

## Chapter 6

# Music Libraries: How Users Interact with Music Stores and Repositories

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Nowadays, there is a great increase in music distribution over the Internet. This phenomenon is common in many countries and therefore involves many issues such as: ways of distribution, music format, organizing music and copyright issues. The revolution in music prototypes (especially the MP3 music format) urged many people to turn to the Internet for free and easy-to-find music. Music files can be downloaded easily from the Internet anywhere in the world and be burned into a CD or DVD or transferred to a friend via usb-sticks. Music is also widely available as streams in Internet trough various services such as MySpace, YouTube and Spotify. Internet also is full of questions what is legal and what is not, because exchange of files is hard to supervise and the laws between countries also differ. All the legal services are constructed around a digital music library, containing millions of songs. Vast music libraries are easily accessed through Internet from users and serve as the ultimate way to find and listen to the music they desire. In this chapter, some representative popular music libraries are presented. Moreover, the interaction between the user and a music repository or a music store (a web site that sells music over the Internet) is another subject presented in this chapter. In section 1, terms and definitions related to digital music libraries are explained. Section 2 presents some popular music libraries, while section 3 presents some popular Internet music stores. Finally, a special version of a digital music library in streaming format (Internet Radio) is presented in section 4.*

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## 1. DIGITAL MUSIC LIBRARIES ONLINE

During the centuries, music recordings and productions worldwide have created a vast collection of music resources, which lie interspersed in different media on earth. Several years ago, it would imagine impossible to organise suitably and make accessible to any interested user all this huge volume of music data. However, with the advent of new technologies, the digitization of sound gave new perspectives and capabilities to the music community. The growth of Internet, the small (in size) digital music files, the disks of enormous capacity and the development of computer music led the scientists to focus their efforts in organizing great music collections, which are accessible from the Web. The Digital Music Libraries offer their users new ways of interaction with music repositories and music stores online. Some of the capabilities of Digital Music Libraries are: classification, filing and sharing of music, music information retrieval etc.

### 1.1. Terms and Definitions

A library is defined as a catalogued repository of mass produced physical objects (books, journals etc). It is local and generalized and is supported as a line-item in an agency, institutional or corporate budget. It is a specific place with a finite collection of tangible information and it is geographically constrained (Oppenheim & Smithson, 1999).

However, things have changed and nowadays, besides the conventional libraries, another source of accumulated knowledge has become available. The enormous amount of information that exists on the Web has transformed it to a universal public information repository. Digital libraries are a set of electronic resources and associated technical capabilities for creating, searching and using information. In this sense they are an extension and enhancement of information storage and retrieval systems and support the analysis and processing

of information (Bawden & Rowlands, 1999). The content of digital libraries includes data, metadata that describe various aspects of the data (e.g. representation, creator, owner, reproduction rights) and metadata that consist of links or relationships to other data or metadata, whether internal or external to the digital library (Borgman et al, 1996).

Digital libraries are constructed, collected and organized, by (and for) a community of users and their functional capabilities support the information needs and uses of that community. In this sense they are an extension, enhancement and integration of a variety of information institutions as physical places where resources are selected, collected, organized, preserved and accessed in support of a user community (Baker, 1996).

A Digital Music Library (DML) is a digital library for music content. DMLs have the following features:

- Digitized materials are delivered over a network (but not necessarily over the Internet)
- They use technology to allow easy access to the material
- Contents are stored as stand-alone collections
- Allow for simultaneous retrieval of information in multiple formats (audio, visual, textual)

A digital music library requires addressing complex issues of description, representation, organization, and use of music information. The fundamental question to be addressed is the nature of associations that exist among various types of musical objects.

### 1.2. Creating a Digital Music Library: Techniques, Technologies and Media

A single musical work can be manifested in a range of physical formats: as one or more scores, sound recordings, and video recordings, each of

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