



Bruno Mars

Bruno Mars is a very successful Grammy award-winning artist who has appeared at the Superbowl and was named on the Forbes '30 Under 30 List' in 2014. He is signed to Atlantic Records, which is part of Warner Music Group. Mars has also been a producer, plays several instruments and voiced a role in the film *Rio II* in 2014. His music covers many different styles including pop, R&B and dance and he has been influenced by artists such as Michael Jackson and Prince.

Justin Bieber

Justin Bieber is an extremely successful singer-songwriter signed to Def Jam Recordings, part of Universal Music Group. Two of his singles, 'Baby' and 'Sorry', have achieved Diamond Awards from the Recording Industry Association of America. He has appeared on the Forbes '30 under 30' list several



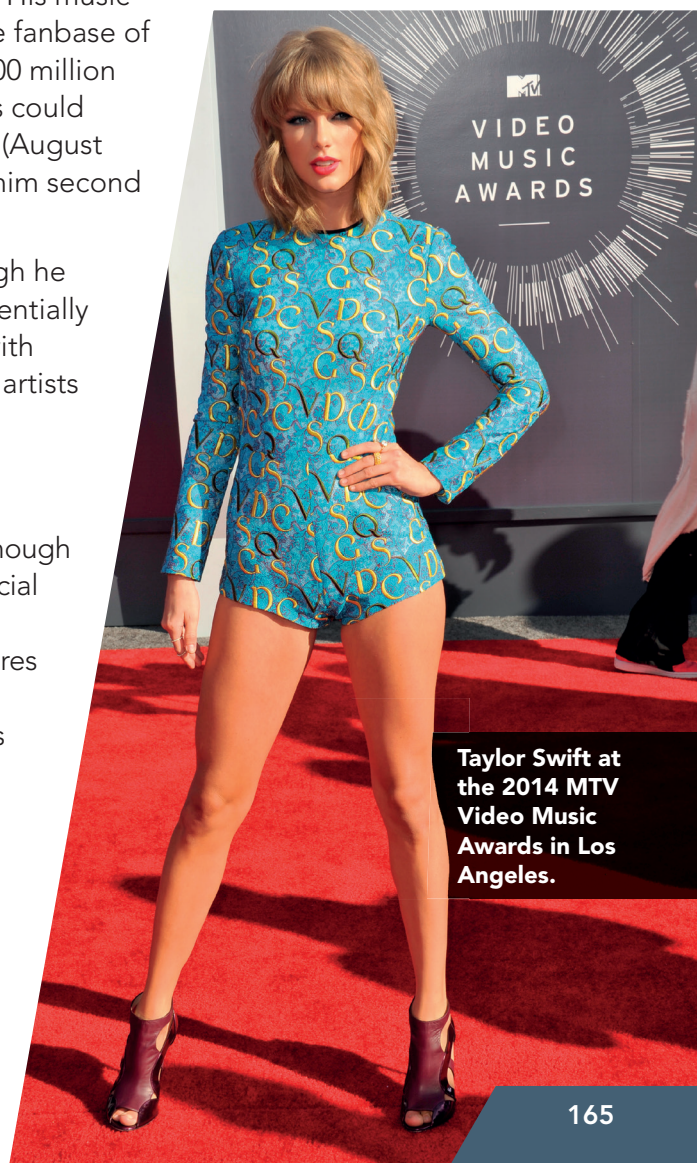
times, and was the highest-earning celebrity on that list in 2014. His music has wide, mainstream appeal and he has developed a very large fanbase of mainly young females, known as 'Beliebers'. When he passed 100 million followers in August 2017, Twitter issued a special emoji that fans could obtain by retweeting the hashtag #100MBeliebers. He currently (August 2021) has 113.9 million followers on this platform, which places him second in the world to Barack Obama.

Most of Bieber's music can be described as pop or R&B, although he has worked with artists from different musical genres, which potentially widens his audience. His collaborations include '10,000 hours' with country duo Dan + Shay and 'Where are U Now' with electronic artists Skrillex and Diplo (Jack U).

Analysing Music Videos

A music video is a 'clip' that usually fits the length of the song, although some have a narrative that begins before the song. It is a commercial product, designed to promote the music, and coincides with the release of the song as a single. It is important that the video captures the key elements of the song, along with the artist's persona, to engage the audience. Many music videos have very large budgets and demonstrate high production values to help sell the product. Exotic settings and special effects are often used to create an aspirational 'fantasy' world.

As a form of advertisement, music videos may be seen as 'disposable' and not intended to last, but they are also media products in their own right, and many are highly creative and artistic. They often use codes and conventions of film and some film directors, such as Michel Gondry, Anton Corbijn and



Taylor Swift at the 2014 MTV Video Music Awards in Los Angeles.

- The video won the MTV Video Music Award for Video of the year and has had over 4.2 billion views on YouTube as of August 2021. It is the ninth most viewed video on the site.

The video for 'Uptown Funk' was released on YouTube in November 2014 and it was widely reported that the record was due for release in January 2015. However, a performance of the song by a contestant on *The X Factor* in early December gained an extremely positive response and this version of the song went to number one in the iTunes chart. The record release was then brought forward and Ronson and Mars topped the charts. As both Simon Cowell's record label Syco and Mark Ronson's label Columbia are part of Sony, this can be seen as a commercial success for the organisation and an example of the benefits of horizontal integration.

Audience responses to the song included model and actress Cara Delevigne posting a video on Instagram of friends performing the track at Thanksgiving, which received over 270 000 likes. This type of post can act like a celebrity endorsement and allow the product to reach a wider audience.

The song was also received positively by other musicians. Chilly Gonzales, for example, said on the BBC's *Newsbeat* that he loved 'Uptown Funk' for its mixture of old, new, classic and modern. This also adds to the status of a product and might encourage more people to buy it.

There were many online responses from fans too, including cover versions of the song and video that were posted on YouTube. Mark Ronson later collaborated with six of these YouTubers to create his own cover version of the song, which shows how audiences can become active participants and create media products themselves.

'Intentions' by Justin Bieber

The song 'Intentions' also features Quavo, a rapper who is part of the hip-hop trio Migos, and is an example of Justin Bieber's collaborations with artists from different genres. It is taken from Bieber's fifth studio album, *Changes*, and was released in February 2020. The set product is the official music video (short version), timed at 3 minutes 44 seconds. It was directed by Michael D. Ratner and has received over 490 million views on YouTube. The short version comprises the song alone, while a longer video (6 minutes 39 seconds) features more detailed exploration of the women's stories, including dialogue outlining their intentions. This extended video premiered on YouTube on 6 February 2020 and now has 79 million views on this platform. It was nominated in the best pop video category of the MTV Video Awards in 2020.

The video is partly filmed at Alexandria House, a women's shelter in Los Angeles, and features three women from different backgrounds – Bahri, Marcy and Angela – who have overcome difficulties and now want to 'give something back' to their communities. Elements of narrative include Justin Bieber and Quavo offering help and opportunities to succeed,



Mark Ronson on stage at the Dcode music festival in Madrid.



Top Tip

Find other examples of audience responses to 'Uptown Funk'.



Quickfire 5.59

What are the benefits to audiences and industries from this type of collaboration between an artist and their audience?



Quickfire 5.60

Why might an artist release two versions of a video, in shorter and extended forms?



The game was described on thegamer.com as allowing players to 'explore the circus while trying to restore the smiles to the **NPCs** found along the way.' Interactive characters included a strong man, frog prince and wolf boy, and players could join in carnival games.

Katy's *Quest* was released by Alienware (a branch of Dell Computers), which also publicised the launch of the game with a livestream on Twitch, demonstrating cross-media promotion. The game also supported two charities: MusiCares, an organisation that supports musicians, and Extra Life, which hosts gaming events to raise money for children's hospitals. Perry has undertaken charity work for many years, especially in support of children. She is a Unicef Goodwill Ambassador and won this organisation's Audrey Hepburn Humanitarian Award in 2016. This project demonstrates a continuation of this work and creates a positive representation of the artist as a 'real' person.

An example of an online and social media marketing campaign: *Red (Taylor's Version)*

In 2021, Taylor Swift began to release re-recorded versions of her first six albums. Her previous record label, Big Machine Records, owned the **masters** of her early recordings and she has been unable to buy them back. Therefore, she has created new versions of the work, including previously unreleased songs 'from the vault' on each.

Swift began promoting *Red (Taylor's Version)* in the Summer of 2021, prior to its release in November.

- On 18 June 2021, Swift announced her next album release in a post that appeared across her social media accounts, including Instagram and Twitter, where it became a pinned tweet. Swift is known for her interaction with her listeners and this message generated a positive response from fans, many of whom referenced their memories of the original album in their comments, reflecting a sense of nostalgia.
- On 23 August, Swift announced that the album was available for pre-sale on vinyl and her website included information about ordering the record. The vinyl record includes 'never before seen photos' and 'handwritten lyrics'.
- On 5 August, she posted a mysterious challenge to fans on her social channels. This type of interaction will be familiar to her audience and she often includes hidden references, or **easter eggs** in her music videos, offering gratification to fans who can spot them.

A short video showed a series of jumbled letters emerging from a metal box, with a soundtrack that seems to be a song played backwards. The post refers to a 'Level', similar to a video game, while her quote 'cackles maniacally' suggests a mischievous enjoyment in setting this difficult puzzle to her avid fans.

The puzzle post received 100 000 likes within minutes and eventually over 4.6 million views on Instagram, and over 5.2 million views on Twitter, along with nearly 147 000 retweets. The comments in response to the post demonstrate that Swift's fans, or 'Swifties', became actively engaged with the challenge and some of them posted pictures of the letters laid out in a grid, with possible solutions highlighted.



Quickfire 5.62

How might a tie-in, such as a video game, help to promote an album?



Key Terms

NCPs (non-player characters)

In a video game, these are characters that are not controlled by the player, but by the game itself.

Masters

The original recordings of, for example, an album. At the time of Swift's first record deal, it was normal for a record label to invest money in an artist in return for owning the recordings. Nowadays, this is less usual due to changes in the industry and the rise of music distribution on the internet.

Easter egg

Usually associated with video games, a hidden feature that needs to be 'unlocked'.

Quickfire 5.63

Why might fans prefer to buy a vinyl recording of an artist's album?



Later that day, Swift posted an 'I unlocked the vault' image, followed by the solution on the following day, revealing the tracks and featured artists on *Red (Taylor's Version)*.

In these posts, the informal mode of address creates a sense that she is speaking directly to her fans and including them in a shared experience where they can 'relive these memories together'.

Quickfire 5.64

How does this example demonstrate active audience behaviour?



The posts were part of the advance promotion of the album, reinforced by the image of the album artwork and a link to pre-order. The 'event' generated a lot of publicity and was reported in news media and in magazines such as *Glamour*.

How Justin Bieber uses online and social media platforms to engage audiences



Justin Bieber's Twitter page promoting the *Changes* album.

YouTube was the platform that led to Justin Bieber's discovery as a music artist. His career reportedly began when the music manager Scott 'Scooter' Braun saw videos of Bieber singing, and he signed his first record deal in 2008. Online sites and social media still play an important role in promoting his music and allowing him to engage with his audience.

The 'Videos' page on the official Justin Bieber website features an extensive range of material, such as official music videos, behind the scenes footage and live performances. Bieber created a number of videos for songs from the *Changes* album, including official promos for the single releases, 'Changes: The Movement', featuring different styles of dance, and 'Nature Visuals', where Bieber performs songs in different settings. The online material for 'Intentions' includes the official music videos (extended and short), an acoustic audio version of the song, and live performances on US primetime television (such as *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*). All of these videos include an option to share on a range of social media sites. This allows fans to experience a range of content and potentially help to publicise Bieber's music by sharing it on their own social channels.

Quickfire 5.65

Which of the uses and gratifications is likely to be fulfilled if an audience member researches the social context of a song?



As well as promoting the single, the video for 'Intentions' shows support for Alexandria House which offers safe and supportive housing for women and children moving from an emergency shelter to a permanent home. There is a message at the end of the video, announcing the \$200 000 Intentions Fund for the organisation, and the video's YouTube page includes a message and link to the Alexandria House website where donations can be made. This aims to raise awareness of the charitable organisation and the issues faced by many women in contemporary society. Audiences might engage further by exploring the Alexandria House website and finding out more about the social context of the song.

Quickfire 5.66

Why might an artist include personal posts and videos on social media?

**Top Tip**

Watch the other videos and live performances of 'Intentions' on Justin Bieber's website. Make notes about the different pleasures these offer to fans.



Justin Bieber also has an active social media presence, including a TikTok account. Here, he posts some personal videos, for example of him singing and dancing at home, giving fans 'exclusive insights'. On 14 February 2021, he performed the first ever full-length live concert by a solo artist on this platform when his 'Journals Live from the Drew House' show was live-streamed on his TikTok page. This demonstrates Bieber's use of new and diverse platforms to reach audiences, possibly with the aim of targeting younger demographics.