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> We are at a crossroads in the music business: with the rise of the internet, the world we live in has changed, and the past is not coming back. But I see the glass as half-full: the internet and social networking are new avenues for the next Bob Dylan to be born on, said Jon Bon Jovi in an interview with the Guardian back in 2010.

Six years later, he is still touring and releasing albums, while digital music downloads and streaming services are the new normal in the industry.

Large companies in the music business, streaming services, publishers and researchers are integrating data and metadata to create increasingly interlinked and integrated services to engage audiences.

Most of all, they are using Linked Open Data to take advantage of the network effect of data integration. As a result, they are offering easier navigation and discovery, for users and systems alike. And they enjoy the flexibility and the easier updates of the semantic data integration model to gain efficiencies and reduce costs.

Let's tour the music streaming business, app creators and publishers around the world to find out how they integrate data to enhance their music-related services.

MusicBrainz Global Tour

MusicBrainz is a source of open music data that collects music metadata (information about artists and music identification) and makes it available to the public. An international community of users contributes, edits and maintains the information on the site.

Companies using this collection of metadata include Google, the BBC, music industry heavyweights like Universal Music, streaming service provider Spotify, Amazon.com, Last.fm, mobile apps and start-ups with public products, etc.

BBC Music: Maiden to Mendelssohn

The BBC music page, BBC Music, uses MusicBrainz for basic data about names and

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discographies. The BBC staff also contribute to the MusicBrainz dataset. BBC Music provides a comprehensive guide to the music content across the BBC and shows relevant links to profiles of artists, playlists, events and tours.

For example, if you search for 'Iron Maiden', you'll get the basic info about the band, their last track played on BBC, their next gig and the latest news featuring the band in the BBC News. And that's information users see without additional searching or browsing.

Iron Maiden are also part of the 'The Shakespeare 400th Anniversary Playlist' featuring 'A Midsummer Night's Dream: Opus 61' by Felix Mendelssohn, for instance. You guessed right: clicking on the latter will return the page with info about the composer, audio tracks played on BBC and mentions of the composer in BBC articles.

But how does the BBC know not to return news pages containing other people named Felix? That's because of the Linked Data and Semantic Web principles, which use Uniform Resource Identifiers (URIs) to represent people, places and things.

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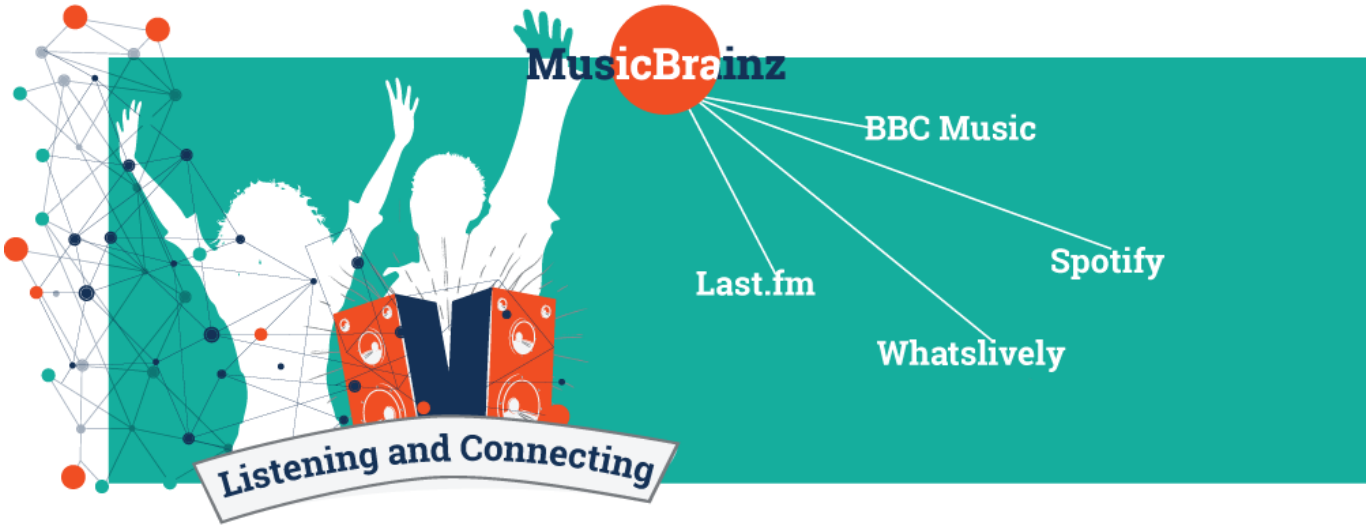

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Spotify: Spot The Artist

Among all other links, the BBC links playlists to Spotify. The Swedish streaming service also uses MusicBrainz. According to MusicBrainz founder Robert Kaye, Spotify uses MusicBrainz data to clean up the data it receives from labels.

Spotify said in September that it had reached 40 million paying subscribers, up by a third from six months ago. This affirms Spotify's top spot in the music streaming business. Its main competitor Apple Music has around 17 million paying subscribers.

At a conference in London earlier this year, MusicBrainz's Kaye said:

> Spotify, Apple Music, YouTube and everyone else is a data silo. As a data nerd, I am kind of pissed off by that.

But as we've seen during our tour, not only 'data nerds' have realized the benefits of

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breaking down data silos and working toward data integration, content interlinking and increasingly personalized apps, albums and artist recommendations.

Last.fm: Listening and Connecting

Another music service that uses MusicBrainz's datasets is Last.fm. It recommends and connects people based on music preferences. It also integrates data, including metadata from MusicBrainz, to show users the listening trends and habits of other Last.fm users.

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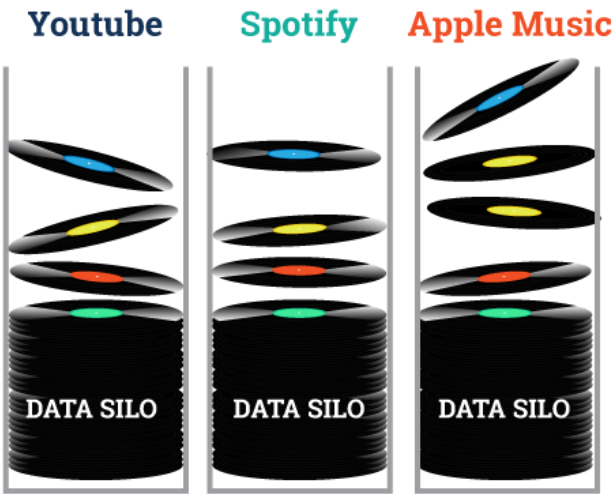

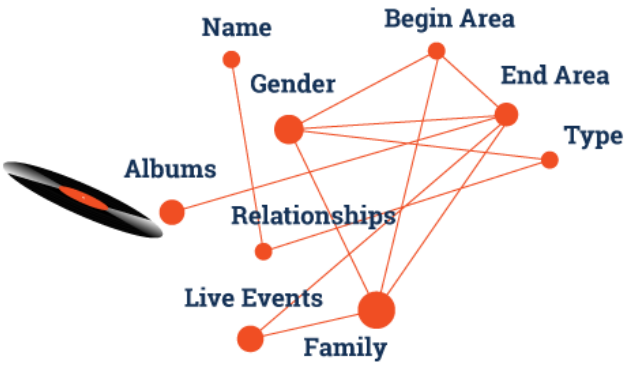

Not only 'data nerds' that have realized that there are benefits in breaking down the data silos and working toward data integration, content interlinking, and increasingly personalized app, album, and artist recommendations.

Music for the Masses

But it's not only the likes of Amazon (for their music-related offerings) and Universal Music (for boosting their own metadata) that use MusicBrainz data.

Australia-developed Whatslively app, one of MusicBrainz's supporters, constantly scans the music that users listen to on their phones or their favorite streaming apps to alert them to concerts in their area. The app integrates music and artist data with social media to allow friends with similar music tastes to quickly exchange information about what gig they'd like to attend together.

And users, especially the huge millennial group of customers, appreciate the easy one-click apps to all favorite artist, album releases or gigs info. This makes the providers of integrated data and services the preferred one-stop shop for music fans. Not surprisingly, customers are rewarding these services with shares, tweets and pins for a higher brand exposure. And, ultimately, with more treaming subscriptions.

To build upon Jon Bon Jovi's words, today it is indeed the Internet, data integration and

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tailored recommendations that stage the music scene for the new Bob Dylans.

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