with promises of rewards. Clicking on the URL takes the user to a fake site that collects personal information—after which no reward is provided.

## ***Google Plus+***

Google Plus is Google’s social networking site with 300 million active users worldwide and 120 million unique monthly visitors. It is the seventh most popular service among US teenagers.

Google Plus is a social networking overlay for the portfolio of Google services, including YouTube. Users create profiles that are linked to the Google services items the user creates, plus user photo, background, location, work, and education history. Also included are links to other sites, including sites owned by the user or other social networking sites where the user is active, and a space for status updates. Users organize themselves into circles, which are groups of users who share interests. Each user then has a stream where circle members can enter and share text, pictures, videos, and URLs organized by circle.

Hangouts are a free conferencing service for up to ten simultaneous users. This can include scratch pads, Google Docs, screens, video, and live-streaming YouTube videos. Video content created in a Google Hangout is then available as a YouTube video, which can be published on YouTube and made available to YouTube users and subscribers without the ten-person collaboration limit. Hangout conferencing is supported on personal computers, Android phones with front-facing cameras, iPhones, and iPads.

Google Events integrates with Google calendar to allow scheduling and running online events.

Google Locations allows a user to share his location, down to the accuracy of GPS.

Google Local is a service that integrates user business reviews, including text and pictures, with other reviewing services, including Zagat since its acquisition by Google.

Similar to Facebook pages, Google offers Google pages for businesses to use as a marketing and sales tool to Google Plus users.

All these features integrate with the full suite of Google online tools.

## **Tumblr**

Tumblr, with 110 million unique monthly visitors worldwide, is the seventh most popular social media site in the US, and the sixth most popular among US teenagers. It contains over 243 million blogs with 114 billion posts.

Tumblr takes its name from *tumbleblog*, a term used to describe what became the prototype for micro-blogging, anarchaia.org, in 2005.

Tumblr has a strong visual media orientation. Users interact via a dashboard that lets them track their own blog's usage and other blogs they have an interest in; they can also update and edit the content on their own. Posts can then be publicized directly via tweets or status updates on the user's Facebook account. Other users can comment on posts. Posts can be tagged with hashtags to facilitate searches, and, unlike other sites, users are allowed to directly edit the HTML code for a highly personalized look and feel, and to use customer domain names for the blogs.

Tumblr is especially popular among users 35 and under: 28% of users are in the 18–24 age group and 25% are between 25–34. Usage rates continue to decrease by age group. (Source: ComeScore).

Tumblr has a well-deserved reputation in support of free expression, and features some of the edgiest content. Consequently, it also has a reputation for personal pornography—featured on approximately 4% of the 243 million resident blogs. Likewise, it has generated controversy based on sites that support self-harm, from suicide to eating disorders (pro-ana and pro-mia). Recently, Tumblr announced that it would shut down and ban sites promoting self-harm.

Revenue is generated through advertising and promoted sites.

## **Instagram**

Instagram is primarily a method of posting and sharing photos and videos of 15 seconds or less, with hashtags assigned for searching and sorting. They can then be directly posted to other social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Flickr.

Instagram has 100 million estimated global monthly visitors, or 20% of all Internet users worldwide. It is the tenth most popular social network overall in the US, but is far and away the most popular among US teenagers, with 76% of teen Internet users engaged with Instagram.

### **Distribution of Instagram users worldwide as of 1st half 2014, by age**

<b>16-24 years</b>	<b>41%</b>
<b>25-34 years</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>35-44 years</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>45-54 years</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>55-64 years</b>	<b>2%</b>

Source: GlobalWebIndex

In the US, share is highest among African Americans (64%), followed by Hispanics (52%), and white users (50%) (source: Pew Research). The number-one account with the most followers is Beyoncé's. For a raw comparison among top 100 Instagram accounts, by followers, see [socialblade.com/instagram/top/100/followers](http://socialblade.com/instagram/top/100/followers), keeping in mind that raw follower accounts (along with all social media) are fundamentally unreliable in gauging both the actual number of people represented and the depth of influence these accounts have. These numbers (on socialblade.com) say nothing about whether they are really human beings (not machine bots), or how often they are referenced, linked to, or redistributed among individuals or communities.

One additional feature of Instagram that has contributed to its popularity is filters. These are predefined methods for modifying photos to achieve a variety of different looks, attitudes, and moods.

Instagram was acquired by Facebook for \$1 billion in April 2012.

## *Flickr*

Flickr is primarily a digital image and video hosting and distribution site with roughly 65 million monthly unique visitors worldwide. As of April 2011, total photos were around 6 billion and growing, with 3.7 million added per day from approximately 87 million registered users.

Flickr allows users in three categories—Free, Ad Free, and Doublr—to upload pictures and videos from Windows, iOS, Android, and others, and directly from applications like Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom, Windows Photo Gallery, and iPhoto. There they go into the user's photostream and can be archived into albums. From there, titles, descriptions, and hashtags can be applied for searching and sorting; photos can be edited using a Flickr-provided photo-editing tool; and metadata can be changed, including geo location data. From there the albums or individual photos can be embedded in other sites, such as Facebook, Tumblr, or blogs. In the case of photos tagged with geo data, this can include a mapping feature that places the photo in a displayed map.

Flickr allows photos to be tagged as public or private, with private access assigned to individuals or groups. Rights can range from all rights reserved to public domain" with Creative Commons Attribution being the most used. Creative Commons allows any public use as long as the photo is not modified and the photographer is credited. In addition, content is filtered as safe, intermediate, or restricted" with access default restrictions for safe for unregistered users. Other levels require a Yahoo account that allows age restrictions based on Yahoo profile information.

There is a link to Getty Images that allows photographers to submit their photos for use as Getty stock images with opportunities for income. Many major museums use Flickr as an online store. The White House is one such user. There are also links to online photo printing services.

Flickr was acquired by Yahoo for \$25 million in March of 2005.

## *Vine*

Vine is a video-sharing social network with approximately 42 million unique monthly visitors globally. Launched in 2012, it was acquired the same year by Twitter.

Vine allows people to create 6-second video loops on their smartphones, share them with friends via Vine's own social network, or post them to Twitter.

Vine is tremendously popular among 14–20 year olds. Some Vine accounts now have millions of followers and it has become an immensely powerful tool for promotion of artists and commercial brands. Dunkin' Donuts created a Vine video that then became the entirety of a television commercial. Vine videos have been sold in art galleries on a thumb drive as individual works.

Vine's popularity is greatest (as percentage share) among African Americans (31%), followed by Hispanics (24%), and white users (22%) (Source: Pew Research, as of March 2015).

## Reddit

Reddit is most clearly a continuation of the online phenomenon of Bulletin Board Systems that predates the arrival of the Internet for public use. It consists of posts contributed by users to discussion topic areas, called subreddits, in addition to the 50 default areas. The software that runs the site is completely open source. Users are encouraged to contribute to its development, bug fixes, new features, and translations. Users also vote on stories and comments, which causes them to rise or sink within the site.

Reddit is text-based, though graphics and other web content can be embedded in URLs as file references. Any registered user(s) can create a subreddit and moderate it. Discussion is marked by a very wide range of free and open expression that has not failed to create a great deal of controversy. The topics, quantity, and quality of discussion are left in the hands of users. Becoming a registered user is very simple, and a valid e-mail address is not required.

Total page views for Reddit climbed from 37 billion to 71.25 billion from 2012 to 2014, primarily from the Asia Pacific region (as share of active users):

### Distribution of active Reddit users as of 2nd quarter 2014, by region

APAC	61%
North America	21%
Europe	8%
Latin America	7%
Middle East and Africa	3%

Source: GlobalWebIndex

As of January 2016, Reddit had 231 million unique visitors, from 217 different countries, viewing a total of 8 billion pages. By the end of day on February 16, 2016, Reddit had 11,061 communities (or subreddits), consisting of 3.4 million registered users (redditors) casting 29 million votes on posts.

As is typical in the world of social media, Reddit users provide nearly the entire content and set the agenda. It is volunteer-user-contributed content that attracts readers and users to engage with the site. Engagement is very high and extends beyond the online world to local get-togethers for subreddit contributors as well as larger conferences.

Reddit has become known for the somewhat anarchic nature of its user communities. This has sometime created controversy when users have descended to abusive behavior, including uncovering personal information of others (doxing) and launching threats via phone and mail. Still, the administrators of Reddit have been reluctant to step in, doing so only when clear cases of abuse happen. One such example was the posting of nude pictures of Hollywood actresses hacked from online storage accounts. In that case the subreddit was shut down and the user banned.

Reddit usually relies on the community at large to self-police. While this has attracted condemnation from the outside world, it has generally worked well to correct and remedy abusive behavior.

The power of the Reddit community is seen regularly on the web at large by the phenomenon known as the Reddit Hug of Death, when a mention of a website on Reddit has attracted enough interest that the simple increase of traffic by curious Redditors has been enough to shut that site down because of user overload.

The power of individual Reddit users in the governance of the site was shown recently with the forced resignation of Reddit's CEO Ellen Pao. Recently promoted, Pao had started to make changes, including increasing deletion of subreddits she disapproved of as well as posts about her. But she ran into real trouble when she interfered with the popular feature "Ask Me Anything," a kind of Internet town hall where Reddit users can ask questions and engage with public figures who have ranged from Barack Obama, Bill Gates, and Ron Paul to Madonna, Louis C.K., Larry King, and Neil deGrasse Tyson. Pao summarily fired Victoria Taylor, who administered "Ask Me Anything" and was the primary liaison with moderators and other members of the community. Users immediately launched a change.org petition for Pao's removal that quickly acquired 200,000 signatures, while subreddit moderators started taking their subreddits private, removing them from view to other users. While the intemperate, indeed misogynistic nature of some comments about Pao attracted media attention, which portrayed the conflict as one of gender harassment and abuse (Pao's unsuccessful suit against Kleiner, Perkins focused on the same issues), the material issue was one of governance and ownership. The moderators and users won the battle and Pao resigned.

Reddit users are very engaged in political and other causes. This can be something very small, like the seven-year-old girl suffering from advanced Huntington's Disease who, along with her family, was being taunted by neighbors. A local Redditor mentioned this in a post and money was raised by users to pay for a shopping spree at a local toy store. Reddit can also have international reach. Members of the Christianity and Atheism subreddits have engaged in competitive fundraising efforts, exploiting the inherent competition between their points of view and the natural competitiveness of Redditors. The first competition was to see who could contribute the most money to *Medecins San Frontieres* (Doctors Without Borders). In response to Glenn Beck's Fox-news promoted "Restoring Honor" rally, Redditors proposed a restoring truthiness campaign, enlisted Stephen Colbert, and raised \$600,000 to fund his "March to Keep Fear Alive" in Washington, D.C.

Reddit may be the social networking site with the greatest history of social activism, especially with worldwide reach, yet the agenda is driven entirely by the interests and the passions of its users.

## Key Takeaways

There are a few main takeaways. Foremost is that each service under the umbrella of social media is unique and cultures, demographics, and intents vary radically from service to service. Reddit cannot be treated the same as Tumblr, which cannot be treated the same as Twitter, as each has its own mores, customs, and quirks. In that sense, social media is not so much an industry like film or television, with traits and trends generalizing (and “normalizing”) across the industry, but with a series of discrete and oftentimes contradictory websites and services whose one unifying factor is a focus on building and exploiting social interactions.

Also important is the fact that influence in these arenas is not dictated by any content gatekeeper or arbiter, but rather—like celebrity—through the popular endorsement and trust of individuals within the varied cultures and subcultures. Individuals or brands must build up organic connections with the groups in question, with consideration of those unique mores, customs, and quirks that define them, in order to attain influence. A social media site rises or falls based on the commitment of its users, because they not only drive the content—they create it.

A third takeaway, and perhaps the most interesting of all, is that social media is already an incredibly diverse platform. In proportional terms, the most popular forms of social media in America are most used by African Americans and Hispanics and are one of the prime vehicles for giving voice to groups who would be otherwise underrepresented—as the case of #BlackLivesMatter shows.

Predicting future trends is difficult and has a consistent record of failure. Openings for disruption are still there for future services and applications that can upend the current champions. Previous champions (Yahoo, AOL) struggle for relevance, even survival, while well-funded corporate sponsors (Disney, Sony) have been outpaced by shoestring operations that have been more adept at finding some identifying qualities with user populations.

As long as barriers to entry remain as low as they have historically been, either through cost or legal/commercial constraint, and as long as access increases in scope as it drops in cost, the ability of gatekeepers to control and restrict broad-based, popular ownership of social media, as well as the Internet at large, will fail. This has been an ongoing fight since the beginning and is not likely to stop, as recent campaigns over net neutrality and software patents prove.

Freely available software that conforms to publicly available standards, plus the increased commoditization of hardware, has reduced barriers to entry. Top-down models have so far, failed in the face of popular forces, not only regarding participation but even in defining what the social media universe consists of, functionally and technologically.



## Key Facts

Over the course of 2011–2013, Nielson and Pew Research conducted different studies of smartphone usage by ethnicity. Across the board, these studies showed that African Americans and Hispanics had higher levels of smartphone ownership and usage than white users. This was true in several categories: number of hours spent, usage of smartphones for texting, video chatting, and social media.

Social media is a very diverse ecosystem. Proportionally, the most popular forms of social media are most used by African Americans and Hispanics.

At 1.49 billion, Facebook is the world's largest social network, with more monthly active users than WhatsApp (500 million), Twitter (284 million), and Instagram (200 million)—combined.<sup>17</sup>

However, African-American usage of Facebook is lower than that of Hispanic and white users, in part due to privacy concerns.

Twitter is the best site to reach African-American teens: 45% are active on Twitter.

Pinterest is the best site to reach women, who comprise 83% of its global users.

Instagram is the best site to reach American teenagers. It's used by 76% of American teenagers, with the largest share being African American, followed by Hispanic and white users.

## “On Fleek”

by Brian Sheppard

It is not unusual for slang terminology to begin as an expression of independent culture—even for it to serve as an exclusionary vernacular or cryptolect—and later become an expression of pop culture. Sometimes the evolution is gradual, but it can be rapid, particularly when massive social networks are involved.

Take the currently popular phrase “on fleek.” Though its precise meaning is debated, the consensus view is that it generally means perfect. The phrase is at least a decade old, and there are many theories about its origin, from the notion that it comes from 19th-century British poetry to the idea that it is a hybrid of “fly” and “sleek.”

Importantly, the phrase lingered in obscurity until the summer of 2014, when a then-unknown girl from the Chicago suburbs using the handle Peaches Monroe filmed herself touching her eyebrows while saying “eyebrows on fleek.” At that time, the phrase was becoming a salient part of an independent culture, but there were few clues that it would become mainstream. One week later, however, a similarly obscure YouTube user, Kev Jr., used the phrase in a Vine video that he uploaded to his YouTube channel, which received 1.1 million views over the next four months. At this point in time, the expression was beginning its swift move upward into the pop-culture heartland of entertainment and media. It would reach the borderline just two months later, when it became a memorable part of the lyrics in the hit single “Feeling Myself” by pop icon Nicki Minaj. Two weeks after that, the phrase was the focal point of a segment of the *Today* show, leaving little doubt that it had made the journey to pop culture.

Interestingly, “on fleek” has become more versatile in the mainstreaming process. Though it was initially tethered to its eyebrow-related context, the phrase can now be appropriately applied to a variety of settings. It has even taken on other constructions such as “fleeked out” and the insult “off fleek.”

An important question is whether this mainstreaming power can be harnessed or controlled—or even influenced. In the case of “on fleek” the results are mixed. On the one hand, mainstream media creators with a reputation for vetting independent culture have been able to highlight the expression without generating significant backlash (see, for example, *Complex Magazine* or Minaj). On the other hand, major goods producers or media creators without this reputation have become the butt of jokes or criticism. For example, when Taco Bell tweeted “Taco Bell on fleek” and IHOP tweeted “Pancakes on fleek” in October of 2014, many commentators declared the expression dead. That said, these messages garnered many retweets and favorites, leading *Ad Week* to characterize them as winning messages for the companies.

## 4. Video Games

by Michael Ahn

The video game industry is going through explosive growth. What was once a niche experience with limited appeal is now mainstream entertainment, available in many forms, with a wide variety of players. Game content and the ways in which games can be played have evolved, dramatically changing the size and makeup of today's gaming audience.

Video games have been used to generate empathy, or to convey messages or calls to action. This genre of game, called games for change, or cause-based games, features more transactional content that consciously and intentionally attempts to influence, enlighten, and/or call an audience to act. This differs from educational games used for teaching or training (serious games), or games with transformational content that enlighten or subtly promote social awareness (such as positive role models), but are secondary to the core game experience.

This chapter will cover who is playing video games, how, and why they are playing, the most popular established and emerging game experiences, and what's driving their popularity. In doing so, we'll explore the best potential strategies for social justice advocates to use games to create empathy and activate change.

### *Most Americans play video games.*

Video games were once perceived as an activity for teenage boys—a transient activity, to be abandoned in adulthood, or replaced by more socially acceptable activities. The gamer stereotype was of a nonathletic, socially awkward teenage boy. No one aspired to spend time with a gamer—they were not admired, and few willingly identified as one.

For a variety of reasons, this stereotype has become archaic. While they may not think of themselves as gamers, the majority of Americans—over 59% or 150 million people—play video games, defined as interactive entertainment software played on personal computers, mobile phones, tablets, and proprietary devices. (In this report series, the terms “game” and “video game” are interchangeable.) According to the Entertainment Software Association (ESA), a video game trade association comprised of the top game publishers, the average male gamer is 35 years old, and the average female gamer is 43. The stereotype of the lone teenage boy playing video games in front of his TV might still exist, but it has been eclipsed by an explosive growth in audience diversity.

This growth can be attributed to multiple reasons, including wider appeal of content, more platforms, more ways of experiencing games, and more reasons to play.

But because much of this growth has happened fairly recently (the last two decades), the content in video games has not evolved as rapidly. In fact, video games are only just coming out of the phase of spectacle, wherein people experience a medium simply for the medium itself, as opposed to the content the medium has to offer. This trailing innovation is normal for evolving media. Early films were simple and devoid of meaning; audiences paid simply to witness the spectacle of moving images projected on screen. It took a decade for storytellers to invent contextual devices specific to the medium of film—montage, deep focus, audio layering, and the myriad methods used by filmmakers to share their vision.

The explosive growth of video games and the appeal to a wider demographic has made video games a mainstream medium, and therefore a powerful vehicle to build community and generate empathy.

## Women are playing video games.

Much of the growth of the video game audience comes from a demographic that heretofore eschewed the idea of playing video games: women. According to the ESA, 48% of gamers are female. This has been a steady upward trajectory, with no slowing in sight. While there have always been women gamers, much of this growth can be attributed to two things: the proliferation of computers and devices at home and in the workplace and the kinds of games offered on these devices. Computers became more mainstream as a tool for communication, research, consumption, and entertainment through the Internet, and usage by women skyrocketed. Additionally, the advent of portable laptops, tablets, and phones gave women opportunities to utilize the devices for entertainment on the fly.

So where we once had a very specific group of people playing video games, we now have an equal number of women, and a broader social spectrum.

## Kids are growing up with video games.

More children are growing up with a complete awareness of devices and video games. The uses of devices and gaming to educate and entertain is happening at an earlier age. The ESA reports that 26% of gamers are under 18, and 74% of elementary school teachers use digital games in the classroom. In this same survey, 56% of parents agreed that video games positively affect their children. The normalization of video games and game devices means that ensuing generations will focus more on the content than the spectacle, and presents opportunities for a receptive audience to interact with causes and their messages.

Dr. Randy Kulman, president of LearningWorks for Kids, studies the use of video games for improving academic performance and learning skills, and writes in his blog, *What is Digital Play? Why is it Important?*, “Digital play is no longer solitary: approximately 70% of all digital engagement is social. Digital play also contributes to the acquisition of 21st century skills by preparing children for future roles, developing communication and collaboration skills, nurturing creativity, and providing an opportunity for digital-literacy skills.”

Clark Quinn, who explores computer- and simulation-based learning in his book *Engaging Learning*, describes acquiring knowledge as “hard fun,” noting the importance of feeling connected to or engaged with what one is learning.

According to Kulman, “When learning has a ‘play’ component, whether through gamification (applying game design and game mechanics to non-game applications to make them more fun and engaging, such as reward points for using your credit card or getting ‘badges’ for completing club activities) or for the simple joy or excitement of the activity, learning is likely to be enhanced. This is why educators and psychologists are so enamored with using games as a tool for learning.”

In “Children’s Motivations for Video Game Play in the Context of Normal Development,” a study conducted by Cheryl Olson, the top reasons children gave for playing video games were that they are “fun, exciting, and have the challenge to figure things out.” Olson also found that 45% of boys and 29% of girls said they play video games “to get my anger out.” Children in the same study reported that they played violent video games to “relieve stress, to be rebellious, and to test the limits of acceptable behavior in a safe environment.”

## Gamergate and female role models in games.

The inclusion of women in games has been contentious at times. In 2013, Zoe Quinn, an independent game developer, released an interactive fiction game called *Depression Quest*. After positive reviews, members of the gaming community, claiming Quinn had manipulated reviewers into giving her positive reviews, began sending hate mail to her. Her attempt to defend herself in social media caused a greater backlash, and soon ballooned into a campaign of misogyny and harassment on game forums, chat groups, and game websites from primarily anonymous gamers. Quinn and those defending her—especially women—were subject to virulent abuse, including publishing personal information (doxing), hacking into personal online accounts, and threats of rape and death. Said Quinn, “I used to go to game events and feel like I was going home ... Now it’s just like ... are any of the people I’m currently in the room with ones that said they wanted to beat me to death?”<sup>18</sup> Her comment is not hyperbolic; in fact, gamers online routinely threatened her with bodily harm.

The controversy surrounding Quinn’s harassment came to be known as “Gamergate,” and inspired a Twitter hashtag by the same name that gamers used to discuss issues of sexism and progressivism in video game culture. Steve Place, vice president at GEER, a New York and DC-based strategy agency, coordinates high-level campaigns on empowering women in the video game industry. Place has followed Gamergate closely and feels that the rapid growth and a lack of institutional communication left the industry vulnerable for such behavior. “I don’t think the industry knew how to respond. There needed to be a coordinated effort to really push back and look at the systemic issues that were causing these problems. Widespread industry action was delayed because this wasn’t something any community—gaming or otherwise—had experienced before to this magnitude. It became a very vitriolic situation that spilled over into the real world.”

According to Place, the proper long-term solution is empowerment at every level: “The gaming industry needs to increase diversity across the board. This will create better companies, better communities, and better products. When you have more people with different perspectives working on a game, those perspectives will shine through and the end result will be more naturally inclusive.”

Place adds that during Gamergate, game companies were fearful of alienating their audience by taking sides. Place felt that it was a lost opportunity. “From my perspective, the vocal minority of negative community members were like weeds that needed to be plucked to let the flowers to grow. When you are a company that’s been staring at a bed of weeds for so long, you don’t recognize your true potential. Become more inclusive and you’re going to see that potential, build better communities, and ultimately make more money.”

## ***Game playing is impacting other forms of entertainment.***

According to the ESA, the popularity of video games has become so great that it has led players to reduce their time spent on other forms of entertainment. 39% of gamers say they are watching less television. 40% are seeing fewer movies in theaters, and 47% are spending less time watching movies at home.

Game-playing activity does not parallel other media—watching TV, going to the movies, reading, and listening to music are all experienced passively, whereas video games require player input. However, the content of video games (narrative, theme, characters) is not nearly as rich. It could be extrapolated that this transition from watching traditional media to game playing fulfills an additional need, which leads us to the need to understand why people play video games.

## ***Watching video games has become a form of entertainment.***

Incredibly, 27 million people worldwide watched the *League of Legends* World Championship in 2014, eclipsing the World Series (15.8 million) and the NBA Finals (15.5 million).

There are hybrid entertainment forms that blend game playing with viewing. Games are also now a booming spectator sport and there are leagues and competition for game playing and viewing, called eSports. Major League Gaming has 9 million registered users and an online game channel, TwitchTV, that hosts live events of top gamers competing for prize money. Viewership has hit over 2 million views. YouTube gaming channels bring in more than 3.5 billion views each month. Seventy-one million people watch competitive gaming worldwide, a viewership that eclipses traditional professional sports events in the US. ESports viewership has increased eightfold in the past four years; and top eSports athletes enjoy sponsorships, prize money, and other accoutrements typical of celebrity athletes.

What are the factors driving this growth in gaming and the change in behavior of gamers?

## ***Games can be played on more devices.***

More platforms are available for playing, but not to the exclusion of older platforms. Games can be played on phones and tablets, but gamers are still enjoying consoles, hand-held devices, and personal computers.

The ESA reports that gamers still use computers to play—62% of gamers do so, including professional eSports competitors—followed by game consoles (56%), smartphones (35%), tablets (31%), and dedicated handheld systems (21%). (Note that percentages reflect gamers playing on more than one platform.)

It's becoming standard practice for games to be developed on multiple platforms, and game engines such as Unity enable multi-platform distribution. Therefore, a game at launch can call on a tremendous user base.

There are, however, challenges to this form of distribution, including scaling the game to play on the variety of screen sizes and resolutions to take advantage of each platform's unique capabilities. For example, a game may use a phone's GPS to alert other players of his/her location, allow PC users to type messages, or make use of a console's joystick layout for easier input. A well-designed game will play across many platforms, but will be tailored to each device's unique capabilities.

Mobile (phone and tablet) is the fastest growing platform, and is expected to overtake console games. Mobile game sales have already hit \$25 billion in sales in 2014, a 42% growth from 2013 sales. Smartphone and tablet game sales are expected to reach \$30.3 billion in 2015.

Wearable devices such as the Apple Watch, the Fitbit, and Google Glass (should it, or something like it, return to the marketplace) have the potential for gaming, but the devices are too new and have not yet achieved enough of a foothold in the market to warrant many developers and publishers making games for them. The challenge for all developers and publishers is to build to a technology that is mature enough to reach their audience, but is not yet oversaturated. Designing an experience on a mature device with an established audience will incur less overall risk.

### *There are more types of play.*

Games have moved from solitary experiences to social and massively multiplayer experiences. Gamers spend an average of 6.5 hours per week playing with others online. Over half of today's gamers play with others. Game playing is used to interact with family; 21% of gamers play with family members, and 16% of gamers play games with their parents.

### *Modes of play include:*

**Single player:** Playing alone against the game program (such as *Tetris* or *Solitaire*).

**Head-to-head:** Playing against each other in real time (such as a fighting game) or turn-based (casual games like *Words with Friends*).

**Massively Multiplayer:** Playing in real-time either in support of each other against a computer-controlled adversary, or against each other, in an open world (such as in *World of Warcraft*). Players are given the option to select missions or perform a myriad of activities, and can choose to interact with whomever they want.

**Cooperative Multiplayer:** Playing together to defeat a software-controlled adversary, as seen in tactical shooters, fantasy combat, and sports games.

Some games offer many modes of play. For example, in *Minecraft* players can play cooperatively in real time. First-person shooters have single-player mode, and also online cooperative and head-to-head competition. Single player games can feature leaderboards where players passively compete for high score.

It's also important to note that games involve two forms of play: the creation of chaos vs. the creation of order. Some games reward players for conquering or creating chaos or destruction, such as shooting or fighting games, while others reward order, such as matching games (*Candy Crush*), *The Sims*, and *Diner Dash*. Some games are virtual environments where players can choose their own mode of behavior, such as *World of Warcraft* and *Grand Theft Auto*.

These modes of play have existed as long as video games themselves, and give players a very wide range of experiences. A player can choose from a range of modes of play, from the isolation of a single-player experience on their phone, to the wide-open social worlds of Massively Multiplayer online games. Gamers have the freedom to choose how and when they interact with others.

Game genres also overlap in description and goals. For example, the genre of Social Games means just that—games that encourage or are built around group gameplay. Yet many other games have social elements, such as leaderboards and tournaments.

Here are the most popular genres of video games according to the ESA, with percentages of market share on each platform:

### **Console video games**

(Games played on dedicated game systems such as Xbox, Playstation, and Nintendo, such as *Super Mario Brothers*, *Call of Duty*, *Wii Sports*):

<b>Strategy</b>	4%
<b>Sports</b>	13%
<b>Shooters</b>	21%
<b>Role playing</b>	9%
<b>Racing</b>	5%
<b>Action</b>	28%
<b>Adventure</b>	6%
<b>Arcade/casual</b>	1%
<b>Family/children</b>	3%
<b>Fighting</b>	6%

### **Computer games**

(Games played on PCs that usually take advantage of a dedicated keyboard and Internet access, such as *Kerbel Space Program*, *Her Story*, *Final Fantasy*):

<b>Strategy</b>	37%
<b>Shooter</b>	6%
<b>Action</b>	2%
<b>Adventure</b>	4%
<b>Casual/arcade</b>	25%
<b>Role playing</b>	20%
<b>Family</b>	1%

### **Wireless**

(Games played on iOS and Android phones and tablets, such as *Angry Birds*, *Fruit Ninja*, *Candy Crush Saga*, *Clash of Clans*):

<b>Social games</b>	31%
<b>Puzzle/board/card/game show games</b>	14%
<b>Action games</b>	5%

### **There are more reasons to play.**

Different devices and different modes of play have expanded the types of games people enjoy.

Wireless devices (phones and tablets) have led to an explosion of social games and a resurgence in popularity of puzzles and board games. These games have in turn led to audience appeal, bringing women and younger and older people to gaming.



People play games for a myriad of reasons. Some games are designed to immerse players in an alternate reality. Players take on roles—super hero, athlete, tycoon—to accomplish a simulated goal, such as to save a city from destruction, win a championship, or construct buildings. Casual games are more ethereal. Players don't take on a role, and their tasks are more abstract, such as to collect pieces, match colors, and/or find hidden objects.

All games share certain design goals—players should be captivated, compelled, and challenged. The player must be given a reason to continue, with obstacles that present challenges but can be ultimately overcome. This is no different from the storyline of a TV show or movie, except that the player has agency—he/she controls how the challenge is to be met. The player is the protagonist or controls the protagonist of the game. This is key, and it's why many feel that games are great vehicles for activism, education, and social change.

A common perception about gaming is that it is “empty calories,” that people play games to kill time.

But is that what is really happening? In fact, games simulate not only roles (being a soldier, race car driver, etc.) but they simulate accomplishment. A high score, saving the princess, clearing the screen, all—regardless of the game's social value—give the player the illusion of accomplishment.

Great games allow players to create a narrative. They can tell a story of how they defeated the dragon or went from losing to winning. There is a chance of joining narratives to the user experience.

Jane McGonigal, director of Game Research and Development at the Institute for the Future, in her book *Reality Is Broken*, says:

I believe that, for most gamers, playing games is, surprisingly not a waste of time—but rather quite productive. Gameplay may not contribute to the Gross Domestic Product ... but scientific research shows that gameplay does contribute to our quality of life, by producing positive emotions (such as optimism, curiosity, and determination) and stronger social relationships (when we play with real-life friends and family—especially if the game is cooperative). And for gamers who prefer tough, challenging games, they can build up our problem-solving resilience—so we learn faster from our mistakes, and become resilient in the face of failure.

McGonigal argues that our workplaces could learn a lesson or two from the consequences and rewards systems in gaming. “The truth is this: in today's society, computer and video games are fulfilling *genuine human needs* that the real world is currently unable to satisfy,” said McGonigal. “Games are providing rewards that reality is not. They are teaching and inspiring and engaging us in ways that reality is not. They are bringing us together in ways that reality is not.”

There is opportunity in this. Connecting real-world issues with games can give players the sense of a real accomplishment, awareness, or mastery of a skill or situation.

However, making games that affect change has been challenging.

### ***The challenges of using games to evoke change***

Making a game fun is enormously challenging. Adding messaging or calls to action to the experience and measuring its effectiveness presents even greater challenges. The nonprofit organization Games for Change worked with evaluation experts to define a theory of change around games with intentional messaging, and came to the conclusion that, “research on video games' impact is frequently unattainable, costly, or an afterthought. Yet, demonstrating effectiveness is an essential step for scaled adoption.”

So why do it?

Quite simply, games have the potential to convey a message and create empathy amongst a very large audience.

Games are interactive and require player immersion. People playing games stare intently at images, concentrate on audio and visual (and in some games, tactile) feedback, and must respond to game events. Because of this feedback loop, many game developers and activists believe that if done correctly, a game infused with deliberate messaging can influence players on a much deeper level than more passive media.

But this feedback loop must be compelling to the player. In other words, it must be fun enough to play. The challenge of activism and social justice advocacy is to engage the indifferent and involve the un-invested. Fun, compelling gameplay can serve as a bridge to new audiences. But a game that isn't fun is a barrier even to those who might be receptive to the message. As a result, the core game experience often takes a back seat to the innovation required to add messaging to games.

It's important to understand what players are asked to do in cause-based games, and how compelling the activity is to them.

A game player's participation—what they control in the game—is known as agency. This includes tasks the player must perform and the role he/she plays that frames the agency. For example, in a shooting game, the player's agency is shooting at enemy soldiers while moving to avoid getting shot by them, and the role the player plays is a soldier in a battle. Thus, players control how they move, what and how accurately they shoot, and why they are doing it. This is the player's agency.

The following are types of agency in cause-based games, and the challenges to each type:

**Simulation:** The player simulates being a character, such as a soldier, athlete, fighter, etc. In this experience, the player takes on a role or persona and simulates an experience (pro athlete, robot, city builder). For cause-based games, the experience is literally “put yourself in my place.” For example, players are street vendors in *Cart Life*, or play as an immigration officer in *Papers, Please*.

**Challenge:** Cause-based games that simulate a problem will be less appealing to the player, unless the game provides a viable outcome, a win for the player. For example, *Papers Please* simulates the monotony and stress of being an immigration officer, which may be enlightening, but is not fun.

**Transmedia/Interactive Documentary:** In this experience, the player generally remains himself/herself (but may be asked to assume a generic role, such as reporter or relief worker) and explores an issue, with some control over how he/she views the content. There is usually a cursory goal for the player to achieve, but the game's emphasis is on the narrative. Cause-based games in which the player interacts with the content include *Half the Sky*, *Fort McMoney*, *Phone Story*, *Inside the Haiti Earthquake*, and *End Homeland Guantanamo*.

**Challenge:** The design must make the interactivity relevant to the content. If it's not, then the game's interactivity will be pointless, and the content is better off being presented in a linear way. Also, the player's required interactivity assumes that the player is interested in the content. This tends to attract those who are already aware of and/or engaged by the subject matter.

**Enabling:** The player remains himself/herself, but helps an onscreen character accomplish an abstract goal. Examples of this in mainstream games are helping Flo the waitress run a restaurant, helping Mario and Luigi save the Princess, and helping the Angry Birds defeat the pigs. Obstacles and worlds are often more symbolic than realistic. *Never Alone* is a game with this style of play, without an overt cause or message but instead more subtle goals of shifting perception, de-biasing, improving public opinion of and behavior toward indigenous people—girls in particular.

Challenge: While the game might be popular through compelling gameplay, it's difficult to measure the impact of such subtle messaging. It's hard to know if players are engaged by the gameplay alone, and how much content they are retaining.

Because of these challenges, cause-based games have not attracted the audiences that mainstream games routinely achieve. Instead, they appeal to those already familiar with the content. As with other media, the risk of cause-based games is that they are not being played by a persuadable middle, but are instead preaching to the converted. And while social-impact documentaries, the film corollary to cause-based games, can impact mainstream media through press coverage, cause-based games get little to no exposure, and therefore make little impact. Games such as *Half the Sky* and *Papers, Please* receive critical acclaim and some media interest, which treats them as noble curiosities, but they ultimately aren't able to attract an audience comparable to their mainstream peers.

In an admirably candid and transparent performance review of their game *America 2049*, the NGO Breakthrough wrote that "The biggest disappointment was that the game attracted only 20,000 players ... even with promotion ... (it) required a pretty significant investment of time, over 12 weeks, with the challenge (or frustration) of getting through a variety of hurdles ... you're asking gamers to indulge you; they know there's a message and that's not why they're playing."

By comparison, here are the top 20 free-to-play games currently on Facebook, with their monthly active users:

1	Candy Crush Saga	50,000,000
2	Dragon City	10,000,000
3	8 Ball Pool	10,000,000
4	Pet Rescue Saga	10,000,000
5	Subway Surfers	10,000,000
6	Criminal Case	10,000,000
7	Farm Heroes Saga	10,000,000
8	Hay Day	10,000,000
9	Clash of Clans	10,000,000
10	Trivia Crack	10,000,000
11	Words With Friends	5,000,000
12	Texas HoldEm Poker	5,000,000
13	Pool Live Tour	5,000,000
14	FarmVille 2	5,000,000
15	Top Eleven Be a Football Manager	5,000,000
16	CityVille	1,000,000
17	Marvel: Avengers Alliance	1,000,000
18	Angry Birds Friends	1,000,000
19	Diamond Dash	1,000,000
20	Tetris Battle	1,000,000

According to GameChitah.com, *Backyard Monsters*, currently the 100th most popular game on Facebook, averages 100,000 active users every month.

Breakthrough's report concluded, "It was in a situation of diminishing returns in terms of using games to expose or attract new audiences to its issues, either directly through the game itself or through media coverage, at the level of investment it was prepared to make."

It's also challenging to measure the game's impact or success. In 2015, Games for Change conducted a study of the impact of using games for activism and concluded that unclear goals, inconsistent ways of measuring impact, and the innovative quality of the medium make it difficult to measure the effectiveness of the games.

For more detail on recently published cause-based games, describing their goals, designs, and reception, please refer to the end of this chapter.

## *Never Alone (Kisima Ingitchuna)*

*Never Alone* is a puzzle-platformer video game by E-Line Media (an entertainment and educational games publisher that partners with academic researchers, foundations, government agencies, and social entrepreneurs) and Upper One Games. The player completes puzzles in a story based on Alaskan indigenous stories told in eight chapters. Its story is based on restoring balance in "eternal blizzard" by visiting its source. The game is based on the intergenerational transference of wisdom.

The game was developed in conjunction with the Cook Inlet Tribal Council, a nonprofit organization that works with indigenous groups living in Alaska's urban areas. The Council met with E-Line Media and generated the idea for *Never Alone* as part of a series that "shares, celebrates, and extends culture." It is intended both to share the stories of native culture as entertainment and to revitalize interest in Alaskan indigenous folklore.

According to Michael Angst, co-founder and CEO of E-Line Media, *Never Alone* was unique in that it was produced and marketed to win over the game audience. According to Angst, the path for a successful cause-based game is to create "an alignment of impact objectives with financial return. You have to align your business strategy in that if you are successful with the brand values you have, you will have an impact and make money." Says Angst, "We believe that gamers look for gaming experiences that are entertaining but also expose them to new themes, perspective, and concepts that they have not experienced before."

According to Angst, this means leaving the game making to game companies. "Games, like any other medium, aren't made institutionally: they're made by creatives. The way to encourage or stimulate more meaningful entertainment in the games space is to empower those inclined to be successful." Angst believes that doing so will lead to bigger game developers and publishers taking notice. "Sony and Microsoft aren't idiots: they recognize that as we as a game industry literally approach a billion players, having diversity in their content is a good thing. They would love to support folks who can demonstrate commercial viability in a diverse way."

*Never Alone* received mixed reviews but has sold well enough to warrant a game expansion pack, released in 2015.

## Strategies for effectiveness with games and activism

Developers of cause-based games face a multitude of challenges:

- Games might have limited appeal and end up preaching to the converted.
- Games can be costly and time-consuming to produce.
- Games require player commitment to learn and master.
- It is difficult to measure the impact of a game.

Therefore, the challenge is to make a fun, cause-based game fairly inexpensively and quickly, with wide appeal and measureable impact.

In fact, a model of such activism does exist. It is not a game, but it can be applied to games: the charity fun run.

Fun runs are sponsored charity events with participants doing an action that they already enjoy. Runners are sponsored by businesses, friends, and family, or else pay to participate. They join a community in the event, and they can compete, though they are not required to. Participants don't have to learn how to experience the event, nor must they be particularly good at it. Money and awareness are raised through this communal activity.

A video game can succeed in the same manner. Here are the steps to doing so:

### 1. Use an existing game mechanic for core gameplay.

Core gameplay is what the play does moment-to-moment. In a shooter, it's running around and shooting at enemies. In *Solitaire*, it's matching cards against each other. Use an existing game mechanic for core gameplay will clear two major challenges:

- The production team won't have to spend time designing the core gameplay.
- Players will automatically know how to play.

Examples of existing game mechanics also include:

- Match 3 gameplay (used by *Bejeweled* and *Candy Crush*)
- Mahjongg (matching tiles to remove them from a board)
- Hidden object (finding objects embedded in an image)
- Word Search
- Platform running

Example: Using a humanitarian example for ease of illustration, let's say we want to make players aware of a drought in South Sudan. *Solitaire* is the core game mechanic: each card players move off screen helps the residents of a village.

### 2. Design the metagame around the cause.

The metagame gives the player a sense of progression, and a reason to continue playing the core game.

Examples of metagames are:

- A map on which the player advances.
- A story that's revealed.
- Virtual money that can be used to buy items for an avatar or house.
- Items to complete a collection.
- Keys to open doors to a house.

The cause-based content is integrated in the metagame. Players are rewarded for progression. This can be tied to the cause with virtual or real-life goals. This gives players enough familiarity with fun gameplay, but allows messaging and activism at the metagame.

Example: With the drought game, the metagame is building a well for the village. As the player moves cards off screen, he/she sees a well being built. Every day the player returns, he/she sees more of the well being built.

### ***3. Enable the players to help actual people.***

Players respond better when they are helping a virtual character succeed (“Help Mario save the Princess!” “Help Flo run her diner!”). This desire to help and nurture is very powerful. If the players are aware of who is being affected, it will enable them to care more about the cause.

Example: Show the faces of the villagers on the cards, and the location of the village on the game background. As the game loads, show profiles of the people they are helping.

### ***4. Make the game scalable.***

The game should be engaging with 50 people playing, or 50 thousand, or millions. The core game and metagame can grow with the audience. A fun run is pleasurable with 50 people running together, but can scale up with more participants. A cause-based game should have this same capability.

Example: As the player completes the well-building metagame, he/she sees the scores of other players accomplishing the goal. The player can join forces or compete with the others. This is the player’s core community. The game may start with only one well to build, but it can scale up to more villages, more wells, and other infrastructure. But the core game experience is consistently engaging.

### ***5. Create urgency and community with a deadline.***

In order to create urgency and community, a deadline should be enforced.

Participants of a fun run must run on a certain day and time. It makes the event exciting: people gather, volunteers support, and organizers share information. A game must have same sense of urgency and community. Players shouldn’t need to play at the same time, but they should need to beat a deadline, which could be days, weeks, or even a months-long campaign.

Example: In the drought game, players are told they have two weeks to accomplish the metagame of building the well, or the crops will be lost. A timer is presented each time they log on to play, and they are sent messages or texts updating them on the village.

### ***6. Enable teamwork, benign competition, and fame through community.***

Community and fame drive players to get involved. Players are shown on leaderboards, and collect virtual badges for accomplishments. They become famous in the online world. Players can create teams or clubs, where cooperative play completes the metagame more quickly.

Therefore, audiences are playing games they love to accomplish goals that give them fame and satisfaction. Example: The players are told that the more people playing, the faster the well will be built. This gives the players a reason for sharing and making the experience viral. A leaderboard shows the top players, which updates daily.

## 7. Unite players, foundations, and sponsors to the cause.

The costs of a charity fun run are covered by the foundation, a sponsor, and the players themselves. The sponsoring business builds goodwill through association, and attracts new customers. Everyone is working together.

Example: The well building is sponsored by Target, and players can make direct donations to build the well faster, or get better *Solitaire* cards. Everyone is working together to build the wells.



We close this chapter with a final thought from Mike Angst, CEO of E-Line Media, who believes that finding socially minded game makers is more feasible now than ever.

“Where foundations can be helpful is not trying drive change top-down but creating some bridges for the high-risk funding that it takes to take something that is close to being successful and make it successful. They can look to see the good work that people are doing so that it is used more extensively and for higher impact. It’s much easier to make meaningful and lasting cultural impact through popular media with the best entertainment than it is to help kids learn algebra through games.”

### Key Takeaways

The explosive growth of video games and the appeal to a wider demographic has made video games a mainstream medium. Over 59% of Americans play video games on personal computers, mobile phones, tablets, and proprietary devices.

Children are growing up playing video games, and video games are becoming a popular education tool because the fun of gameplay fosters engagement and enhances learning.

Cause-based video games have enormous potential to convey a message, build community, and generate empathy amongst a very large audience. Fun, compelling gameplay can serve as a bridge to new audiences.

While there are a number of cause-based video games on the market, none have really broken through to a mainstream audience. Part of the problem is that most aren’t very fun to play and even those interested in the cause lose interest in the game.

Creatives at game companies should be empowered to make cause-based games. They’re the ones who know how to design fun, compelling games.

Game development is expensive. Social justice advocates might consider partnering with game companies to create cause-based games that will have mainstream appeal ... or simply infuse social justice values into commercial games.

There is currently no effective system for measuring the impact of cause-based video games, or the socially relevant content in commercial games. Social justice funders might consider investing in efforts to support such research and evaluation efforts.

## More examples of cause-based video games

**Cart Life** (Richard Hofmeier; 2011): Players control one of three characters, each of whom has a different street vending job: Vinny sells bagels, Andrus runs a newspaper stand, and Melanie sells coffee from a cart. While at their stalls, players interact with customers by selling them items, and can manage their stall by selecting stock, setting prices, and buying new equipment. Players must also look after the characters' day-to-day lives, including having adequate food, drink, and sleep. Each character has unique situations to address. Melanie, for example, has a daughter who she walks to and from school. PC Gamer said the game portrayed "a convincing, empathetic set of portraits." Digital Spy found the pixel art to complement the game's portrayal of the mundane aspects of life.

**Dys4ia** (Anna Anthropy; 2012): Anna Anthropy, alternatively Auntie Pixelante, developed this game to recount her experiences of gender dysphoria and hormone replacement therapy. Touching on the frustrations in taking estrogen and transitioning from her assigned sex to correspond with her gender, the game documents a six-month period in her treatment via a succession of mini-games that reflect on gender politics, identity, and personal development. Anna Anthropy remarked, "This was a story about frustration—in what other form do people complain as much about being frustrated? A game lets you set up goals for the player and make her fail to achieve them. A reader can't fail a book. It's an entirely different level of empathy." *The Guardian* commented that *Dys4ia* offered "a touching and witty insight into an experience many may never even consider in detail" and that the game "does much to prove the power of games to communicate complex concepts through playful interactions."

**Fort McMoney** (National Film Board of Canada / David Dufresne; 2013): A transmedia experience combining a web documentary with a strategy game about Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada, and Athabasca oil sands development, directed by David Dufresne. The documentary uses interactive game elements to allow users to decide the city's future and attempt to responsibly develop the world's largest oil sands reserves. The game consists of three episodes, each played in real-time over a 4-week period. Users decide on the virtual future of the city, while exploring the social, economic, political, and cultural history of Fort McMurray. Players virtually walk around the city, meet residents, and ask them questions. Each week, they vote in referendums and surveys that will affect the city's virtual future, engage in debates, and attempt to win other players over to their "worldview" in order to influence the city's development.

**Papers, Please** (Lucas Pope; 2013): A puzzle game developed by indie game developer Lucas Pope, *Papers, Please* focuses on the emotional toll of working as an immigration officer, deciding whom to let in and whom to exclude from entering the fictional dystopian country of Arstotzka. The player inspects arrivals' documents and uses an array of tools to determine whether the papers are in order, with the purpose of keeping undesirable individuals, such as terrorists, wanted criminals, or smugglers, out of the country. The player may be challenged with moral dilemmas as the game progresses, such as allowing the supposed spouse of an immigrant through despite lacking complete papers at the risk of accepting a terrorist into the country. The game uses a mix of randomly generated entrants and special encounters. *The New Yorker* wrote: "Grim yet affecting, it's a game that may change your attitude the next time you're in line at the airport." Some critics, however, reacted against the paperwork gameplay. *Good Game's* reviewer found the game "tedious," commenting, "while I found the issues that arose from the decisions you are forced to make quite interesting, I was just so bored that I just struggled to go from one day to the next. I was torn between wanting to find out more, and just wanting it all to stop."



**Phone Story** (Molleindustria; 2011): *Phone Story* is a game for smartphone devices that attempts to provoke a critical reflection on its own technological platform. Under the shiny surface of our electronic gadgets, behind its polished interface, hides the product of a troubling supply chain that stretches across the globe. *Phone Story* represents this process with four educational games that make the player symbolically complicit in coltan extraction in Congo, outsourced labor in China, e-waste in Pakistan, and gadget consumerism in the West. All of the revenues go directly to workers' organizations and other nonprofits that are working to stop the horrors represented in the game. *Android Rundown* said that *Phone Story* was "not that entertaining or enlightening," criticizing the game's short length and repetitive gameplay. *Pocket Gamer* was more positive in reference to the game's educational content, stating that it encouraged them to read up on the issues raised, but were similarly critical with the game's simplistic gameplay and short length.

**End Homeland Guantánamos** (Breakthrough; 2008): Users assume the role of an undercover journalist doing an investigative series on Immigration detention and the true story of immigrant Boubacar Bah, who died in US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody under questionable circumstances in 2007. The user experiences a 3D walk-through tour of the facility led by a guide, during which they encounter video stories about true situations as experienced by former detainees.

**Inside the Haiti Earthquake** (PTV Productions; 2010): An online simulation that allows users to experience the aftermath of Haiti's January 2010 earthquake as a survivor, aid worker, or journalist. The game is the online companion to the *Inside Disaster Haiti* documentary. Funded by Canadian Media Fund (CMF), Bell New Media Fund, and TVO, *Inside the Haiti Earthquake* is designed to challenge assumptions about relief work in disaster situations. This is not a game. Nobody is keeping score. By playing the role of an aid worker, journalist, and survivor, you will be given the opportunity to commit to various strategies, and experience their consequences. *The Columbia Journalism* review writes, "With stunning footage and tricky decision-points, it's a simulation that not only shows the reality of the chaos in Haiti after the earthquake, but also reinforces the fact that there are no easy solutions to it, whatever one's role may be."

**Half the Sky** (Nicholas Kristof/Frima Studio/Show of Force/Games for Change; 2012): A transmedia experience linking Kristof's book with a Facebook game in which the tasks and issues portrayed have a real-world equivalent in donations and social action opportunities. Players embark on a global journey that begins in India and moves on to Kenya, Vietnam, and Afghanistan, ending in the US. Along the way, players will meet different characters and take action in a very simple way by unlocking funds from the game's sponsors to make direct impact. For example, players can collect books for young girls in the virtual world and then activate a real-life donation of books to Room to Read (total of 250,000 books). *The New York Times* wrote, "This free, interactive accompaniment to the Half the Sky global women's empowerment project brims with good intentions. But like so many interactive apps on Facebook, it doesn't brim with qualities that make it a game worth playing for its own sake. It lacks the pleasing interactivity of what aficionados of the medium would simply call good gameplay. Rather, like FarmVille or SimCity Social or other popular Facebook games, it tugs you to keep playing with some psychological manipulation."

# 5. Celebrity

by Thelma Adams, Michael Ahn

Celebrity is best understood not as a standalone industry. It is not a function of dollars spent, products consumed, or revenue metrics. While there are industries that feed upon celebrity to produce revenue—such as tabloid magazines and journalism, or film, music, and sports where the brand of individual celebrities can be just as important as quality in selling units or merchandise—celebrity itself is best understood as the capacity for individuals to build, develop, and maintain audiences through popular buy-in. This fits well within our definition of pop culture—in any given community, celebrities exist as a consequence of their ability to build and maintain a personal fanbase, just as any item of culture becomes pop culture. People become celebrities for a range of reasons, such as being the subject of accidental sex-tape leaks, being publicly and ostentatiously wealthy, starring in popular films, winning NBA championships, or encapsulating and articulating the zeitgeist of a community in some particular way. Celebrities are individuals whom fans believe represent, or reinforce, some ideal or aspect of identity that they subscribe to, such as style, political view, or sense of humor. The specific reasons people become celebrities are endless, but the core mechanism is constant. Like other elements of pop culture, celebrities create community identities as they establish fandoms; people bond over *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, a shared passion for Beyoncé, or jokes about Donald Trump’s hair.

At the same time, by building audiences, celebrities build platforms to speak on issues that are important to them. Examples of this are abundant. Musician John Legend, with 7.5 million followers on Twitter, uses his Twitter account as a platform to speak out on various issues he cares about, including racism, gun control, and criminal justice reform. Mark Ruffalo, an actor and director with a Twitter following of close to 2 million, uses his Twitter account—as well as other social media forms such as Tumblr—as a platform for environmental advocacy and conservation. Another timely example of this is Caitlyn Jenner, Olympic gold medalist turned reality TV star, who used her ESPY award speech to spread awareness of trans issues to an audience that might not have been otherwise aware of them. Celebrities become celebrities through their capacity to build a personal audience, and then often use that audience to advocate for causes about which they are passionate. By partnering with celebrities, NGOs, advocates, and foundations can tap into these same audiences in an organic and often deeply personal fashion.

One important strength of celebrities is their ability to bring new—and large—audiences and participants to a cause or movement. Conversely, the causes with which celebrities align can give them a gravitas they may not have gotten as an actor, singer, or athlete. George Clooney’s work on Darfur, for example, brings his significantly-sized fanbase awareness about the cause, and provides Clooney a mantle of seriousness perhaps not earned by acting in movies and TV shows alone.

This also works in the reverse: it could be argued that political stars such as Kennedy, Reagan, and Obama gained popularity through their personal charisma as much as their policies.

Celebrities are adept at bringing a spotlight to issues, helping to raise critical awareness. An executive director of a nonprofit might not be invited to appear on Capitol Hill or *The Tonight Show*, but a celebrity would. Some of the luminaries who have testified before Congress include George Clooney on Darfur, Oprah Winfrey on child abuse, Michael J. Fox on Parkinson’s, Ted Nugent on hunter’s rights, Public Enemy’s Chuck D on peer-to-peer Internet file sharing. Even Elmo testified in support of greater funding for music education. Often, celebrities serve simply as spokespeople, making themselves available for photo ops and sound bites, but heartfelt as their service may be, all too rarely are they asked to do any creative or strategic thinking on the subject they are amplifying.

While some may be too busy to make such a commitment, this can be a lost opportunity, as many who labor in the public eye are extremely motivated, creative, intelligent, and naturally gifted communicators.

Pop culture figures' net worths and philanthropy generally can't compare to the billionaire's club of celebrity entrepreneurs—think of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation or Mark Zuckerberg's funding of the Newark schools experiment—so high-profile cultural figures are often better suited to raising funds than writing checks. Notable exceptions include Oprah Winfrey (detailed below), and George Lucas, whose family foundations have over \$1 billion in assets, and gave away \$133 million in 2013 (according to its most recent IRS 990 filing).

Historically, celebrity causes have tended to center around safer subjects such as medical research and disease prevention, or humanitarian relief. The general public is less willing to follow celebrities' leads on issues involving scientific data (such as climate change), because they may not see their favorite stars as experts.<sup>19</sup> Celebrities have been most effective with causes for which they can leverage their personal standing, authenticity, and heart rather than scientific or technical expertise.

An increasing number of high-profile personalities are beginning to take a stand on issues like race or gender bias, especially if the celebrity belongs to the group they are representing. Of course, high profile artists and athletes have taken stands on social issues throughout history—in the modern era, beginning with the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War. Some pop-culture-icon “pioneers” who took to activism include Harry Belafonte, Norman Lear, Mohammed Ali, Robert Redford, Barbra Streisand, and Joan Baez. They did so at risk of losing fans and work—it was not expected, nor was it always welcome. And as illustrated in *Making Waves: A Guide to Cultural Strategy*, some paid a heavy price for speaking out:

At a White House luncheon on juvenile delinquency in 1968, singer/actress Eartha Kitt condemned the Vietnam War, linking it to the widespread youth rebellion. “You send the best of this country off to be shot and maimed ... They don't want to go to school because they're going to be snatched off from their mothers to be shot in Vietnam.” Her comments brought first lady Lady Bird Johnson to tears, and after the public heard about her outburst, Kitt experienced a massive backlash. Angry op-ed pieces popped up in newspapers all over the country, denouncing her as a Communist. She began receiving hate mail, and the CIA kept a close eye on her. Nightclub owners and producers cancelled her contracts. For many years she couldn't get gigs in the US and resorted to lengthy tours in Europe. Her virtual exile lasted until 1974, when she performed at Carnegie Hall, and in 1978 Jimmy Carter invited her back to the White House. Decades later, in 2003, the Dixie Chicks experienced a similar backlash after lead singer Natalie Maines spoke out against the looming Iraq War and George W. Bush during a concert performance in London. The backlash did not, however, stop the Dixie Chicks from mounting two successful tours in 2003 and 2004. Media coverage of Maines's off-the-cuff comments shed light on the expanding role of musicians in the political process, helping musician-activists to overcome the “shut up and sing” hurdle that many, including Eartha Kitt, faced in previous decades.

But celebrities' power to spotlight issues grew; for the next generation, it has become accepted—and expected—for celebrity activists to spotlight favorite issues, such as HIV/AIDS awareness, climate change, marriage equality, and the refugee crisis. Think about Bono, Lady Gaga, Leonardo DiCaprio, Sean Penn, and Angelina Jolie.

The creative community—heavily weighted to Democrats—regularly raises money for political candidates. Barack Obama's presidential campaign was the most successful at harnessing the power of celebrity endorsements: Oprah Winfrey, Morgan Freeman, will.i.am, Tom Hanks, and Bruce Springsteen. Rosario Dawson served as chair of Voto Latino, which has had deep partnerships with a variety of celebrities like America Ferrera, Pitbull, Romeo Santos, and Jennifer Lopez.

And of course a number of artists today are vocally supportive of the Movement for Black Lives: Kendrick Lamar, Russell Simmons, Kanye West, John Legend, Prince, Jesse Williams, Beyoncé, and Jay-Z.

The rise of social media has given celebrities a greater reach than ever before. A simple tweet can instantly reach millions of fans. To bring these general concepts to life, below are a selection of mini profiles that describe the activism of well-known artists on behalf of the causes and issues they are passionate about. Most of these cases are deeply inspiring, but we have also included a cautionary tale as a reminder of the importance of due diligence.

### ***The Pioneer: Harry Belafonte as Activist and Boundary-Pushing Role Model***

A role model for contemporary activist-artists, singer Harry Belafonte weathered blacklisting and censorship for using his fame to raise awareness and funds for civil rights and humanitarian causes. His celebrity is synonymous with his activism, and he has consistently taken stances for what he believes.

Inspired by Paul Robeson, Belafonte was active in the civil rights movement and was a confidante of Martin Luther King Jr., making appearances in support of, and personally providing financial support for King's family. During the 1963 Birmingham Campaign, he bailed King out of Birmingham City Jail and raised thousands of dollars to release other civil rights protesters. He helped to finance the 1961 Freedom Rides, supported voter registration drives, and helped to organize the 1963 March on Washington. Belafonte refused to perform in the South until 1961, and was blacklisted during the McCarthy era.

Belafonte has been a longtime critic of US foreign policy, opposing the US embargo on Cuba and praising Fidel Castro, praising Soviet peace initiatives, attacking the US invasion of Grenada, praising the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, and honoring Ethel and Julius Rosenberg. According to Geoffrey Baker's book *¡Hip Hop, Revolución! Nationalizing Rap in Cuba*, Belafonte's meeting with Fidel Castro led to the Cuban government's support of rap as a cultural influence.<sup>20</sup>

Belafonte has not relented in his willingness to take controversial positions, speaking out against the Bush administration's prosecution of the war in Iraq, comparing Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice to house slaves on a plantation, and comparing the American government to the hijackers of the September 11 attacks: "What is the difference between that terrorist and other terrorists?"<sup>21</sup> Belafonte asked. "What do you call Bush when the war he put us in to date has killed almost as many Americans as died on 9/11 and the number of Americans wounded in war is almost triple? By most definitions Bush can be considered a terrorist." Regarding his (then) unpopular stance on the war in Iraq, Belafonte said: "Bring it on. Dissent is central to any democracy." Belafonte also referred to the Department of Homeland Security as "the new Gestapo."

Also a longtime champion of global humanitarian efforts, Belafonte was a key organizer of the Grammy Award-winning song "We Are the World," a multi-artist effort to raise funds for Ethiopian famine relief, performed in the Live Aid concert. As a UNICEF goodwill ambassador, he traveled to Dakar, Senegal, where he and 20 other artists raised funds by staging the largest concert ever held in sub-Saharan Africa. Belafonte went to South Africa to support the campaign against HIV/AIDS, travelled to Kenya to stress the importance of educating children, and launched a media campaign to raise awareness of the needs of Rwandan children.

Today, through Sankofa, the nonprofit organization he founded, Belafonte is helping to nurture and support a future generation of artists and activists. Sankofa's mission is "to enlist the support of today's most celebrated artists and influential individuals in collaboration with grassroots partners to elevate the voices of the disenfranchised and promote justice, peace, and equality."

## ***The Artist as Activist: Talib Kweli and the Movement for Black Lives***

Known for blending his music and performances with activism, hip hop artist Talib Kweli has worked to generate awareness of institutional racial bias and police brutality. Considered a risk-taker by some, Kweli is an example of the new breed of artist-activist, whose creative work and social/political agendas are strongly connected.

In 2000 Kweli collaborated with Mos Def on *Hip Hop for Respect*, a CD and video about the death of Amadou Diallo at the hands of New York City police. The project involved 41 different artists—one for each shot fired at Diallo.

Kweli made appearances in support of the Occupy Wall Street camp; spoke at a rally calling for the end of the NYPD's stop-and-frisk policy; spent the night with the Dream Defenders, a group of students staging a sit-in to protest Florida's stand-your-ground law; and traveled to Ferguson, Missouri, to join the protesters calling for justice after the shooting of Michael Brown. Kweli's commitment to Ferguson has been ongoing: he raised over \$100,000 through the crowdfunding platform Indiegogo to support "jail, bail, and life needs" of Ferguson protesters and community organizers. To ensure accountability for the funds, he organized the Action Support Committee (ASC) to vet and oversee the micro-grants. Kweli and the ASC also produced two free concerts in St. Louis to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the death of Michael Brown. The concerts were part of the #UnitedWeFight actions, protests, and community events planned by various St. Louis community organizations, and were live-streamed on AllHipHop.com.

Kweli has also been a long-time advocate for artists and performers within the hip-hop community to take more public political stances in support of, primarily, racial justice. In a blog post for the Perception Institute, he writes, "America seems to be on the verge of a great cultural upheaval. The old way of doing things when it comes to racist systems is being challenged by a growing group of young people. In this climate, much like musicians and artists during the civil rights and Black Power movements, hip-hop artists are in a unique position to help shape a new culture. Will they challenge the inner workings of the music industry? Will they change the content of their music? In this environment more than ever before, they have a chance to impact an entire generation."<sup>22</sup>

Kweli also captures the challenge of working with celebrities to elevate a social issue. "Activists often don't understand that the language of activism is fluid and it moves in a way that is connected to real life events on the ground. Celebrities are very disconnected to things happening on the ground in real time. It is easy to assume that celebrities know, or to be angry when they don't," Kweli stated in an interview for the #PopJustice report series. "You have to create an opportunity for celebrities to look good, create ways that make sense to them to engage in activism."

## ***Wyclef Jean and Yéle Haiti: A Cautionary Tale about Fiduciary Mismanagement***

Wyclef Jean, the Grammy-winning former member of the acclaimed hip-hop group the Fugees, was quick to organize a highly-publicized relief effort for his native country of Haiti after the catastrophic 2010 earthquake. His charitable organization Yéle Haiti, which, with corporate support, had previously provided scholarships to 3,600 Haitian children and raised funds for school funding and free meals for the citizens of Haiti, achieved its greatest fame in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake that devastated Haiti and its capital Port-au-Prince.

According to Jean, Yéle raised over \$1 million in 24 hours using a plea on Twitter and more through Jean's participation in an MTV donation drive and other publicity efforts to benefit survivors of the earthquake. Jean then organized the "Hope for Haiti Now" telethon—the most-watched telethon in history, aired on

almost every network and many cable channels—and gave the last performance of the telethon. The aim was for Yéle to donate funds to orphanages, street-cleaning crews, hospitals and medical clinics, and to organize food service to provide hot meals to refugees and victims of the catastrophe.

But soon after, questions were raised about the management of the Yéle charity. News organizations reported that the foundation failed to file required tax returns from 2005–2009, and allegations were raised about mismanagement of funds, lack of financial controls, and incompetency in handling large projects. According to reports by *The New York Times*, *The Smoking Gun*, and *The Washington Post*, much of Yéle Haiti's money was paid out to Wyclef Jean, his relative and fellow Yéle Haiti director Jerry Duplessis, or companies they own, including \$410,000 paid directly to Jean for rent, production services, and Jean's appearance at a benefit concert. The Foundation also paid \$250,000 to Telemax, a television station controlled by Jean and Duplessis, \$31,000 to rent offices from Platinum Sound owned by Jean and Duplessis, and \$100,000 for Jean's own performance at a benefit concert in Monaco.

The charity eventually closed in 2012, in the wake of an investigation by the New York Attorney General over allegations of mismanagement. A forensic audit disclosed that in the year of the earthquake in Haiti, the organization had spent over \$9 million—half of it on travel alone. The closed charity is still entangled in lawsuits in Haiti for unpaid debts.

### ***Eva Longoria: Expanding Repertoire of Activist Roles***

Actress Eva Longoria has always had a dedication to philanthropy, founding Eva's Heroes, a charity which helps developmentally disabled children, and supporting the Clothes Off Our Back Foundation, OmniPeace, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the National Stroke Association, Project HOME, and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

But the actress, not content to work merely as spokesperson, enrolled in a Master's program in Chicano Studies and political science at Cal State University, Northridge. According to Longoria, "I really wanted a better, more authentic understanding of what my community has gone through so I can help create change."<sup>23</sup>

Longoria now works as an activist behind the camera, executive producing *The Harvest*, a documentary about the 500,000 child migrant farm workers in the US.

For her efforts, Longoria was *The Hollywood Reporter's* 2009 Philanthropist of the year, for "her commitment to Latino causes and giving back to the community."

"She's made a tremendous contribution, and showed tremendous courage, in using her celebrity to raise awareness of issues that have an effect on the Latino community and the working community," says Thomas Saenz, president and general counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), the Latino legal voice for civil rights in America. Longoria is on its board of directors. "She's demonstrated a true commitment to learning about these issues, deeply, then taking that knowledge and using her access to media and public to raise awareness. She is certainly a very different kind of celebrity."<sup>24</sup>

Longoria announced the formation the Latino Victory Project, a political action committee and national initiative to boost Hispanic political participation. The Victory Project's aim is to boost the number of Hispanic candidates in local, state, and national elections by raising money and resources for Latino candidates. Longoria said the aim of this PAC is to build "Latino currency."

Longoria also supported The Futuro Fund, the largest Latino fundraising group for the 2012 elections, which raised millions of dollars in Latino contributions for President Obama's reelection. Longoria was also one of the co-chairs of Obama's reelection campaign.

## ***Oprah Winfrey: Game Changer***

Dubbed "Queen of All Media" and the richest African American, Oprah Winfrey is regarded by many as the greatest black philanthropist. Her influence goes far beyond celebrity; she is able to bring fundamental change through her activism and frequently donates money to her causes.

By 2012, Winfrey had given away about \$400 million to educational causes, as well as 400 scholarships to Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. In 2013, Winfrey donated \$12 million to the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Winfrey established Oprah's Angel Network, a charity that provided grants to nonprofit organizations around the world. (The charity was launched in 1998 with donations from viewers of Oprah's talk show; it ceased operations when the show went off the air.) Oprah's Angel Network raised more than \$80 million. Winfrey personally covered all administrative costs associated with the charity so one hundred percent of all funds raised went to charity programs.

In 2004, Winfrey and her team filmed an episode of her show in South Africa to bring attention to the plight of young children affected by poverty and AIDS. Winfrey and her crew visited schools and orphanages in poverty-stricken areas, and distributed Christmas presents to 50,000 children. Throughout the episode, Winfrey appealed to viewers to donate money to Oprah's Angel Network for poor and AIDS-affected children in Africa. From that episode alone, viewers around the world donated over \$7 million.

In an ultimate show of power, savvy and determination, after Hurricane Katrina decimated New Orleans, Winfrey created an entire community: 65 small homes in a neighborhood called Angel Lane. As profiled in *New York Magazine*, days after the hurricane struck, "Winfrey took her show to New Orleans to broadcast stories of heroism and heartbreak to her 40-million-plus viewers ..." A few months later, Winfrey flew to Houston, where tens of thousands of Katrina evacuees were still sleeping in hotels, shelters, and the living rooms and spare bedrooms of relatives and friends, to announce she would spend \$10 million of her own money, plus \$5 million donated by fans of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, to build Angel Lane with the help of Habitat for Humanity. Oprah's charity was generous but selective: Angel Lane applicants had to show proof they were working, be able to donate 300 hours of "sweat equity" toward building their own houses, and afford about \$400 a month in mortgage payments for their new three- and four-bedroom homes. Twenty years from their move-in dates, Angel Lane residents will own their houses outright.

The *New York Magazine* article concluded: "Angel Lane was perhaps the most high profile of the celebrity-driven projects. It didn't just attract media; it was the media. Oprah not only created a community, but a stream of content. She devoted several episodes of her TV show and articles in *O, the Oprah Magazine*, to documenting the lives of Angel Laners."<sup>25</sup>



Effective partnerships have everything to do with strategy and respect—finding the right fit between the goals of the celebrity and the goals of the cause. As Erin Potts, former CEO and co-founder of Revolutions Per Minute, says almost religiously, it's not about “using” artists. There are a number of common-sense guidelines for working with artists, celebrity and otherwise, laid out in The Culture Group's *Making Waves: A Guide to Cultural Strategy*.

The gatekeepers or teams who guide and insulate their celebrity clients include agents, managers, publicists, lawyers, financial advisors, and sometimes even political or philanthropic advisors. In *#PopJustice, Volume 2: Mapping the Players*, where we map organizations and practitioners at the intersection of popular culture and social change, we list a number of the industry's highest profile and most influential agencies and philanthropic advisors. Some are dedicated and strategic social justice warriors, others strictly in the business of protecting their golden goose. But without these professionals, the chances of effective, engaged, and strategic partnerships with celebrities are minimal.

## Key Takeaways

High profile personalities can make significant contributions to campaigns and causes. Certainly they are very helpful in **raising awareness** and **raising funds**:

- **Earned media:** drawing a spotlight. Congressional hearings, media appearances, and photo ops are hugely helpful in raising awareness.
- **Direct communication:** messaging their fans. Artists connect directly with fans via social media; some have followers numbering in the hundreds of millions, far more than most organizations and causes—this personal communication can be great at motivating engagement and excitement.
- **Walking the walk.** Sometimes being a role model is the most powerful messaging of all, whether it's registering to vote, joining a march or boycott, or driving an electric vehicle.
- **Raising money.** Whether through appearances at fundraising events or concerts, lending their names to direct mail appeals, donating items for auctions, or through other philanthropic means, celebrities can be excellent surrogates and fundraisers.
- **Donating money, or in-kind value.** Not all, but many high profile personalities put their money where their mouths are. Writing a check is great, but sometimes donating free license rights to a song for a PSA is worth tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of dollars.

The best possible engagement with high profile artists, however, is to partner with them from the very beginning of campaign planning. Many are extraordinarily gifted creative and strategic partners, and come to the issue with passion and commitment—as well as with deep knowledge and relevant personal experience.

For social justice advocates seeking to work with celebrities, the first step is contacting the various professionals who handle different aspects of celebrities' careers (publicists, agents, managers, and so on). Some high profile artists retain political or philanthropic advisors, which would be ideal points of contact. Many of these professionals are listed in *#PopJustice, Volume 2: Mapping the Players*.



## 6. Other Sectors

by Thelma Adams

This report has provided in-depth examinations of the key entertainment industries: film and television, music, social media, video games, and celebrity. To round out the picture, here is a brief look at some of the other popular culture sectors: publishing, advertising, and Broadway theater.

### *Publishing*

BookStats—an annual survey of the US Publishing industry—stated in its 2013 report that the industry as a whole reported \$27 billion in net revenue across both book and journal publishing, with \$14.63 billion of that coming from the trade sector—consumer fiction and nonfiction—down from \$15 billion the previous year. Similar stats state that eBooks took up 20% of the trade sector revenue in 2012, and 15% in 2011, remaining relatively flat into 2013. BookStats attributes much of the growth-trend in eBooks to the fact that they are released at the same time as hardcovers, with paperbacks typically being released later. BookStats notes that 2012 was an outlier for trade totals due to the release of the film adaptation of *The Hunger Games* boosting book sales, and the release of major entries in the *50 Shades* series, calling it “the strongest year in publishing’s recent history.”

In contrast, magazine sales have largely suffered. Combined annual revenue estimates for US magazines have seen a general decline from a peak of \$10.47 billion in 2005 to \$8.3 billion in 2011. One likely reason for this trend is a growth in online outlets providing similar news and entertainment services as an alternative to conventional print circulations.

Meanwhile, Comichron reports a record year for comics and graphic novel sales in 2014; a total of \$935 million, split between \$100 million digital, \$375 million print comic book sales, and \$460 million print graphic novel sales. Comichron notes that, accounting for inflation, this was the best year that the comic and graphic novel industry has had since 1995; they further note that “digital appears to be complementing, rather than cannibalizing, print,” contrasting with BookStats’ report with regards to eBooks and paperbacks. Overall, they note a 7% increase in sales over 2013, a rare uptick in the print publishing business.

Comic books and diversity present a unique opportunity. People grow up with comic books; many of the most popular movies now are based on comic book characters, from Spiderman to the Avengers, a product of a generation of comic book nerds who grew up to become writers and producers and directors in film. In an interview with *Rookie Magazine*, Sana Amanat, Pakistani-American and Marvel’s director of content and character development, describes her mission as “connecting Marvel content and characters with as many audiences as possible.” In the interview, she reminisces about how she read *X-Men* as a child and connected with the characters, a sentiment many comic book readers could no doubt identify with. Amanat is herself making a difference in this respect, as cocreator of the comic book *Ms. Marvel*, a hit series featuring a Muslim teenager with superpowers. By presenting diverse characters and perspectives, comic book authors can shape the narratives that many young people are exposed to.

In a similar line of thought, the above Comichron research states that in 2014, \$530 million of the \$935 million in revenue across the comic book industry was produced by comic stores. Many times, these comic stores are small businesses with either one store or a small chain, and are intimately tied into their local communities, hosting various board-, tabletop-, and trading-card-gaming activities throughout the year, as local pillars of the nerd community. They function as community centers as much as stores. Interaction with these small stores on a business-to-business level through building up relationships, can allow social justice advocates to sponsor diversity-minded initiatives with real reach into youth communities.

## Jeff Gomez

Jeff Gomez, the son of a teenage Jewish American mother and a Puerto Rican father, spent his early years in foster care in upstate New York. After reuniting with his mother, he moved to a public housing project on the Lower East Side, and spent summers in Puerto Rico. Gomez began by drawing monsters and dinosaurs, and later developed an interest in supernatural stories during his Puerto Rico summers where his aunt gave him a copy of *The Hobbit*. When his mother moved them to Hawaii, he was exposed to Japanese anime, where a particular series could span several different media formats—television, comic books, and film. After returning to New York, he built detailed personal worlds and incorporated them into *Dungeons and Dragons* games with his friends. He eventually landed a job at Acclaim Comics, where he created and produced characters, concepts, and games related to their titles, and helped those franchises gross \$420 million. In order to succeed, he'd had to publish under a pseudonym, since his Puerto Rican name almost guaranteed rejection.

Tired of the pretense, and now finally working under his real name, Gomez founded, with two partners, Starlight Runner Entertainment. Initially they developed software to tell stories on the web. Later they began consulting on the creation of worlds across different platforms, helping to create the field of transmedia. He worked on a Hot Wheels campaign that featured driver characters, and insisting one of the five characters who was recognizably Puerto Rican and another who was North African.

He says, "My real goal is to show people, particularly young people, that there are alternatives. If I didn't have reminders in popular culture of how it was possible to rise above my station in life, I would have fallen into an abyss ... The important thing is to create aspirational narratives, a tiny little story, capable of starting you down a different road ... Large media companies, consumer product companies, and even entire governments are underestimating the extent to which the consumer now controls the dialogue, and this paradigm shift is among the most dramatic ever seen. We are witnessing the rise of communal narrative, and this is giving a voice and power to those who have thus far been invisible."<sup>26</sup>

## Advertising

The Advertising industry in America is mammoth, with estimated revenue of \$103.72 billion (aggregated for the period 2005-2013) according to Statista. Popular advertisements enter pop culture for any number of reasons, like humor or catchiness. Embedding into pop culture is often considered a mark of success for an advertisement—from Mazda's "Zoom Zoom Zoom," which made it into Urban Dictionary and the television show *Scrubs*; to the Farmer Insurance Group's "We are Farmers" jingle, which virtually everyone knows and which made it into a YouTube musical remix. The Super Bowl, in particular, has evolved to a point where the advertisements are almost as much attraction as the football game itself, with many news outlets ranking the best advertisements of the game, turning Super Bowl advertisements into a pop culture phenomenon of their own. *The Wall Street Journal* notes that \$292 million alone was spent on Super Bowl advertisements in 2013, with that number increasing to \$331.8 million in 2014.

However, not all advertising is catchy TV ads and magazine spreads. Two prominent trends have emerged in recent years that have dominated the world of online advertising. The first is Google advertising. Google, which owns a near-monopoly on search engine usage in the Western world, as well as extensive mapping/GPS services, has its own advertising service. This service uses all of Google's suite of Internet

services to target advertisements to likely consumers, using Internet searches, traffic history, and geography to tailor the average Internet user's online advertising exposure to their unique Internet experience. Gamers see ads for games, coffee-junkies see ads for coffee shops—often without realizing that Google is tracking their traffic to customize their advertising exposure. On top of that, Google tailors these ads geographically, so a local coffee shop, which wants users in a certain neighborhood, or county, or other geographical region, to see their ads, will have their ads shown to those users. The degree to which Google has integrated into the lives of everyday users has created a powerful advertising tool; the average user has a whole world of advertising tailored to their own interests and experiences online.

Coca-Cola ran a commercial during the 2015 Super Bowl featuring a rendition of "America the Beautiful" sung in various languages. Conservative broadcaster Glenn Beck declared the ad was "an in your face" effort "to divide people." According to Beck, the entire point of the ad was to send the message that "if you don't like it, if you're offended by it, then you're a racist ... And if you do like it, you're for immigration. That's all this is, is to divide people."

Another trend is sponsored content, also called native advertising. In this, online blog posts or news articles, sponsored by companies and masquerading as ordinary content, are interspersed with unsponsored posts and articles, so that casual users may not realize they are reading a lengthy paid advertisement for a company. This practice is employed by websites and content providers as diverse as *The Atlantic* and *The New York Times*, both respected news publications, and *The Onion*, which provides satirical content for entertainment purposes. Oftentimes, the difference between sponsored and unsponsored content is no more than a subtly inserted "sponsored content" tag, easily overlooked beneath boldfaced headlines. In a world in which more and more people get their news and information online—indicated by the fact that, as noted above, print magazine revenues are decreasing—users are increasingly being sold products without realizing it. One 2014 study reported that 62% of prominent online publishers

offered native advertising of this sort in 2013, with another 16% intending to do so by the end of 2014. This marks an overwhelming shift in the way that advertising occurs online.

## Theater: Fun Home

*Fun Home* is a work of musical theater that premiered off-Broadway in 2013 and on-Broadway in 2015. Based on the 2006 graphic memoir of cartoonist Alison Bechdel, it deals with Bechdel's struggles as a young person against the expectations of her father, discovering her sexuality, and coming out. It is significant in modern theater for being the first musical about a young lesbian to enter the mainstream, and the first Broadway musical to feature a lesbian as its protagonist.

In both its off- and on-Broadway runs, *Fun Home* was not only hugely popular with audiences, but a dominating force in the awards circuit, opening to overwhelming critical acclaim. In 2014, the off-Broadway production racked up nominations and awards by the handful, taking three Lucille Ortel Awards including Outstanding Musical, as well as both the NY Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Musical and the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Off-Broadway Musical, on top of being a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in drama. In total, the off-Broadway production won or was nominated for around 33 different awards. The 2015 Broadway production was nominated for twelve Tony Awards, of which it won five, including Best Musical, Best Original Score, and Best Direction.

This breakthrough success is important for the way it brings the experiences and struggles of young people questioning and discovering their sexualities to the forefront of theater. Not only is it a musical about a young woman discovering that she is a lesbian, engaging with the complexities of sexuality and family dysfunction, thus providing a reflection for the experiences of thousands of youths who might not feel represented in the broad corpus of theater; it is also a massive, breakaway hit that blew away the competition, elevating its reach and visibility.

### **Key takeaways:**

Comic books and graphic novels had a record year for sales in 2014: a total of \$935 million, split between \$100 million digital, \$375 million print comic book sales, and \$460 million print graphic novel sales. This is a 7% increase over 2013, a rare uptick in the print publishing business.

Unlike traditional fiction and nonfiction books, sales of comic books and graphic novels are not declining because of digital sales; industry trade publication Comichron notes that “digital appears to be complementing, rather than cannibalizing, print.”

Comic books present a unique opportunity to advance diversity and social justice priorities, and thus represent a sound investment strategy.

People grow up with comic books, and comic books are the basis of some of our most popular movie franchises and television series. By presenting diverse characters and perspectives, comic book authors can shape the narrative that many young people are exposed to.

Comic book nerds come in all genders, religions, and ethnicities, and as adults they are introducing more diverse characters to the medium.

Comic book stores tend to be small businesses that host events and serve as gathering places for the fan community. Interaction with these small stores on a business-to-business level, building up relationships, can allow social justice advocates to sponsor diversity-minded initiatives with real reach into youth communities.

Advertising is a multibillion-dollar industry with a unique reach into popular culture.

When a television ad makes a specific point about diversity, it makes news and sometimes generates controversy, as with Coca Cola’s multilingual “America the Beautiful” ad shown during the 2015 Super Bowl.

Online advertising is increasingly sophisticated and ubiquitous. Google has its own advertising service and dominates the online market. With its ability to track users’ activities, Google can tailor ads to each individual’s personal interests and experiences online. The degree to which Google has integrated into the lives of everyday users has created a powerful advertising tool.

# Appendix A:

## Hollywood's Diversity Programs

Compiled by Michael Ahn and Liz Manne, with Brian Sheppard

### *The Major Media Conglomerates*

Each of the seven major media conglomerates—21st Century Fox, CBS Corporation, Comcast, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Time Warner Inc., Viacom, and the Walt Disney Company—has policies and programs related to diversity. These companies are publicly traded, and serve multicultural, multilingual global audiences. They are, by law, equal opportunity employers. Their diversity-related programs and public statements are designed for the consumption of all key stakeholders: their shareholders, audiences and other customers, their employees, watchdog organizations, the press, and their partners in industry, labor, and government.

#### **21st Century Fox (21CF)**

[www.21cf.com](http://www.21cf.com)

21st Century Fox is home to a global array of entertainment companies including cable networks (such as FOX, FX, Fox News), filmed entertainment (20th Century Fox, Fox Searchlight, Fox Television Studios), television (the Fox Television Stations Group), and satellite (most notably, BSKYB). 21CF has a variety of philanthropic and community-engagement initiatives, which are described at: [www.impact.21cf.com](http://www.impact.21cf.com). Fox Audience Strategy ([www.foxaudiencestrategy.com](http://www.foxaudiencestrategy.com)) is a strategic business resource across the 21CF entertainment businesses to identify programming content and services that are compelling and relevant to increasingly broad and diverse audiences. 21st Century Fox hosts the following programs:

- **The Fox Writers Intensive (FWI)** offers experienced writers a four-month curriculum focused on developing original material; learning and honing writing skills for multiple mediums; and exploring the business of media and entertainment. Upon successful completion, FWI finalists receive priority-staffing meetings for the dedicated Fox Staff Writer position on Fox Television Group Productions. Annually, one FWI Fellow is awarded either a purchase and development deal on his/her original script or a first-look deal (including a right of first negotiation) from Fox Broadcasting Company or one of the Fox-affiliated production entities.
- **The Fox Global Directors Initiative (FDI)** focuses on cultivating emerging and established directors and amplifying female perspectives across features and episodic television. FDI partners with a wide range of creative and advocacy organizations as well as with 21st Century Fox entertainment businesses to source talent of diverse backgrounds, visions, and perspectives.
- **The IMAGES Speakers Series** are internal events co-hosted by cross-divisional senior leadership exploring cultural and creative trends, current events, artists, and innovation. Guests from art, dance, music, literature, fashion, cinema, and technology are frequent participants.
- **The FOX | HBCU Media Alliance** promotes a pipeline of talent from historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) for executive and creative career opportunities through networking events hosted by Fox senior executives and creative talent; executive and creative career advancement initiatives, industry events and creative workshops/seminars; and C-Suite creative executive, internship, and fellowship opportunities.

## **CBS Corporation**

[www.cbscorporation.com](http://www.cbscorporation.com)

CBS Corporation is comprised of a global portfolio of cable and broadcasting networks and other media properties, including CBS Television, CBS Sports, The CW, Showtime, Smithsonian Channel, CBS Radio, and Simon & Schuster. Its CBS Cares campaign ([www.cbs.com/cbs\\_cares](http://www.cbs.com/cbs_cares)) consists of PSAs featuring talent from many CBS programs. Through EcoMedia ([www.ecoedia.cbs.com](http://www.ecoedia.cbs.com)), CBS's advertising partners provide millions of dollars in financial support for education, wellness, and environmental projects nationwide. For diversity programs, please refer to the CBS Diversity Institute listing below in the major TV networks section.

## **Comcast**

[www.corporate.comcast.com](http://www.corporate.comcast.com)

Comcast Corporation is a global media and technology company with two primary businesses: Comcast Cable (including XFINITY) and NBCUniversal (which includes NBC, Telemundo, Universal Pictures, and Universal Parks and Resorts). Its community investment program empowers communities by investing in local organizations, developing programs and partnerships, and mobilizing resources to connect people and inspire positive and substantive change. NBCUniversal hosts the following diversity programs:

- **The NBCUniversal Short Film Festival** seeks the next generation of writers, directors, producers, and actors, while celebrating innovative storytelling from diverse backgrounds, including female writers and directors, the LGBTQ community, and performers with disabilities. The festival has a high-profile list of judges and partners including Comcast, NBC, Panavision, USA Networks, Telemundo, Bravo, Universal Pictures, E!, SAG-AFTRA, PGA, WGA, DGA, Hulu, The Hollywood Reporter, and Variety.
- **Writers on the Verge** is a 12-week program focused on polishing writers' skills and readying them for a staff writer position on a television series. The program is for writers who are almost there but need that final bit of preparation with their writing and personal presentation skills. The program particularly encourages writers of diverse backgrounds to apply. Classes concentrate on creating an exceptional spec and pilot script and understanding the dynamics of pitching oneself in the television industry. Writers are given the chance to interact with industry players ranging from network executives to show runners to agents, and receive valuable feedback on their work and pitch style. Writing assignments on an NBCUniversal television show may be available after successful completion of the program. Past participants have gone on to create series including *Community*, *Burn Notice*, *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, *White Collar*, *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, *Chicago Fire*, and *Parenthood*.
- **StandUp NBC** is a nationwide search for stand-up comedians of diverse backgrounds. This initiative allows comedians from across the country to showcase for key industry players at NBC and industry-wide. Top recipient(s) receive an NBC Talent Holding Deal, meeting with NBC Casting execs and an invitation to join the Stand Up for Diversity College Tour.
- NBC encourages diversity among writing staff by funding select staff writer positions, open to all scripted NBC Primetime Series, along with some series from its cable networks. In order to further foster diversity among writers, NBCUniversal provides funding for a diverse staff writer position on all scripted NBC Primetime and Late Night Series. These positions are filled with writers selected and hired by the showrunner of each show, along with the guidance of the network and studio(s).

- **The NBCUniversal Late Night Writers Workshop** is a program focused on exposing talented joke, sketch, and comedy writers to NBCUniversal's late-night and alternative lineup and readying them for a staff writer position. The program particularly encourages female writers and those of diverse backgrounds to apply.
- **The NBC Scene Showcase** is a six-to-eight week workshop of original scenes by diverse writers, cast with up-and-coming actors and guided by directors of diverse backgrounds presented in a one-day live theatrical showcase for executives, producers, casting directors, and other industry professionals. The program casts actors and hires directors. These directors are typically selected from a pool of the NBCUniversal Directing Fellowship finalists and award-winning NBCUniversal Short Film Festival directors. A live theatrical showcase takes place in Los Angeles and in New York.
- **The Sundance Institute Native American and Indigenous Program** is a year-round program to deepen the commitment to support Native American and Indigenous artists and talent. This program allows NBCUniversal to build relationships within the Native and Indigenous communities and raise awareness of the artistic opportunities available at NBCUniversal through its various diversity initiatives and programs, while creating a pipeline for Native American actors, writers, and directors.
- **The NBCUniversal Casting Apprentice Program** is an 18–24 month paid rotational program designed for individuals of diverse backgrounds who aspire to join a casting office. Apprentices sit in the NBC casting office, and are exposed to working in both a network and freelance environment. Apprentices assist casting executives or directors with the day-to-day management of casting activities for a television production.

### **Sony Pictures Entertainment**

[www.sonypictures.com](http://www.sonypictures.com)

Sony Pictures Entertainment (SPE), a division of the Japanese electronics giant, includes Sony Pictures Entertainment Group (Columbia Pictures, TriStar Pictures, Screen Gems, Sony Pictures Animation, Sony Pictures Classics, Sony Pictures Imageworks, Sony Pictures Home Entertainment), Sony Pictures Studios, and Sony Pictures Television. Sony Pictures Entertainment hosts the following diversity programs:

- **Employee Business Resource Groups (EBRGs)** are designed to foster professional development and upward mobility through networking and outreach opportunities. EBRGs are linked to SPE's overall business strategy. For example, a group may be asked to help SPE understand market trends or assist in product development. EBRGs may host speaker series, career development seminars, panel discussions, outreach, volunteer activities, and social/cultural events open to all employees. Groups include: Emerging Professionals (EP), Latinos Unidos, OUT@SPE, Sony Pictures Employees of the African Diaspora (SEAD@SPE), Sony Pictures Asian Resource Community (SPARC), Women, Achievement, Value, Everywhere (SPE WAVE), Women in Technology (WiT), and SPE Veterans.
- **Diversity Roundtable Networking Mixers** are held quarterly; these mixers offer SPE employees the opportunity to connect with senior executives and coworkers from across the company. This unique opportunity to meet and network with executives and colleagues provides a new and fresh way to build business contacts.
- **Sony Pictures Television's Diverse Directors Program** provides access for highly qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds to potential episodic directing opportunities on scripted one-hour and half-hour SPT series. This Los Angeles-based program allows its participants to shadow veteran Directors Guild of America (DGA) directors on episodes of various scripted SPT series; after the successful completion of their shadowing assignment, participants may be permitted to direct scripted webisodes of SPT series.

## **Time Warner Inc.**

[www.timewarner.com](http://www.timewarner.com)

Time Warner's operating divisions are HBO (including Cinemax, HBO Family, HBO Latino, HBO GO), Turner (TBS, TNT, CNN, HLN, Cartoon Network, Adult Swim, truTV, a variety of digital sports properties including NBA.com and NCAA.com), and Warner Bros. (Warner Bros. Pictures, Home Entertainment and TV Group, New Line Cinema, DC Comics, DC Entertainment). At the corporate level, Time Warner operates the Time Warner Media Lab and the Time Warner Investments Group, which invests in early-stage media and entertainment ventures. The Time Warner Foundation ([www.timewarnerfoundation.org](http://www.timewarnerfoundation.org)) is a private, nonprofit foundation with a mission to seek innovative and powerful ways to discover, nurture, and celebrate the next generation of storytellers.

According to Diversityinc.com, Time Warner's talent pipeline, especially for women, is showing significant progress. Women now comprise 40% of the top leadership—almost 30% more than the Top 50 average. Women in management also exceed the Top 50 average by 7%. Fifty percent of Time Warner's managers are enrolled in formal, cross-cultural mentoring programs—27% more than the Top 50 average. The company also has strong employee-resource group participation. 39% of employees are active members of at least one group—14% more than the Top 50 average.

**Business Resource Groups** encourage and support employee networks that foster networking, team building, and professional development across Time Warner's various operating companies:

- **Time Warner Corporate:** Asian & Pacific Employee Exchange at TW (APEX), Black Employees at TW (BE@TW), Emerging Professionals at TW (EP@TW), OUT at TW, TW Women's Network (TWWN)
- **HBO:** Alianza, EMERGE, MOSAIC, HBO Out
- **Turner Broadcasting System:** Black Professionals at Turner, Turner Asia, Turner LEADS, Turner NextGen, Turner Parents, Turner Seasoned Professionals, Turner Women Today, TurnerUNO, TurnOUT
- **Warner Bros. Entertainment Group:** Black Employees at Warner Bros. Studios, Emerging Professionals at Warner Bros. Studios (EP), NAPA @ Warner Bros., OUT @ Warner Bros. Studios, UNIFDOS @ Warner Bros. Studios, Women of Warner (WOW)

Two content-related diversity programs are:

- **HBOAccess** provides project development, mentorship, and master classes to diverse directors. Selected candidates are paired with an HBO development executive who will serve as his/her mentor throughout a four-week session in June, and HBO provides a series of master classes taught by HBO executives and creative talent. At the end of the four-week session, filmmakers will be given a budget to create short form content for HBO to be shot in late summer. Upon completion of the development process, each project will be considered for production as a 10–15 minute film or a series of webisodes to air on various HBO platforms including, but not limited to, HBOGo, HBO service, HBO's YouTube channel, HBO.com, film festivals, charity screenings, and other outlets.
- **Warner Bros. Television Writers' Workshop** is for new writers looking to start and further their writing career. The workshop teaches every aspect of spec script writing and features exposure to Warner Bros. TV's top television writers and executives, all with the goal of staffing graduates on a Warner Bros. TV show. The program meets for three consecutive months, one evening a week, on the Warner Bros. lot, and is free to those accepted.



## Viacom

[www.viacom.com](http://www.viacom.com)

Viacom is home to Viacom Media Networks (VMN) as well as Paramount Pictures. VMN is divided into four main groups: BET Networks (BET, Centric), the Entertainment Group (Comedy Central, Spike, TV Land), the Music Group (CMT, Logo, MTV, VH1), and the Nickelodeon Group (Nickelodeon, Nick Jr., Nick at Night). Paramount Pictures includes Paramount Pictures, DreamWorks Pictures, DreamWorks Animation, Paramount Vantage, Paramount Classics, Marvel Studios, MTV Films, Nickelodeon Movies, and Epix. Viacomcommunity ([www.viacomcommunity.com](http://www.viacomcommunity.com)) is Viacom's corporate-level effort to engage and support the communities it serves. Viacom diversity programs include:

- **Viacom's Office of Global Inclusion (OGI)** ([www.viacomcommunityreport.com/report/inclusion](http://www.viacomcommunityreport.com/report/inclusion)) comprises employee affinity groups that aim to enhance career development, celebrate cultural heritage, build ties with the community, and increase networking opportunities. They include: The BEAT for African Americans, Somos for Latino/Hispanic employees, AMP for Asian Americans, Emerge for LGBT employees, Thursday Think for individuals starting their careers, HERE for women, and The ParentHood for Viacom's working parents.
- **The Music Group's Spectrum Director Diversity Program** ([www.vmn\\_spectrum.com](http://www.vmn_spectrum.com)) helps attract and provide training for diverse candidates interested in gaining experience in both scripted and reality programming on MTV, VH1, CMT, and Logo.

## Walt Disney Company

[thewaltdisneycompany.com](http://thewaltdisneycompany.com)

The Walt Disney Company is a leading diversified international family entertainment and media enterprise with five business segments: Media Networks (ABC, Disney Channel, A&E, Hulu), Parks and Resorts (Disney World, Epcot Center, Disney Cruise Lines), Studio Entertainment (Disney Animation, Pixar, Lucasfilm, Touchstone, Marvel Studios, Hollywood Records, Disney on Ice), Consumer Products, and Interactive Media. The Walt Disney Company is currently ranked one of the Top 50 Companies for Diversity by DiversityInc. Its diversity programs include:

- **Walt Disney World** employees, or "cast members," are encouraged to participate in the company's Diversity Resource Groups, including: CastABLE, focused on differently abled cast members and their allies; HOLA, which promotes Hispanic/Latino heritage; PULSE, dedicated to the development of cast members of African descent; FAMILIES, for parents, caregivers, potential parents, and those impacted by parental interests in the workplace; and PRIDE (People Respecting Individual Diversities in Everyone), which provides resources, learning opportunities, and a supportive network to gay, lesbian, and ally cast members. Other divisions use different names, such as EQUAL at ESPN, which supports the LGBT and ally community.
- **Disney | ABC Television Group's (DATG) Creative Talent Development** programs identify and develop creative talent with multicultural voices and perspectives, and have launched the careers of many industry professionals, including writers Veena Sud (*The Killing*, *Cold Case*), Saladin K. Patterson (*Psych*, *Frasier*), George Mastras (*Breaking Bad*), and Peter Murrieta (*Wizards of Waverly Place*, *Level Up*), and directors Seith Mann (*Dexter*, *Nurse Jackie*), Zetna Fuentes (*Pretty Little Liars*, *Switched at Birth*), and Nzingha Stewart (*The Fosters*, *Pretty Little Liars*).
- **The Walt Disney Studios and ABC Entertainment Writing Fellowship** is designed to identify and employ a diverse pool of creative writing talent. The program offers fellowships in the feature film and television areas. The program is an intensive experience that involves workshops, seminars, and personalized mentorship with creative executives from ABC Entertainment Television Group, ABC Studios, Disney Channel, ABC Family, and Buena Vista Motion Pictures Group.

## The Major TV Networks

The four major television networks—ABC, CBS, Fox, and NBC—each a subsidiary of one of the major media conglomerates listed above, offer various programs for minorities to gain access to careers in television.

### ABC

ABC Talent Development ([abctalentdevelopment.com](http://abctalentdevelopment.com)) provides a variety of programs to help aspiring individuals in the fields of acting, writing, directing, and production. For example:

- **The Disney/ABC Directing Program**, focused on increasing the number of episodic directing opportunities on ABC series for women and minorities, is one of the longest running programs of its kind in the entertainment industry. The Los Angeles-based program affords selected participants the opportunity to shadow veteran episodic DGA directors on an episode from prep to post.
- **The Disney/ABC Writing Fellowship**, listed above (under Walt Disney Company).

### CBS

The CBS Diversity Institute ([www.cbsdiversity.com](http://www.cbsdiversity.com)) offers writing and directing programs in which mentees are paired with working professionals. These include:

- **The Writers Mentoring Program** focuses on opening doors and providing access to network executives and showrunners. It is a structured form of support that aims to prepare writers for meaningful employment in television.
- **Writer Fellowship Workshops** give emerging writers of diverse backgrounds a step-by-step guide to identifying and locating the people who can help their careers. Instruction is given on how to set meetings, how to prepare for those meetings, and how to follow up.
- **The Directing Initiative** facilitates professional on-set observing opportunities for aspiring directors of diverse backgrounds. The program matches participants with CBS primetime directors who mentor them through the entire process of prep, production, and post-production.
- **Talent Showcases** are professionally mounted showcases that spotlight emerging talent and, for many, are the doorway to professional success. They are juried by CBS Casting and attended by senior level CBS Entertainment executives, as well as showrunners, casting directors, and talent agents.
- **CBS Diversity Institute and Casting** is undertaking an initiative to enhance access for actors of color who are 18 years and over to the talent pool for the daytime dramas, *The Young and the Restless* and *The Bold and the Beautiful*.
- **Actors Career Workshops** are designed to help actors hone the skills they need to get auditions and land roles. Scene work is critiqued by CBS Casting. Head shots are scrutinized for qualities that best represent the actor to casting executives. Practical tips and advice are provided by experts in a hands-on approach to give actors the knowledge they need to succeed.

## FOX

Fox Television ([www.fox.com/diversity](http://www.fox.com/diversity)) is expanding opportunities for writers, directors, and actors within the creative African American, Latino American, Asian American, and Native American communities with programs such as:

- **The Fox Writer's Initiative**, designed to identify diverse writers for various staff position on Fox series. (See 21st Century Fox above for details.)
- **The Fox Global Directors Initiative (FDI)** brings 20 selected participants to Fox Studios in Los Angeles, CA, to take part in a four-to-six week directors lab, where they attend interactive lab sessions with showrunners, directors, and creative executives from various Fox productions. Out of the 20 participants, five will be invited to become FDI Fellows and will receive a mentor within the Fox organization, a fellowship stipend, a grant to develop and direct a three-to-five minute short, and the opportunity to be considered for a deal with a Fox entertainment business.

## NBC

The NBC Talent Diversity Initiative ([abctalentdevelopment.com](http://abctalentdevelopment.com)) was created to promote and sustain on-camera diversity through community involvement and development, showcasing non-traditional casting choices, and creating programs to raise awareness at NBC. Programs include:

- **The NBCUniversal Directing Fellowship** program, designed to take directors accomplished in their respective fields (features, commercials, and/or music videos) and have them work alongside episodic television directors. While in the program, directors are assigned to shadow up to three episodes of one or more NBCU scripted show from production prep to post.
- Additional NBC diversity programs are listed under Comcast.

## The Labor Guilds

Each of the main creative labor guilds—the Directors Guild, the Writers Guild, and the Screen Actors Guild—has diversity programs and policies in place. They are responsive to their members first and foremost, but also to their partners in industry and, of course, the court of public opinion. They collaborate with major studios and networks to support various diversity programs.

### **Directors Guild of America (DGA)**

[www.dga.org/The-Guild/Diversity](http://www.dga.org/The-Guild/Diversity)

Several DGA committees are dedicated to building communities within the Guild comprised of members of ethnic or gender groups that are underrepresented in the entertainment industry. Each of these committees works to increase diversity in the industry through meetings, seminars, networking, training, and events hosted at the DGA headquarters in Los Angeles and New York. These include:

- **The African American Steering Committee (AASC)** was born of a desire to address the specific needs of the African-American members of the Directors Guild. One of the primary goals of the Committee is to establish a productive line of communication between African-American Guild members and the creative community. The Committee meets monthly to plan events throughout the year that celebrate the achievements of African Americans, as well as forums with industry executives to proactively address what can be done to hire more African Americans.

- **The Asian American Committee (AAC)** was created as a networking group to provide a forum for interests and issues that concern Asian-American Guild members. Through outreach efforts in the entertainment industry that emphasize career development and skills enhancement, the committee provides a variety of networking opportunities as well as screenings, seminars, and discussions with industry professionals.
- **The Eastern Diversity Steering Committee (EDSC)** represents the concerns of Guild members of African, Asian, Native American, Arab-Middle Eastern, or Latino descent. Committed to improving employment opportunities, working conditions, and skills of ethnically diverse Guild members, the EDSC sponsors workshops, seminars, round-table discussions, and networking events to showcase the talents of its members, recognize their contributions, and increase their visibility in the industry.
- **DGA Latino Committee** was created as a networking group to advance career and job opportunities for Latino DGA members by improving craft skills, networking, and enhancing their job opportunities in both the English- and Spanish-speaking media.
- **The Women's Steering Committee (WSC)** promotes diversity through sponsoring networking events, screenings, and seminars. The Committee fosters relationships between the members to provide support, mentoring, and networking opportunities. All women members of the Guild are invited to attend WSC meetings and events, and to share in the benefits that come from cooperative activity.

The DGA also coordinates with studios and networks on director diversity programs. These include:

- CBS Directing Initiative
- Disney/ABC Directing Program
- Fox Global Directors Initiative
- HBOAccess Program
- NBCUniversal Directing Fellowship
- Sony Pictures Television Diverse Directors Program
- Viacom Media Networks Music Group—Spectrum Director Diversity Program
- Warner Bros. Director Program

### **Writers Guild of America (WGA)**

[www.wga.org/content/default.aspx?id=1042](http://www.wga.org/content/default.aspx?id=1042)

WGA's Diversity Department works with producers, studio and network executives, and writers to increase employment opportunities and the availability of writing assignments for writers who are Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, African American, Latino, women, over 40, gay, lesbian, or disabled. The department works with industry personnel to develop access and talent development programs, and also hosts events, panels, and seminars to promote a more positive image of historically underemployed writers in order to increase the industry's awareness of unique obstacles often faced by these writers, and to encourage positive change in hiring practices. The Diversity Department staffs the following committees:

- American Indian Writers Committee
- Asian-American Writers Committee
- Committee of Black Writers
- Career Longevity Committee
- Latino Writers Committee
- LGBT Writers Committee
- Women Writers Committee
- Writers With Disabilities Committee

The WGA TV Writer Access Project is a program designed to identify excellent, diverse writers with television staffing experience. Qualified WGA members are invited to submit their work in one of five diversity categories: minority writers, writers with disabilities, women writers, writers age 55 and over, and gay and lesbian writers. The scripts are read and scored on a blind submission basis by WGA members with extensive television writing experience, including current and former showrunners and writer/producers.

### **Screen Actors Guild (SAG-AFTRA)**

[www.sagaftra.org/EEODiversity](http://www.sagaftra.org/EEODiversity)

The following committees are at the heart of SAG-AFTRA's diversity initiatives:

- Asian Pacific American Media (APAM)
- Ethnic Employment Opportunities (EEO)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)
- Native Americans (NA)
- Performers With Disabilities (PWD)
- Seniors
- Women

SAG's American Scene Awards are bestowed on union productions that most intelligently and progressively employ the talents of people of color; people with disabilities; women; seniors; people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender; and other misrepresented or underrepresented groups, resulting in the realistic portrayal of the American Scene. The recipients of these awards are producers whose projects exemplify their commitment to employment of our diverse union membership in the following three categories: Actor/Performer, Broadcaster, and Recording Artist. Projects must have been produced under a SAG, AFTRA, or SAG-AFTRA contract.

# Appendix B: Creative Content Lists

The following charts list today's top pop culture content:

## Top 25 Box Office for Movies

Source: IMDB

(ranked by box office gross, North America, year-end 2015)

Rank	Title	\$ Millions
1	Star Wars: The Force Awakens	906.7
2	Jurassic World	652.3
3	Avengers: Age of Ultron	459.0
4	Inside Out	356.5
5	Furious 7	353.0
6	Minions	336.0
7	The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2	281.0
8	The Martian	228.1
9	Cinderella (2015)	201.2
10	Spectre	199.6
11	Mission Impossible - Rogue Nation	195.0
12	Pitch Perfect 2	184.3
13	Ant-Man	180.2
14	Home (2015)	177.4
15	Hotel Transylvania	169.6
16	Fifty Shades of Grey	166.2
17	The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water	163.0
18	Straight Outta Compton	161.2
19	San Andreas	155.2
20	Mad Max: Fury Road	153.6
21	The Revenant	150.2
22	Daddy's Home	145.4
23	The Divergent Series: Insurgent	130.2
24	The Peanuts Movie	130.0
25	Kingsman: The Secret Service	128.3

### Top 25 Box Office for Documentaries

Source: The Numbers

(ranked by box office gross, North America, year-end 2015)

Rank	Title	\$
1	Monkey Kingdom	16,432,322
2	Amy	8,409,616
3	Hubble 3D	4,088,852
4	Space Station	3,201,391
5	He Named Me Malala	2,668,936
6	Meru	2,334,228
7	Island of Lemurs: Madagascar	1,989,670
8	Journey to the South Pacific	1,852,230
9	Jerusalem	1,715,647
10	Meet the Patels	1,700,680
11	The Salt of the Earth	1,343,349
12	Iris	1,310,678
13	The Wolfpack	1,301,696
14	Dior and I	1,028,953
15	Best of Enemies	892,802
16	The Wrecking Crew	801,606
17	Seymour: An Introduction	729,744
18	Cartel Land	704,352
19	Red Army	964,647
20	Born to be Wild 3D	587,060
21	Citizen Four	537,661
22	The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution	516,893
23	Awake: The Life of Yogananda	509,752
24	Deli Man: The Movie	502,294
25	Steve Jobs: The Man in the Machine	494,506

### Top 10 Primetime TV Programs Regularly Scheduled

Source: Nielsen Media Research

(ranked by numbers of viewers, US, January 1-November 8, 2015)

Rank	Title	Average No. of Viewers
1	NBC Sunday Night Football, <i>NBC</i>	23,292,000
2	The Big Bang Theory, <i>CBS</i>	21,065,000
3	NCIS, <i>CBS</i>	20,913,000
4	Walking Dead, <i>AMC</i>	19,669,000
5	Empire, <i>Fox</i>	17,747,000
6	CBS+NFLN Thursday Night Football, <i>CBS</i>	17,665,000
7	NCIS: New Orleans, <i>CBS</i>	17,313,000
8	Sunday Night NFL Pre-Kick, <i>NBC</i>	17,084,000
9	Blue Bloods, <i>CBS</i>	14,974,000
10	Dancing With the Stars <i>ABC</i>	14,555,000

### Top 25 Recording Artists

Source: Billboard

(Artists, R&B/Hip-Artists, Latin Artists)

(rankings based on airplay, sales, streaming, social media, ringtone sales, and touring box office; year-end 2015)

#### Top 25 Artists

1. Taylor Swift
2. Ed Sheeran
3. The Weeknd
4. Drake
5. One Direction
6. Maroon 5
7. Meghan Trainor
8. Fetty Wap
9. Sam Smith
10. Nicki Minaj
11. Ariana Grande
12. Selena Gomez
13. Mark Ronson
14. Luke Bryan
15. Justin Bieber
16. Wiz Khalifa
17. Walk The Moon
18. Hozier
19. Fall Out Boy
20. Elie Goulding
21. Kay Perry
22. Kenny Chesney
23. Sam Hunt
24. Beyoncé
25. J. Cole



### **Top 25 R&B/Hip-Hop Artists**

1. Drake
2. The Weeknd
3. Fetty Wap
4. Nicki Minaj
5. J. Cole
6. Future
7. Wiz Khalifa
8. Kendrick Lamar
9. Silento
10. Meek Mill
11. Big Sean
12. Rae Sremmurd
13. Beyoncé
14. Chris Brown
15. Rihanna
16. Trey Songz
17. Dr. Dre
18. Iggy Azalea
19. Omarion
20. Jeremih
21. T-Wayne
22. Rich Homie Quan
23. A\$AP Rocky
24. Usher
25. Flo Rida

### **Top 25 Latin Artists**

1. Romeo Santos
2. Juan Gabriel
3. Enrique Iglesias
4. J Balvin
5. Nicky Jam
6. Julión Álvarez y Su Norteño Banda
7. Banda Sinaloense MS de Sergio Lizarraga
8. Calibre 50
9. Ricky Martin
10. Ariel Camacho y Los Plebes del Rancho
11. Joan Sebastian
12. Gerardo Ortiz
13. Mana
14. Plan B
15. Farruko
16. Pitbull
17. La Arrolladora Banda el Limón de René Camacho
18. El Komander
19. Marc Anthony
20. Daddy Yankee
21. Banda El Recodo De Cruz Lizárraga
22. Don Omar
23. Prince Royce
24. Gente de Zona
25. Marco Antonio Solís

### Top 10 Videogames

Source: NPD Group

(ranked by sales, US, 2015)

1. Call of Duty: Black Ops III
2. Madden NFL 16
3. Fallout 4
4. Star Wars: Battlefront
5. Grand Theft Auto V
6. NBA 2K16
7. Minecraft
8. FIFA 16
9. Mortal Kombat
10. Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare

### Top 10 Most Viral TV Commercials

Source: AdWeek

(rankings based on total social media shares, global, as of November 19, 2015)

Rank	Title	# of Shares
1	Android, "Friends Furever"	6,432,921
2	Disney Parks, "Disney Characters Surprise Shoppers"	3,943,997
3	Purina, "Puppyhood"	3,021,499
4	Roc by Ronaldo, "Cristiano Ronaldo in Disguise"	2,995,849
5	Budweiser, "Lost Dog"	2,808,541
6	The Ad Council, "Love Has No Labels"	2,743,138
7	Zorba, "Maya"	2,634,706
8	Fanpage.it, "'Slap Her': Children's Reactions"	2,365,612
9	Microsoft, "Robert Downey Jr. Delivers a Real Bionic Arm"	2,119,279
10	Kleenex, "Unlikely Best Friends"	2,027,213

# Appendix C: About the Team

## *Editorial Team for #PopJustice, Volume 4*

**Thelma Adams** ([thelmadams.com](http://thelmadams.com)) is a writer and leading New York based film critic whose forthcoming historical novel will be published by Amazon Publishing in 2016.

**Michael Ahn** ([ahnnyc.com](http://ahnnyc.com)) produces story-based video games and oversees productions for game, film/TV, and advertising companies.

**Liz Manne** ([lizmanne.com](http://lizmanne.com)) is a management consultant and cultural strategist providing customized advisory services to companies, nonprofits, and media makers.

**Meredith Osborne** is a writer, editor, and researcher specializing in film and television publicity.

**Luz Ortiz** ([www.behance.net/luzo](http://www.behance.net/luzo)) is a graphic designer specializing in social and environmental justice.

## *Project Funders*

**Unbound Philanthropy** works in the field of migration to transform long-standing but solvable barriers to the human rights of migrants and refugees and their integration into host societies. They seek to strengthen social, civic, and economic opportunities and relationships of mutual responsibility and respect across communities. ([unboundphilanthropy.org](http://unboundphilanthropy.org))

**The Nathan Cummings Foundation** is rooted in the Jewish tradition and committed to democratic values and social justice, including fairness, diversity, and community. They seek to build a socially and economically just society that values nature and protects the ecological balance for future generations, promotes humane health care, and fosters arts and culture that enriches communities. ([nathancummings.org](http://nathancummings.org))

## *Fiscal Sponsor*

**Revolutions Per Minute (RPM)** is a nonprofit agency that provides artists with strategy and support for their activism and philanthropy. ([revolutionsperminute.net](http://revolutionsperminute.net))

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