Chapter 11
Technological Support for Online Communities Focusing on Music Creation:
Adopting Collaboration, Flexibility, and Multiculturality from Brazilian Creativity Styles

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

People have always found music significant in their lives, whether for enjoyment in listening, performing, or creating. However, music making in modern life tends to be restricted to the domain of the professional artists, instrumentalists, and singers. Since the advent of Web 2.0 and Rich Internet Applications, the authors' research group has been investigating the use of Web-based technology to support novice-oriented computer-based musical activities.

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The main motivation of their work is the belief that no previous musical knowledge should be required for participating in creative musical activities. Consequently, any ordinary user—non-musician or novice—may enhance his creativity through engagement, entertainment, and self-expression. The goal of this chapter is to propose several concepts that emerged during their research concerning novice-oriented cooperative music creation and musical knowledge sharing (a sophisticated activity distinct from the common and well-known music sharing for listening). The authors also discuss key characteristics of Brazilian culture and the creativity styles that inspired their work. They illustrate their perspective by showing how concepts implemented and derived from cases investigated in Brazil represent a comprehensive context for embracing cooperation, flexibility, cross-cultural diversity and creativity. The resulting communityware has music as its intrinsic motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Art and music are basic human functions: Humankind has a burning desire to create as strong as the desire to communicate. People have always found listening, performing, or creating music significant in their lives, whether for enjoyment or for social cohesion. Music has immense value for our society—this is particularly true for developing countries like Brazil, South Africa, or India. However, on a more practical note, music making in modern life tends to be left in the hands of the professional artists, musicians, and singers.

Music creation is considered as mostly a solitary activity performed by musicians. However, given that music has also served as a natural motivation for community formation, new modalities have been created through the use of technology. One example of convergence of social activities and music making is the field of "Networked Music"—subject of a special issue of the Organised Sound Journal (Schedel & Young, 2005). Network music allows people to explore the implications of interconnecting their computers for musical purposes. Because networked music works result from the convergence of social and technological aspects of Internet, this area has attracted the interest of the music technology community. The existing applications—as described in a survey by Barbosa (2003)—have evolved towards sophisticated projects and concepts including, for example, real-time distance performance systems, and various systems for multi-user interaction and collaboration.

Rich Internet Applications such as YouTube (Google, 2009), MySpace (Media, 2009), and Flickr (Yahoo, 2009) have turned the passive user into an active producer of content, bringing into the picture new purposes, like engagement, entertainment and self-expression. Considering music as a social activity for sharing musical experiences (Gurevich, 2006; Miletto, et al., 2011; Keller, et al., 2011), by investigating

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