# University of Salford
## MANCHESTER

# HALLS WITHOUT WALLS:
# PERPETUATION, DEVELOPMENT &
# DISSEMINATION OF THE DISCOURSE ON BLUES
# MUSIC AND BLUES CULTURE IN THE DIGITAL AGE
# (1996-2016)

## Tom ATTAH

School of Arts and Media

University of Salford, Manchester

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, December 2016

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF FIGURES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

## LIST OF TABLES

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TBC

# DECLARATION

TBC

## University of
## Salford
## MANCHESTER

College of Arts & Social Sciences
Room 626 Maxwell Building
The Crescent
Salford, M5 4WT
Tel: 0161 295 5876

09 April 2014

Tom Attah
University of Salford

Dear Tom

**Re:  <u>Ethical Approval Application – CASS130029</u>**

I am pleased to inform you that based on the information provided, the Research Ethics Panel have no objections on ethical grounds to your project.

Yours sincerely

**Deborah Woodman**
**<u>On Behalf of CASS Research Ethics Panel</u>**

x

# ABSTRACT

> The phonograph record has served as the blues musician's equivalent to the
> concert hall almost from the outset.  It has been in effect his hall without walls,
> his *'Musée Imaginaire…'* (Murray, 1978)

This study presents an overview of the effects of technological mediation and specifically, digital remediation, on the discourse on blues music and blues culture since the introduction of the world-wide web in 1989, and the proliferation of computer-mediated communications (CMC) from 1996.

In other words, blues music and blues culture undergo transformations of form and circulation when oral practices are first committed to text as sheet music.  Further evolutions occur as performances are remediated as phonograph records and through various broadcast media during the 20th century.  Each successive transformation generates discourses of authenticity, ownership and value which enable and constrain definitions of the blues aesthetic.

These discourses have remained largely unexamined as part of the latest cycle of remediation to digital formats and computer-mediated virtual environments since 1996.  This study presents the results of examination on key sites using online ethnography, critical discourse analysis, interview and online survey in order to better understand and illustrate the development, dissemination and perpetuation of blues music and blues culture in the digital age.

Specifically, this study considers the ways that blues music and blues culture are perpetuated and affected by computer-mediated communications from the perspectives of performers, cultural workers and consumers, asking what challenges are made manifest in the present by digitally mediated representations of the past.

The study finds that unequal power structures and differentiated notions of individual agency predicated on race, which are inherent in the socio-political construction of the physical world, are reproduced in contemporary on-line and virtual spaces facilitated by information communications technology (ICT) and computer-mediated communications (CMC).  These spaces include the multi-media social networking site Facebook, text-based forums and newsgroups, and the music and video service YouTube.  The study offers suggestions for how this might be addressed in future, and proposes further areas of research in the field, specifically focussing on the interaction of blues music and blues culture with ICT and CMC.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to investigate and report the perpetuation, development and dissemination of blues music and blues culture through digital media. In other words, it is concerned with exploring the technological mediation of the blues following the establishment of the World Wide Web in 1989.  Extending the limits of existing blues historiography which focus largely on analogue modes into a digital environment, this study considers the mediating effects of twentieth century technologies on blues music and culture and further, extends these effects to digital production technologies and computer-mediated dissemination practices in the early twenty-first century.

This thesis examines the role that digital media technologies and their characteristics play in the production, storage and circulation of discourses concerning blues music and blues culture.  In what ways did new creation, distribution and consumption systems enable or constrain performance practices and discourse themes which include value, authenticity and ownership in blues generation, scholarship and fandom during the twentieth century?  How important were and are media technologies in the establishment of the cultural convection currents that have carried blues music and blues culture across space and through time?  How are these practices and themes extended, enhanced and refined in the digital age?

This study is not primarily concerned with the musicological construction of blues music in terms of timbre, harmony, melody, rhythm, or growth (La Rue, 1970) although these genre and stylistic elements do receive consideration throughout the work.  This study is more focused on the challenges to equivocal and egalitarian processes of cultural exchange, acculturation and diffusion – specifically indicating that the treatment of blues music, blues culture, and its practitioners, is about power.  In other words, there is tension over the perpetuation and potential re-creation of the blues and its history in the image of a dominant culture, whose negative treatment of African Americans brought the cultural practice into existence in the first place.

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

Although extensive research has been carried out concerning on-line community (Hine, 2000; Rheingold, 2000) and personal connections in the digital age (Baym, 2010), no single study exists which adequately investigates blues music, blues fandom and blues culture as experienced in contemporary, on-line spaces facilitated by information communications technology (ICT) and computer-mediated communications (CMC).  These spaces include the multi-media social networking site *Facebook*, text-based forums and newsgroups, music streaming sites such as *Spotify* and *LastFM*, and the music and video service *YouTube*.  Continuing the tradition of ethnography and critical discourse analysis which underpins blues scholarship (Evans, 1982; Grazian, 2003; Lomax, 1993; Oliver, 1965; Titon, 1994), this study engages with virtual, on-line communities in order to better observe and analyse contemporary themes in the constituting discourse on blues.

Exploring the influence of folklorists, artists and other cultural workers, this study identifies the persistence of the blues as supported by a continuum of transforming media.  It reflects on the vital role of critics, archivists and collectors in the development of blues music and blues culture, considers how blues expertise is constituted in the present day and additionally, discusses the changing identity and role of the archive in the digital age.   As societies move toward information age concepts that are summarised by Giddens (1990) and Baym (2002) as notions of de-centralised community, instantaneous direct access to content, and the re-conceptualisation of linear time and plurality of self in digital spaces (Hine, 2000, pp. 6-7), through what media and method is the blues perpetuated, developed and disseminated as a living and vernacular artistic currency?

To date, most studies in the field of blues have only focused on the music and culture as created and experienced in the analogue twentieth century, and researchers have not considered processes of transformation and development with reference to digital media in any serious depth.  Through the application of traditional and online ethnography, remediation theory, critical discourse analysis and case studies including the field work of folklorists and song-collectors John and Alan Lomax and the performance careers of artists such as B.B. King, Eric Clapton and Jo Bonamassa, I propose an

approach that extends the study of the blues beyond the analogue and into a twenty-first century context, drawing new conclusions concerning the perpetuation, dissemination and development of blues music and blues culture in the present day.  In other words – I ask how new, digital media technologies have interacted with their analogue predecessors to support the persistence of blues music and blues culture between 1989 and 2016.

## Media, mediation, remediation

Blues music and blues culture undergo transformations of form and circulation when oral practices are first transcribed as sheet music in the early twentieth century.  For example, microtonal variations in vocal lines or performance *senza misura*[1] first observed by Peabody (1903, p. 151) which form part of rural African American performance practice are necessarily brought into the western European 12-tone notation system as "transitional flat thirds and sevenths…to suggest the typical slurs of the negro voice," (Handy, 1941, p. 99).  This representation of African American melodic performance is further regulated by sub-divisions of beats and bars in order to facilitate ensemble performance.  This loss of melodic resolution and simplification of rhythmic subtlety through transcription is a material effect of sheet music on the performance which it represents.  In this example, the sheet music is the *medium*, and its role of conveying a representation of a performance to an audience is called *mediation*.  This transformation can further be regarded as a cultural development from orality to literacy (Ong, 1982).

Further evolutions occur as blues performances are captured as phonograph records and transmitted through various broadcast media during the twentieth century.  To take three examples of this effect: firstly, improvisations may come to be treated as fixed compositions, and studied as such; secondly, mistakes or accidents may be preserved and later normalised by listeners and performers; and thirdly, musicians may repeat their own recorded improvisations (Katz, 2010, p. 79).  Thus, in addition to a process of mediation, the transfer of content between media – in this example,

---

[1] in free time, with no concern for fixed musical metre

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

from sheet music to a phonograph record or in more recent times from analogue media such as

phonograph records or magnetic tape to digital files – also has effects on the music being

represented.  Ong (1982) defines this phenomenon as the advent of 'secondary orality,' (pp. 135-

138). In media studies, this passage of represented material from one media to another is described

as *remediation*, a term first applied by Bolter and Grusin (1999).  These and other examples will be

discussed in greater depth as part of a continuum of technological mediation.

Throughout the twentieth century, each of these successive transformations has contributed themes

of authenticity, ownership and value to the discourse on blues. These themes have remained largely

unexamined as part of the latest cycle of development to digital formats and computer-mediated

virtual environments since 1989.  This research project undertakes such an examination on key sites

of contemporary discourse in order to better understand and illustrate the development,

dissemination and perpetuation of blues music and blues culture in the digital age.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the thesis, outline its structure, and to provide working

definitions of key terms that will be employed throughout the rest of this project.  The next section

begins therefore with a discussion of the term 'discourse' such as it applies firstly to cultural studies,

and secondly, as it will be applied within this project.  Recurring themes within blues discourse are

then explored in the form of a review of the relevant literature in the field.  The chapter continues

with an overview of contemporary sites of discourse, setting the scene for the following section

which outlines a historical context for ICT through an overview of the mechanical reproduction of

blues music between 1900 and 1989.  The final parts of the chapter provide a general review of the

literature in the field.  I then sketch out the methodological approach used in collecting and

analysing the data in this project before the more in-depth description in chapter 2 and in closing,

describe the specific theme, subject matter and focus of each of the following nine chapters of the

thesis.

## 1.1: Blues discourse

My approach to discourse is informed by the work of French philosopher and historian of ideas

Michel Foucault, for whom discourses are '…practices that systematically form the objects of which

they speak' (1989, p. 49), and are a means of both producing and organising meaning (Edgar &

Sedgwick, 1999, p. 117).  In other words, the act of speaking or writing authoritatively about a topic -

using 'discourse' as a verb - brings objects into being within the field of a discussion, which is to use

discourse as a noun.  As Horner (1999, p. 18) argues '…the discourse used to describe popular music

has material consequences for how that music is produced, the forms it takes, how it is experienced,

and its meanings.' Each of these descriptions points toward the constituting power of discourse; it is

the discussion of a topic and the flow of themes within that discussion which makes the topic real in

the world.

The idea that discourse reifies its subjects is particularly important for any study of the blues, whose

definition is fluid and contested throughout the twentieth century.  In other words, 'Blues' in

reference to music and culture means different things to different people at different times and in

different places.   For some scholars, the blues is a site of ideological incorporation and resistance

(Baker, 1984; L. R. Jones, 1963), yet for others, including musicians and cultural workers, blues is a

purely commercial popular musical enterprise (Grazian, 2004; S. A. King, 2011; Ryan, 2011).  Certain

researchers and writers regard the blues as an essential musicological forebear of Jazz  (Blesh, 1946;

Murray, 1978), and others variously consider blues as: socio-political evidence of the existence of

the negro proletariat (Gellert & Siegmeister, 1936); a barometer of and map for the changing

fortunes of African Americans through the twentieth century (Barlow, 1989; Levine, 2007); the well-

spring of American popular musical identity and practice during the twentieth century (Small, 1987);

a revisionist hegemonic construction (Filene, 2000; Hamilton, 2007) and a site of myth-making

(Morrison, 1992; Schroeder, 2004).  Additionally, for some, the blues represent '…the strangest,

most moving, and most thrilling songs I had ever heard,' (Oliver, 1989, p. 59) and for others, simply

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

'…good-time dance music…group and joy music' (Shaw, 1979, p. xvi). With the above in mind, it may be that genre is itself a matter of discourse (Förnas, 1995).

Muir (2010, p. 1) identifies the music that emerges from '…the black subculture…into the American mainstream in the second decade of the twentieth century' as 'popular blues', whilst Davis (1995, p. 59) identifies music from the same period as '…blues-in-name-only'. Similarly, in a 2013 survey concerning 'the relevance of blues for a modern audience,'[2] a researcher listed no fewer than 34 different styles of blues including: acoustic blues, blues-rock, blues shouter, British blues, Chicago blues, classic female blues, contemporary blues, country blues, Delta blues, Detroit blues, electric blues, harmonica blues, hill country blues, hokum blues, jazz blues, jump blues, piano blues, Piedmont blues, rhythm & blues, slide guitar blues, soul blues, swamp blues, Texas blues - and still added a box for 'other'; in the early 1960s, Charles Keil was referring to 'phony,' blues (Keil, 1966, p. 221).

The aim of the above examples is to illustrate the multiplicity of definitions that have constituted the blues from various cultural perspectives throughout the twentieth century. These definitions do not encroach on the purely musicological, which typically include reference to: numbers of bars/measures; tempo; chord types; the use of I, IV and V7 chords; blues form; blues scales; cyclic form; A-A-B lyric stanza patterns and triplet swing. Reference to these elements prevails in very many blues texts e.g. (Barlow, 1989, p. 8; F. Davis, 1995, p. 4; Gioia, 2008, p. 14; Moore, 2012, pp. 126-127) but strict adherence to "twelve-bar-blues" or "the tradition of call-and-response," (Wald, 2010, pp. 3-4) as a marker for what constitutes a piece of blues music excludes almost as many compositions as it embraces. To further complicate matters, from a modern, capitalist perspective 'blues' has also been described as '…a broad range of popular music primarily created by and for black Americans…thus it is more a trade category than a genre,' (Ripani, 2006, p. 6). The origins of

---

[2] https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BluesFanSurvey

these problematic and competing academic, socio-political and vernacular conceptions of blues music and blues culture during the twentieth century is explored in Chapter 2.

As this thesis argues, these diverse and competing views of what-counts-as-blues are facilitated and exacerbated by technological mediation and discourse.  Thus, in agreement with blues scholar Elijah Wald, 'I have no problem with people using whatever definition [of blues] they like, as long as they grant that it is not the only one.'  (2004, p. 4).  By tracing the history of these mediations and conceptions through the twentieth century, and by assessing the impact of new media on the discourse, this thesis reaches conclusions about the hitherto unexplored position and trajectory of the blues between 1989 and 2016.

## Key themes in blues discourse: red threads

In Greek mythology, the hero Theseus entered a labyrinth[3] in order to slay the Minotaur, a half-man, half-bull creature.[4]  In order to navigate his way out of the trap, Theseus was given a ball of crimson twine by the princess Ariadne which he used to re-trace his path to the exit.   This story from antiquity provides a metaphor for the navigation of any potentially labyrinthine topic through the application of consistent reference points.  As mentioned earlier, the effect of the discourse on blues is to enable, constitute and constrain competing conceptions of blues music and culture at different points of the twentieth century.  With this in mind, I will now introduce the 'red threads' that will guide us through the thesis' survey of the discourse on blues.  This project has identified persistent discourse themes which include: representation; geographic location; legal and cultural ownership; ethnicity; the legacy of slavery; technology; gender; sexuality; commerciality; temporality; separation/othering; socio-political positioning; authenticity.  This list may be further distilled to meta-themes of power, ownership and representation.

---

[3] A complicated, irregular network of passages and paths; an intricate and confusing arrangement (Stevenson & Waite, 2011, p. 795).
[4] There is no single source for this legend.  This and other stories concerning Theseus descend from the Greek oral tradition and were transcribed by (among others): Plutarch (45-120 AD), Ovid (43 BC-17AD) and Horace (65BC-8BC).

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

Although scholars had examined African American musical practices in the first half of the twentieth century (Peabody, 1903; Scarborough & Gulledge, 1925), most early writing on blues is found in work concerned with jazz (Blesh, 1946; Mezzrow & Wolfe, 1946) which situates blues music as a stylistic antecedent to the jazz style. *The Country Blues* (Charters, 1959) was the first full-length survey to consider blues as a genre in its own right and is significant for several reasons. Firstly, the book makes a clear distinction between '"city" blues and country-blues styles' (p. 44). Secondly, Charters' book also marginalises the popular sheet-music blues of the 1920s and the contribution of female blues singers, in order concentrate on phonograph records and the recordings of male performers; in so doing, the text re-casts negro 'songsters', 'musicianers' and 'music physicians'[5] (Odum, 1911, p. 259) as *bluesmen*. Thirdly, the book romanticises and hegemonically constitutes the country blues as an American roots form, and fourthly the work inspired young folklorists to set out in search of the performers mentioned in the book who would be re-discovered as part of the American folk revival of the early 1960s. Returning to the reifying power of discourse - as Jeff Todd Titon observed of Charters' book "…our discoveries, like those of the European explorers, were mixtures of invention and interpretation, and in a way of finding our object, blues, we constituted it" (Titon, 1993, pp. 222-223).

*The Country Blues* is the opening statement in a discourse which is initially answered by blues collector James McKune and a group of his acolytes who named themselves The Blues Mafia[6]. Charters' book is based on best-selling blues phonograph records for artist inclusion, and in this suggests a canon of artists and songs. In response to this suggested canon, McKune wrote that:

---

[5] "In general, "songster" is used to denote any negro who regularly sings or makes songs; "musicianer" applies often to the individual who claims to be expert with the banjo or fiddle; while "music physicianer" is used to denote more nearly a person who is accustomed to travel from place to place, and who possesses a combination of these qualities; or each or all of the terms may be applied loosely to any person who sings or plays an instrument." (Odum, 1911, p. 259).

[6] This group includes: Blues historian Steve Calt, record producer Lawrence Cohn, musician John Fahey, record collector Bill Givens, guitarist and singer Stefan Grossman, blues enthusiast Tom Hoskins, collector and writer Don Kent, record producer Bernie Klatzko, collector and music producer Nick Perls, collector Phil Spiro and collector, archivist and producer Pete Whelan.

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

> 'All of us have been interested in who the *great* country blues singers are, not
>
> in who sold best...I write for those who want a different basis for evaluating
>
> blues singers.  This basis is their relative greatness, or competence, as country
>
> blues singers' (McKune, 1960).

As a result two members of the blues mafia, Bill Givens and Pete Whelan, set up the Origin Jazz

Library record label in 1960 and released *Really! The Country Blues* (1961) to indicate artists who

they believed were more important than those cited by Charters in the creation of the country blues

as a style.  It is important to note that both Charters' book and McKune's opinion are based not on

first-hand experience of real-time performances, but on their response to media; they listened to

phonograph records in order to experience blues music (Oliver, 1984, p. 274).  As I will illustrate later

in this chapter, the discussion concerning the value of blues that are best-selling as opposed to blues

that are accorded value by aficionados and fans is still taking place, the statements and responses

facilitated and accelerated by ICT, CMC and other new media.

Discourse themes of ownership and separation surface in the second full-length scholarly work on

blues to be published in the twentieth century; Paul Oliver's *Blues Fell This Morning* (1960).  This

account of the social and economic conditions which gave rise to the blues between 1865 and 1960

is notable not only for the depth and quality of its survey, but also for having been written without

Oliver having visited the United States.  Whilst Oliver is at pains to indicate that the history of the

blues is not necessarily the history of all black people in America, the book further underlines

romanticised, stereotypical images of bluesmen.  Further, Oliver makes plain statements concerning

blues performers:

> The apparent fact remains that only the American black whether purple-black
>
> or so light-skinned as to be indistinguishable from the sun-tanned white
>
> neighbour, can sing the blues.  If there is a conclusion to be drawn from this it is
>
> that the blues has grown with the development of black society on American

soil; that it has evolved from the peculiar dilemma of a particular group, isolated

by skin pigmentation or that of its ancestors. (Oliver, 1960, p. 4)

Such wording positions the blues as the exclusive cultural property of African Americans; in fact

throughout the book, no white blues performers are mentioned.   This problematic essentialist and

racialising theme addresses notions of geography and sociology and is taken up by subsequent

commentators.  Charles Keil (1966, pp. 221-224) suggests a taxonomy of valid blues styles before

declaring "I am white" (p. 225) and attempting to explain his position in the "dominant white

culture." Writing in 1968, Ralph Gleason, founder of the Monterey Jazz Festival addresses the

question "Can white men sing the blues?" and says:

The blues is back man's music, and whites diminish it at best or steal it at worst.

In any case they have no moral right to use it.

Such polarising, binary statements lend weight to arguments of '…appropriation, commodification

and an end to innovation,' (Potter, 1999, p. 79) which proliferate in blues music and blues culture.

Gleason's argument is pursued by Rudinow (1994), Taylor (1995) and Rudinow  (1995) who ask – if

black artists can sing opera or Schubert or country music, then why cannot white people sing blues?

Ideas of cultural ownership are further addressed by LeRoi Jones (aka Amiri Baraka):

The idea of a white blues singer seems an even more violent contradiction of

terms that the idea of a middle class blues singer.

…the above sentence seemingly directed squarely at non-American Caucasian performers who

were performing in the blues style.  Jones' *Blues People* (1963) is the first survey by an African

American of the field.  Jones argued that the blues "represented a clearly definable step by the

Negro back into the mainstream of American society,"  (L. R. Jones, 1963, p. 86) although this step

was to confirm a stereotypical image at odds with the prevailing mood of the civil rights movement.

Jones further argues that the blues represents a continuum of black creative activity; 'The most

expressive Negro music of any given period will be an exact reflection of what the Negro himself

is…a portrait of the Negro in America at that particular time,' (1963, p. 137) and in this illustrates

the 'double-consciousness' (Du Bois, 1903) that allowed African Americans to both recognise and

satirise their position in society.

Examples of the prevalent themes in the blues discourse can be found in the autobiography of

William Christopher 'W.C.' Handy (1873-1958).  Handy was an African American trumpet-player,

composer and arranger whose encounters with itinerant and academically untrained black

musicians lead to his transcription of elements of rural folk-blues in order that other musicians

could begin to reproduce its sounds and stylistic characteristics.  For this reason, he styled himself

as the *Father of the Blues.*  Writing in 1941 about an encounter that had taken place at a Tutwiler

train station almost 40 years previously in 1902, W.C. Handy says:

> A lean, loose-jointed Negro had commenced plucking a guitar beside me while I
>
> slept.  As he played, he pressed a knife on the strings of a guitar in a manner
>
> popularized by Hawaiian guitarists who use steel bars. The effect was
>
> unforgettable. His song, too, struck me instantly.
>
> "Goin' where the Southern cross' the Dog,"
>
> The singer repeated the line three times, accompanying himself on the guitar with
>
> the weirdest music I had ever heard.' (Handy, 1941, p. 74)

Contained in this narrative extract are examples of the themes germane to this study: authenticity;

othering and constraint; evidence of technological mediation in the production of the music via the

affordances of instrumentation – specifically, the steel string acoustic guitar; a transfer of form and

transmission media from the oral to the written as Handy will take elements of the bluesman's song

and use it in his own sheet-music arrangements; the introduction of a retrospective continuity that

places Handy at the centre of the action and, through the reference to 'Hawaiian guitarists,'

evidence of a tonal undercurrent concerned with issues of socio-political adaptation and ownership.

In addition, by the time of writing, Handy had recognised the commercial value of his first blues. After its publication as an instrumental piece in 1912, Handy had sold the rights to 'Memphis Blues' to New York Publisher Theron C. Bennett for "…fifty dollars and a thousand unsold copies for another fifty dollars" (Charters, 1959, p. 40).  Bennett commissioned a new arrangement for the music as well as persuading George "Honey Boy" Evans to feature the piece with his minstrel troupe.  By the end of 1913, the piece had sold fifty thousand copies.  Bennett subsequently commissioned George A. Norton to create a lyric for the piece and upon its recording by both the Victor and Columbia companies in 1914, 'Memphis Blues' became the first song with the word 'blues' in its title to achieve national rather than regional notoriety as the twenty-eighth best-selling song of that year (Muir, 2010, p. 18). With this in mind, it is easy to understand how issues of commerciality and ownership were high in Handy's mind as he did not re-acquire the copyright to this profitable landmark piece until 1940.  Let us look in greater depth at Handy's offered narrative of his discovery of the blues.

The focus in the narrative is on the ragged, itinerant songster and less on the observer - Handy, a professional, trained musician journeying from one town to the next in order to discharge his contractual obligations as a performer.  There is no indication that the songster is himself a professional engaged in the same activity, despite the fact that he is carrying what is for that time a relatively advanced piece of performance technology – the steel string acoustic guitar - and performing material sufficiently engaging to command the attention of not only another discerning person and fellow traveller, but another musician.

W.C. Handy was himself an African American.  Throughout *Father of the Blues* his descriptions of the '…primitive southern Negro,'  and '…more sophisticated Negro, or… [the] white man,' (p. 100) allude to a complex intra-black class structure to whose higher echelons the 'outsider,' bluesmen

were not admitted.  That aside, this encounter is interesting for two reasons:  Firstly, Handy was -

and still is - the self-styled *'Father of the Blues,'* suggesting that he is the style's progenitor.  Whilst

this may be partially true in the written form of the genre, this narrative indicates that Handy is in

reality, encountering the already-existing tradition. Secondly, this extract alludes to the existence of

two distinct African American performance traditions; one that is firmly modelled after the

European example – that of brass bands and ensemble performances - and another that appears to

be wholly indigenous to the United States; an adaptive, folk-based, rural style (Levine, 2007, p.

231).  This dichotomy, its intersection with technology and its subsequent effects will be discussed

in greater detail in chapter 3.

Additionally, the extract presents one of the first instances of the story of the blues being

mythologised, and an example of the text telling us more about the social position and interests of

the narrator than the actual history that is being related.  Rather than marking the moment that the

blues was discovered, I suggest that this extract represents the moment when the blues as a

romanticised commercial artefact is formally invented.  Handy's notation of what was until then a

largely orally transmitted style (Evans, 1982; Titon, 1994) helps to engender a distinction between a

high- and low- blues performance culture.  On the 'low-' side there is the non-literate folk tradition,

and on the high- side there is the literate theatre tradition.  In the popular imagination, the blues

comes out of the fields and into the recording studios and is a style derived from the field hollers of

slavery.   It is a style predominantly performed and owned by men, and represents the primal,

essential, un-commercial and unmediated *cri de couer*[7] of a displaced and emerging nation.   Whilst

this is not necessarily a lie, it is equally true that the blues was named and established by educated

African Americans and initially performed by professional singers in an established performance

milieu as part of an existing black performance continuum.  As A.Y. Davis (1998) and Muir (2010)

argue, these 'popular' blues are a style that is written down in the main initially by white men and

---

[7]A passionate appeal or complaint. (Stevenson & Waite, 2011, p. 338)

performed principally by women backed by trained musical ensembles through vaudeville. These women, previously described as 'coon shouters' and re-invented as 'Blues Singers' (Abbott & Seroff, 2007, p. 4) include Mamie Smith, Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith and other professional entertainers firmly entrenched in a Western-European styled theatre- and stage- performance tradition.  It is also true that the birth of the popular blues takes place during the 'Harlem Renaissance,' of the 1920s – at the time, the greatest flowering of African American literature and artistry yet seen in the United States.  This was also a time of newspapers such as the Chicago Defender, record labels such as Black Swan and theatre circuits, specifically the Theatre Owner's Booking Association, each of which catered for a market of some 11 million African Americans who made up one-tenth of the US population (Hobbs & Stoops, 2002).  In other words, the mediation of the blues as described by Handy had important effects on the perpetuation, development and dissemination of blues music, blues culture, and its constituting discourse.

## Contemporary sites of blues discourse

"Technologically possible manipulations determine what in fact can become a discourse."

(Kittler, 1990, p. 232)

Though traditional sites of discourse including books, magazines, and academic journals remain active, since 1989 the discourse on blues has been increasingly conducted via the internet in on-line spaces.  Here, individual users, organisations and institutions are able to establish websites dedicated to any focus or topic, and to interact and share content.  This content may be static images, text-based documents, or reproductions of primary sources.  Increasingly, video and audio content that has been converted to digital files from original, analogue formats such as video tape or phonograph records are displayed, discussed and exchanged.  Quite apart from the problematic implications that this new availability and transferability holds for archives and copyright holders, the internet and its constituent websites have facilitated the development of online communities (Baym, 1999; Hine, 2000; Rheingold, 1993).  These online or 'virtual' communities may be widely

separated geographically, but are able to form around ideological and/or cultural tastes; in addition, these communities may cohere across regional, continental or demographic boundaries (Shuker, 2012, p. 38).  This study focusses on communities who discover and perpetuate blues music and blues culture.  In order to do this, two specific types of online community receive attention: the discussion forum, and the social network.

Whilst the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, a discussion forum differs from a social network in several important ways.  Although both can be described as online communities and are accessed by computing devices, a discussion forum is primarily dedicated to the presentation or discussion of a single topic or focus, where a social network is concerned with the presentation and interaction of individual members across a number of intersections. For example: the 6,146 members of the *Blindman's Blues Forum*  have at the time of writing posted 641,028 messages under 46,454 topics, all of which are directly or elliptically linked to aspects of blues music and/or blues culture (Community_Statistics, 2014).  By contrast, the 1.06 billion monthly users of social networking site Facebook are not primarily united around a single topic, although groups may cohere around shared interests. In other words, social networking sites such as Facebook are focused on individuals and their multiple interests and activities.  Exchanges within discussion forums are broadly text-based with the occasional use of audio or video material, whereas interactions across social media are heavily laden with digital pictures, moving images and sound. Finally, it is possible to have forums within social networks – and this study will examine one such community, *The Real Blues Forum.*[8]

---

[8] *The Real Blues Forum* is not the only blues-oriented community operating on Facebook.  *The Official British Blues Rock Group* (https://www.facebook.com/groups/britishbluesrock/) has 4,410 members, but the group's posts are largely restricted to posting links to YouTube videos and occasionally advertising live events; the *Bluesmania Group* (https://www.facebook.com/groups/bluesmania/) has 6,603 members but again, has a very low level of interactivity between members who mostly post links to videos.  Finally, *The Solo Blues Group* (https://www.facebook.com/groups/112339902187696/) numbers 11,248 members and, similarly to the previously mentioned groups has very little direct or conversational interaction between its users.  The Real Blues Forum however features lively interactions between its members and is a hub for several spin-off forums:  the *RBF UK 78s* forum, the *RBF Ebony Magazine* forum, the *RBF Paul Oliver Forum, The RBF Book*

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

Of course, social networking sites and discussion forums are not the only type of internet site where users may congregate to discuss blues music and blues culture. Weblogs or 'blogs' are personalised spaces where individuals record opinions and provide links to other sites on a regular basis (Stevenson & Waite, 2011, p. 147), and the micro-blogging site *Twitter* is also a contemporary site of public discourse and exchange. For the purposes of this project however, blogs represent a highly personalised journal-style worldview rather than the gathering of a community, and twitter's 140-character limit per message provides hermeneutic challenges. Although material from both of these sources is referred to generically and in passing, they do not form a major focus for the study.

## New media and its impact on blues discourse

The perpetuation of blues discourse themes through new media has a number of effects, which are discussed in greater depth in chapters 3 to 9. However, it is worth briefly reviewing some of these ideas as part of this introduction. In a general sense, McLuhan (1962, 1964) has explored the influence of technology and new media on discourse and human behaviour. His predictions concerning evolving media and the 'instantaneous movement of information from every quarter,' (1987, p. 254) are relevant to this study, and his suggestions concerning the remediation of television and the changing nature of the library (McLuhan, McLuhan, & Zingrone, 1995, pp. 295-296) dovetail with Foucault's writing on the archive as a seat of knowledge and power (Foucault, 1989).

How do these ideas affect blues music and blues culture as discussed online? The ethnographic strand of this study is concerned with the practices through which new media technology is used and understood in everyday settings, such as these relate to blues music. As Marvin explains: 'media are not fixed natural objects; they have no natural edges. They are constructed complexes of habits, beliefs, and procedures embedded in elaborate cultural codes of communication' (Marvin, 1988, p.

---

*Room, RBF Flicks, The RBF Audio Archive, RBF discographical research* and most recently, *The Real Caucasian Blues Forum*.

8).  In other words, the discussion of blues music and blues culture takes place within a community.

Within this community there is a demarcation between publics and experts.  One example of

expertise is to have knowledge of texts.  In cultural theory, a text may be defined as 'a meaningful

structure…a photograph, a song' (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008, p. 364).  In the case of blues music, these

texts may be phonograph records, discographies or artist biographies (Schwartz, 2007, p. 25).  We

can learn a great deal about how social groups construct their communities by observing their use of

texts, and their evaluation of others' uses (Marvin, 1988, p. 7).

Another effect of new media and the availability of content is to blur this demarcation line and to

constitute experts and publics in new ways.  For example, the ability to share content, ideas and

opinions is now available to more community members than in previous years and this sharing may

take place instantaneously (Hine, 2000, p. 6) and without peer-review.  In another example, the

nature of the archive changes from a bricks-and-mortar physical space to a decentralised store of

information which is accessible from multiple points in time and space, where content may be

copied and shared beyond its point of origin.  Building on this example, users or interested members

may listen to recordings previously 'lost,' or considered rare with relative ease via the audio-visual

site *YouTube*.  Of interest in this last example are the number of clips in YouTube that are

accompanied by images of a) the record itself playing (xodusattack, 2008) or b) a static image of the

record label (JoeOliverIsStillKing, 2010).  These images underscore the primacy of the playback

medium, itself an abstraction of the 'aura' (Benjamin, 1936) of the original performance.

This last example demonstrates how patterns anchored in older media that have provided the stable

currency of social exchange are re-examined, challenged, and defended with the introduction of

new media (Marvin, 1988, p. 4).  Chapter 6 investigates this specific point with regard to what is

described as 'Cultural Capital,' defined as 'all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction,

that present themselves as rare, and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation'

(Bourdieu & Nice, 1977, p. 178).  In other words, despite the availability of rare blues content online

and its circulation within the community, there are still individuals who retain a store of materials that are not publically available.  This retention of materials confers specific status on these individuals within blues circles.  In this way, new media provide new platforms on which old groups confront one another.  Old habits of transacting between groups are projected onto new technologies that alter, or seem to alter, critical social distances (Marvin, 1988, p. 5).

## 1.2: The Technology

### Phonograph effects

"The phonograph record has served as the blues musician's equivalent to the concert hall almost from the outset." (Murray, 1978, p. 183)

Undeniably of black origin, blues music was disseminated initially by public performance and subsequently sheet music, waxed cylinders and phonograph recordings (Muir, 2010, p. 15).  Katz (2010, pp. 9-46) observes that capturing sound in media brings "phonograph effects," which include: tangibility, portability, invisibility, repeatability, temporality, receptivity and manipulability.  In other words, as soon as a recording is made, it exists as an artefact which may be commodified beyond the original performance and may be touched, held, stored, traded and collected in a way that an ephemeral performance may not; it may be moved beyond its point of origin to other locations in space and time; early audio recordings made no concession to visual representation beyond the packaging of the record and so the performer was largely invisible; the recording could be played repeatedly with the only limitation being the condition of the media under repeated use; the media placed a limit on the amount of time that could be recorded - early discs had a recording time of a little over 4 minutes per side (Katz, 2010, p. 31); early limitations of the recording process and format affected which sounds could and could not be accurately represented; and once captured, it is possible to alter recordings with post-production effects and by adding or correcting musical parts.

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

Rothenbuhler (2007) discusses phonograph effects in specific relation to blues music.  Discussing the work of blues musician Robert Johnson (1911-1938) - a performer considered by some to be the greatest of all pre-war guitar-playing blues singers - he writes:

> Johnson learned his craft from records and radio, and polished his songs to
> be recorded, he effectively developed a 'for-the-record' aesthetic that made
> his music sound different to that of his Delta contemporaries and many
> others who used musical techniques honed in performance for an audience.
> Decades later, when a 'for-the-record' aesthetic was the taken-for-granted
> standard in popular musical culture, Robert Johnson's records sounded
> better than those of his contemporaries, and the audience from the 1960s to
> today has had a reason to think that he and his music were special.

…locating the musician's work firmly in the era of phonographic modernity.

For many blues fans and scholars during the 1960s blues revival, their first contact and most enduring relationship with the music was through long-playing (LP) phonograph records (Schwartz, 2007).  The collection and trade of these discs afforded the recordings a certain value beyond performance, as well as bestowing status on the collector as an expert (Katz, 2010, p. 171).  The collation of complete discographies for certain artists and recording companies was an early and intense project for enthusiasts first in the United Kingdom and then in the United States (Titon, 1993, p. 226), whilst other collectors went to extreme – in many cases expensive - lengths in order to acquire specific examples of blues music on record (Wardlow & Komara, 1998).   In an environment where not all available material was recorded and not all recorded material was released (Sanjek, 2009), some recordings acquired mythical status.  In addition, physical limitations on the pressing and storage of vinyl records meant that in many cases, certain titles were only available for a short time, increasing their rarity value in later years.  The introduction of compact cassette and other tape-based media during the mid- to late- 20th century greatly increased the portability of music and

also enhanced the ability of individuals to copy, compile, duplicate and distribute material without

permission from artists, their recording

companies, or publishers.

## Television, Radio and Film

I have so far focused on physical audio media

such as phonograph records, wax cylinders,

and magnetic tape.  Blues music and blues

culture has also been transmitted and

proliferated through broadcast and audio-

visual representation; by film, radio and

through television.  The popular blues were

represented on film as early as 1929.  Blues

singer Bessie Smith starred in *St Louis Blues* in

a dramatisation of the song's lyric, and in this

may constitute the first 'blues video.'  During



*Figure 1: The publicity poster from the 1929 movie 'St Louis Blues,' which featured a singing role for Bessie Smith*

the 1940s and 1950s in the United States, radio became an important media for targeting African

American communities with music, news and advertisements.  From 1941, blues Harmonica player

Sonny Boy Williamson II performed blues material live on the 'King Biscuit Time' show on KFFA based

in Helena Arkansas and other stations across the region including WROX in Clarksdale and WAZF in

Yazoo City.  In 1949, station WDIA in Memphis adopted an all-black format, mindful of the

purchasing power of the African American community (Barlow, 1999).

In the United Kingdom, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) broadcast shows that brought

blues music to those who could not afford to purchase records.  Folklorist Alan Lomax created a

series called *Folk Songs of the Southern States* which aired during 1960 and Paul Oliver also

presented occasional shows.  Musician and broadcaster Alexis Korner also presented a show that

was available through the BBC World Service and so could be received in most of the UK.  In

addition, from 1957 television shows in the UK including *Off the Record* (ITV), *Dig This!* (BBC), *Oh*

*Boy!* (ITV), and *Six-Five Special* (BBC) also included blues material.  Jazz festivals in the UK were

regularly televised and American musicians were often featured  (Schwartz, 2007, p. 95).

On May 7th 1964, Granada

Television broadcast a live show

from Manchester, *Blues and*

*Gospel Train*, which featured

performers including Muddy

Waters, Sonny Terry & Brownie

McGhee, Sister Rosetta Tharpe,

Otis Spann and Rev. Gary Davis.

Of equal importance were the

American Folk Blues Festival

tours which brought African



*Figure 2: a signed ticket to the 1964 Granada TV broadcast "Blues & Gospel Train".*

American blues performers to British and European audiences between 1962 and 1970; although

audio recordings of these performances were available from 1964, visual material was not collated

and offered for sale until 2003.  Famously, on May 20th 1965 in the United States The Rolling Stones

– themselves named after a Muddy Waters song – encouraged the ABC network to give Howlin'

Wolf airtime ahead of their performance on the *Shindig!* television show (Segrest & Hoffman, 2005,

pp. 222-223).  The importance of these presentations was to bring African American blues

performers to an audience swelled by the blues revival and in so doing, perpetuate and disseminate

blues music and culture through the new 'cool media' (McLuhan, 1964) of television.

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

## Digital Media

Since 1969, the introduction of interconnected networks of computers – the internet – has had a profound influence on the ways in which suitably-equipped and empowered individuals and organisations are able to exchange data, build interpersonal and professional relationships, and form communities (Baym, 2002, 2010; Rheingold, 1993).  For many in the western world, the last 40 years have been characterised by a movement away from the practices that define an industrial mode of production toward an information-based economy; this period has been described as the information age or, increasingly, as the digital age (Dutton & Peltu, 1999).  During this time, there has been a qualitative and quantitative upswing in the amount of information that individuals and organisations may generate, store and access (Armitage et al., 2007).

Digital systems as used by information and communication technology (ICT) devices are so-called because they rely on sequences of binary digits, zeroes and ones, for the coding, transmission and re-constitution of data in the form of text, graphics, video and sound.  These systems differentiate ICT devices such as computers, CD/DVD players, and mobile phones from their analogue equivalents such as television, radio, fixed-line telephones, phonographs and video recorders in that ICT devices are generally more portable than their analogue predecessors and are able to transmit, receive and manipulate a higher volume of multi-media content with more consistent fidelity than older technologies.  ICT relies less heavily on physical artefacts for playback and unlike its analogue counterparts, digital media is less subject to degradation over a period of time.   In addition, content that was originally stored as physical media such as audio recordings, film stock, or text may be re-coded as digital files, and transmitted between and stored on ICT devices with relative ease (Armitage et al., 2007, p. xiv).

Introduced as a successor to the long-playing phonograph record and compact cassette, the first digital compact discs (CDs) and CD players were launched in Europe and America in 1983 following a collaboration between the Phillips and Sony Corporations.  Able to hold up to 74 minutes of music

and more resilient to the environment than long-playing vinyl discs, CD digital optical media quickly replaced vinyl and tape as a primary and portable audio format (Sterne, 2012, pp. 12-14).  The first CD of blues significance was the re-issue of *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings* (1990a). Originally recorded over two sessions in 1936 and 1937, the first LP re-issue of Johnson's recordings in 1961 was one of the blues revival's touchstones and sold just over 20,000 copies.  The 1990 release sold 500,000 copies, achieving platinum status and a year later, was nominated for a Grammy award (F. Davis, 1995, p. 225). By 2004, sales had surpassed 1 million units.  The sales figures appeared to confirm a market for pre-war blues in the digital age.

The phenomenon of the album's popularity calls to attention discourse themes of interest to this thesis, for example: legal ownership, in the protracted legal battle over Johnson's newly invigorated estate and the rights to both his recordings and the use of his likeness; cultural ownership, in the appropriation and constitution of the Johnson legend by musicians, cultural workers and in recent years the American tourist industry (S. A. King, 2004, 2011); and technology, in Johnson's adaptation to recording media of the time (Schroeder, 2004).   These themes and their effect on still-living performers are discussed in greater depth in chapters 8 and 9.

The ability to duplicate and distribute audio material was accelerated by the development of the MP3 file and development of peer to peer networks.  Both of these concepts are explored in chapters 4 and 9 but briefly, an MP3 file compresses audio data into digital information which may then be transmitted, stored or played as an audio computer file.  Thus, in addition to the previously mentioned phonograph effects inherent in capturing sound, MP3 and digital files add *availability*.  In other words, a digital file may be moved across a computer network with relative speed, ease and as a recording of consistent fidelity (Katz, 2010, pp. 160-163).  A peer-to-peer network is an aggregation of computers connected via the internet which allow the sharing of files from one client computer – a desktop or laptop device – to another client computer without the need for a central 'server' computer which contains all of the information to be distributed to the network.  This many-to-

many organisation differs from the hub-and-spoke organisation of a centralised Local- or Wide- Area Network in that there is no single holding point or repository of data that is being accessed (Poole, Lambert, Woodford, & Moschovitis, 2005).

Digital reproduction and the launch of online music purchase and streaming sites during the first decade of the 21st century through services such as iTunes (2001) Last FM (2002), YouTube (2005) and Spotify (2008) have provided benefits and challenges for the music industry at large and for blues performers and copyright holders in particular.  The availability of content has reduced the need for traditional record stores to retain content in the form of physical media, and previously deleted material has been made available for consumption and purchase (Reynolds, 2011, pp. 64-65).  Whilst '…it is illegal to download or distribute digital files of copyrighted recordings without permission of the copyright holder,'  (RIAA, 2014) services such as Napster (1999-2001) isoHunt (2003-2013) and the Pirate Bay (2003-) have allowed users to share files across geographic and continental boundaries.  As part of the Real Blues Forum, members upload and share large numbers of copyrighted, bootlegged concerts, vinyl LPs and visual material that would otherwise only be available as vinyl recordings, video cassettes or audio-taped broadcast material.  Despite this being against the law, the forum's membership statement explicitly requests that users do not share material outside the forum.  This practice is discussed in greater depth in chapters 4 and 7.

## 1.3: Methodology Overview

Specific details of the methodology used for data collection and analysis are provided in chapter 2. However, a few words should be said here about how this element of the research has been approached.

### Data Collection

Although blues music is played in many countries around the world, the focus of this study is the United Kingdom and online communities whose servers are based in North America.  For data

collection, I have conducted surveys both on-line and in-person[9].  The collection points for the survey were on-line blues communities and blues festivals, and in the case of this last, blues festivals held in the United Kingdom between June and September 2015.  The aim of the survey was to investigate the impact and use of ICT for blues consumption and blues-based interactions amongst blues fans, alongside their use of traditional physical and analogue sources (see chapter 5 section 5, chapter 7, and appendices 1 and 2).

I engaged in a project of participant observation within *The Real Blues Forum* online community.  As the study began in 2013, this group had 7,709 members including world-leading blues scholars, music fans, musicians, cultural enthusiasts and first-generation blues-revivalists.  Immediately prior to the submission of this dissertation in December 2016, this population had grown to 13,113.  Participation in this community provides an online ethnographic site for interaction with individuals who are actively participating in the contemporary blues discourse around themes outlined earlier in this chapter, including those of representation; legal and cultural ownership; ethnicity; socio-political positioning; authenticity.

I secured interviews with cultural workers in the field including award-winning international blues musician Janiva Magness, and blues scholar, performer and teacher professor Adam Gussow.  These individuals were chosen for their active blues performance practice and their engagement with ICT as a method for engaging with their audiences in perpetuating, developing and disseminating blues music and culture.  Also featured is the output of musician Corey Harris.  This individual is an African American advocate of the primacy of African culture and content in blues music and his performances, although firmly rooted in blues, embrace other musics of black origin such as soul and reggae.  Harris is an active teacher and user of social media as a dissemination tool concerning black rights and blues music.  Adam Gussow is an American scholar, writer and blues performer.  He has authored two memoirs concerning blues literature and performance (Gussow, 1998, 2007) as well as

---

[9] Notice of ethical approval for human subject research was received on 4th April 2014 – see page x above.

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

a scholarly work concerning blues music and culture (Gussow, 2002). In addition, professor Gussow offers an online harmonica class via YouTube which has, since February 2007, received over 11 million individual views (Gussow, 2014). Professor Gussow also offers a free-to-attend online course in blues literature and historiography, supported by a discussion forum. These individuals offer insight into the development, perpetuation and dissemination of the blues in the present day and their comments have informed the research conclusions.

I consulted the UK Chart Company and US Billboard chart data for empirical sales data of blues albums between 1989 and 2016 in order to ascertain the biggest-selling – hence the most 'popular by numbers' (Cutler, 1989, p. 4) – artists in the genre over the 25 years that are the focus of this study. Printed sources including *Ebony* magazine, *Blues Unlimited* magazine, *Rolling Stone* magazine and newspapers including *Billboard*, *Melody Maker*, *The Chicago Defender*, and *The New York Times* have been consulted in order to provide material for the contextual study in Chapter 3. This chapter also draws on printed material in the form of press releases and publicity materials from record companies and publishing houses active in the United States and United Kingdom such as Okeh, Columbia, Paramount, Black Swan, and Chess. This collection/generation methodology has generated a mix of qualitative and quantitative data which requires specific tools and theories for analysis.

## Data Analysis

This thesis employs several analysis tools in order to interpret the collected qualitative and quantitative data and reach the conclusions that are presented in chapters 6 and 7. These tools and examples of their application are discussed and demonstrated in greater depth in Chapter 2. The following is a brief overview of the analytical tools and theories in question, and the rationale for their inclusion in this study.

Throughout, I have been mindful of the advice from both Baym (2010), Kozinets and Hine (2000) not to confuse mediation with determinism; the internet and digital technologies, like all previous

technological developments, amplify, extend and enrich human activity and behaviour rather than precipitating entirely new modes of engagement with others or the environment.  Engaging with online communities through participant-observation builds on the established practices of ethnography, but takes into account the unique computer-mediated environment. This particular ethnographic process is known as 'netnography,' a media-studies term and methodology developed and applied by Robert Kozinets (2010).

Multi-modal critical discourse analysis (CDA) allows us to interpret qualitative data gathered from survey, interview and netnographic interactions on *The Real Blues Forum* in order to observe the use of language within the observed blues fan community, as well as generating a contemporary view of blues discourses such as they are propagated online.  The limitations here are the boundaries of the chosen netnography site, the Real Blues Forum, in that their definition of 'blues,' will often exclude contemporary blues performers on the basis of their ethnicity. In this scenario, the empirical data analysis of chart sales data offers a counterbalance to this by describing what is in fact being bought by blues fans in the United Kingdom and United States.

Media Archaeology offers a view of blues material in various broadcast and playback media, and provides interpretive tools and approaches for interrogating the societies that produced and consumed them.  Any archaeology is largely synchronic, however.  Remediation theory address this deficiency by providing diachronic methods by which to observe the development of blues media on the one hand and the perpetuation and development of blues music and culture on the other.

## Research Context

At the end of the twentieth century,  Jeff Todd-Titon observed that the blues had moved from 'a music by and chiefly for black Americans' to 'a music by black and white Americans primarily for white Americans and Europeans.' (Titon, 1993, p. 223).  For the 12 months between January 2011 and 2012, the top-selling blues albums in the United Kingdom were as follows:

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

| | Album | Artist |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | *Let Them Talk* | Hugh Laurie |
| 2 | *You Can't Teach an Old Dog New Tricks* | Seasick Steve |
| 3 | *Dust Bowl* | Joe Bonamassa |
| 4 | *Man From Another Time* | Seasick Steve |
| 5 | *Don't Explain* | Joe Bonamassa/Beth Hart |
| 6 | *Walkin' Man – The Best of Seasick Steve* | Seasick Steve |
| 7 | *I Started Out With Nothin' and I Still Got Most of it Left* | Seasick Steve |
| 8 | *The Best Of* | Etta James |
| 9 | *The Union* | Elton John and Leon Russell |
| 10 | *Finding the Keys – The Best Of* | Jools Holland & His Rhythm & Blues Orchestra |
| 11 | *Out In The Fields – The Very Best Of* | Gary Moore |
| 12 | *The Best of Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac* | Fleetwood Mac |
| 13 | *The Commitments – Original Soundtrack* | The Commitments |
| 14 | *Dog House Music* | Seasick Steve |
| 15 | *Big Guns – The Very Best Of* | Rory Gallagher |
| 16 | *Songs for Elizabeth* | Seasick Steve |
| 17 | *Blues Breakers* | John Mayall/Eric Clapton |
| 18 | *Rocking Horse* | Jools Holland & His Rhythm & Blues Orchestra |
| 19 | *Heaven and Earth* | John Martyn |
| 20 | *Revelator* | Tedeschi/Trucks Band |

*Table 1: Top-selling blues albums in the UK for 2012-2013 (Official Charts Company UK)*

The news that Hugh Laurie, an individual primarily known as an actor, had the best-selling blues

album for the year generated reaction and debate in several sites.  Exchanges were thematically

grouped as concerning ethnicity, authenticity and moral and cultural ownership.  Subscribing to the notion that authenticity is something conferred on a text rather than anything inherent its manifestation (Moore, 2002), these exchanges are examined more closely in chapters 6, 7 and 8.  Of the remaining best-selling artists for the year, only one, Etta James (1938-2012) was an African American, and her *Best Of* album was issued posthumously.  Seasick Steve (1941- ), a still-living and performing Caucasian American, represents 25% of the chart. Whilst it may be argued that these figures support Titon's assertion, demographically these figures are a crude reflection of the ethnic mix in the United Kingdom where the black citizenry comprises roughly 2.0% of the population.  Of the artists listed, 90% were still-living.

Whilst these figures represent physical album sales and downloads as reported to the official chart company by their agents, at the time of reporting they did not reflect accurately the number of incidents of consumption of blues music via content streaming sites such as *YouTube*, *Last FM* or *Spotify*.  This last is significant as, in the same period, the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) reported that digital sales accounted for 55.5% of UK trade revenues in Q1 2012 – overtaking physical income for first time (BPI, 2012).  Whilst the United Kingdom Official Chart Company (UK) and Billboard (US) provide streaming charts, at the time of writing, the Spotify service did not publically share streaming data by genre.  Chapters 6 and 8 examine this phenomena in greater depth, where I examine the still-relevant discourse theme of popular sales vs artistic merit as conferred by certain sections of the blues community.

## Conclusion

## Thesis structure

The following section explains in detail the content of the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical and practical methodology used to gather and analyse the data sets for this study.  Given the mix of quantitative and qualitative data in question, a multi-disciplinary analysis methodology is required. A Foucaultian conception of the archive in the

intersection between knowledge and power beyond a concrete space and toward a virtual, computer-mediated environment is allied to Baudrillard's ideas of capital, and applied to a space where ideology informs contingent truth-formation in pursuit of authenticity (Gracyk, 1996; Moore, 2002) and genre-formation (Fabbri & Chambers, 1982; Holt, 2007).  Additionally, multi-modal Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2003; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Simpson & Mayr, 2010) provides a perspective through which early and continuing discourse themes such as those discussed previously in the chapter may be traced, uncovered and contextualised as sedimentary layers of the existing on-line discussions.  Remediation theory (Bolter & Grusin, 1999), like media archaeology, encourages researchers to observe the traces of previous media in new forms and conversely, the genesis of new media in previous forms.  Finally, online ethnography, also known as Netnography (Kozinets, 2010) is used as the principal framework for investigating and interacting with online forums whose central focus is blues.  This chapter examines and explains how each of these theories contributes part of an image of blues music and blues culture in the digital age and how this approach may assist in the extension of blues historiography into the twenty-first century.

Chapter 3 addresses the discourse theme of race, such as it is manifested in the discourse on blues through the question of performativity – specifically the question "…can white men sing the blues?"  Can white men sing the blues?  ICT and CMC do not provide an answer to this question, but allow more people to engage in the discourse around this persistent question.  The argument itself is a hegemonic process in action; organic intellectuals engage directly with the academy over an issue of racial politics and the problematic notion of authenticity within popular music.  The chapter illustrates that ICT and CMC imbue this existing process with a level of immediacy, velocity and audience inclusion that was not previously possible though print-based media, illustrating the nature of power distribution within the blues community as facilitated by digital media.

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

Chapter 4 begins the examination of the archival discourse theme which is central to our developing conception of blues music and blues culture as an unfolding cultural phenomenon.  For blues music and blues culture, it is the collection of recordings, oral histories, photographs and journalism that form the corpus of texts that are referred to as an archive.  Drawing on the work of theorists Michel Foucault (1989), Jacques Derrida (1995) and Wolfgang Ernst (2013), this chapter examines the development and continuing evolution of the blues archive in the digital age and examines the shifting positions of repositories of public knowledge such as libraries, museums and archives.  Two particular case studies are investigated: that of the Alan Lomax archive at the Association for Cultural Equity, and that of blues archivist and collector Robert "Mack" McCormick.  In the first case, issues of provenance arising from the use of collected works are examined and in the second, the choice of McCormick to restrict access to what is believed to be a fundamentally important archive of materials is discussed.  The McCormick archive is examined in light of developments involving the alleged obtaining by deception of materials by a *New York Times* reporter (Sullivan, 2014).

Chapter 5 asks - how do we learn to play, and learn about, the blues in the modern day?  How are the narrative and practical texts and gestures of blues as a sociological phenomenon, first evidenced in oral cultures, transmitted through digital media?  What were and are the methods for transmitting performance techniques?  Building on the discussion of chapter 4, this chapter discusses education, enculturation, acculturation and cultural diffusion such as these are enabled by computer-mediated communications.  The role of YouTube in terms of mimesis and secondary orality (McLuhan, 1962, 1964; Ong, 1982) is examined as part of an evolving continuum of knowledge and practice transfer in the artistic and wider community engendered by social networking sites (SNS).

In chapter 6, the project asks - how is the primary and secondary audience for blues music and blues culture constituted in the 21st century, and how does this community use the internet to interact with the culture?  This chapter presents the survey data gathered by  online ethnography, as well as

discussing the project's primary online ethnographic site – The Real Blues Forum (RBF) on Facebook. The aim here is to illustrate and interrogate the ways that individuals who self-identify as fans of blues music and blues culture interact as a community via ICT, and to understand the part played by these interactions in the perpetuation, development and dissemination of the style via CMC.

Building on the material presented in chapter 6, chapter 7 presents and analyses the results of the online survey carried out as part of this project. The survey was open between 28th May and 30th September 2015, a total of 4 months and 3 days, and generated a total of 512 responses. The 32 questions in the survey focused on how blues fans use the internet to experience and discover blues music and blues culture, with specific reference to live performances and blues-related events. Questions also sought to ascertain how blues fans participated in the blues community before they had access to the internet. The analysis tools and outcomes from this section of the study are expressed and explained in greater detail in chapter 2.

Chapter 8 investigates the effect of digital technologies on blues performers and other cultural workers in the present day. Specifically, the chapter examines how attitudes and opinions concerning the discourse themes of race and gender circulated by digital means and media may affect blues music performers in their contemporary practice. The chapter examines how performers engage with both their fans and the wider music industry through digital means and also reviews the role played by ICT and CMC in the nomination and valorisation processes particular to contemporary blues award ceremonies. Finally, this chapter considers the role played by CMC in the media presence of deceased blues performers via their websites and participation in social media. Case studies of B.B. King, Muddy Waters and others are explored, and the power of digital hauntology – the presence of absence – is problematised such as it impacts still-living musicians and those active in the creation and consumption of blues music and culture.

Chapter 9 discusses the specific limitations of technological mediation before chapter 10 summarises the findings of the research from each chapter and provides the conclusion to the study. This

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

chapter discusses the impact of ICT and CMC on the blues discourse and practices of blues artists and cultural workers. Developing conceptions of expertise, the archive and the lived experience of blues music and blues culture are illustrated by example, and suggestions for further research and applied methodology are offered.

## Summary

This chapter has introduced the aims of this thesis as an investigation and report of the perpetuation, development and dissemination of blues music and blues culture through digital media; in other words, a study of the technological mediation of blues music and culture in the digital age (1989-2016). I have indicated the definition of discourse that applies to this study, and suggested the persistent themes in the discourse on blues music that will be pursued in this thesis. I have explained the research context for the study and briefly outlined the research methodology to be employed, and as part of this section, suggested the limitations of single methodologies and indicated the need for a multi-disciplinary approach. The chapter has illustrated competing conceptualisations of blues music and attempted to provide a historical context for the technologies employed in the dissemination of commercial blues. Finally, I have offered a brief review of the relevant literature in the field, highlighting the dearth of research in the area addressed by this thesis.

Since its formal recognition as a distinct style in the twentieth century, blues music and its culture have proved persistent through many media and the widening field of popular music; it is my intention that the perspective indicated in this thesis may suggest further future developments and alternative views of existing histories for this most resilient of musical genres. My hope is that this research will provide a useful addition to existing scholarship in the field of blues and indicate possible research areas for subsequent studies. The following chapter further develops and explains the approaches that have been used to gather, analyse and present the data for this study, and discusses the benefits and challenges of my chosen, multi-disciplinary approach.

# Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter outlines the methods and methodology employed during the research and analysis for this project. Methodology in this context is the group term given to the individual methods used to address specific research problems which derive from the central research question. This chapter provides operational definitions for the project, and where appropriate, provides examples of these named methods being applied to relevant materials. The intention here is to illustrate the nature of the data generated from the various approaches, and the conclusions which can be drawn from this. Additionally, the chapter discusses limitations and exclusions in the collection and interpretation of data, and indicates how this approach leads to a supported conclusion. Finally, the chapter briefly specifies methods which were initially considered as research tools but after some experimentation were abandoned. In other words: this chapter illustrates firstly, the specific nature of the research question(s); secondly, the approaches taken to answering these questions; and thirdly, why these are the preferred approaches for application to the task.

## 2.1 Method vs. Methodology

The central research question for this project is "What are the effects of digital remediation on blues music and blues culture?" As indicated in chapter 1, blues music and blues culture appear to undergo transformations of form, ontology and circulation when oral practices are first committed to textual inscription as sheet music – the cultural moment where an oral tradition becomes subject to the practices of literacy (Gates, 1988; Ong, 1982). These transformations include an essentialising of blues music, in that the cultural practice becomes identified particularly with African Americans and so by extension with "blackness" (Morrison, 1992; Pieterse, 1992), and in the socio-political context of the early 20$^{th}$ century United States, with "othering" (Born & Hesmondhalgh, 2000). Further evolutions seem to occur as blues performances are remediated as phonograph records, and through various broadcast media during this period (Auslander, 2008; Katz, 2010). In both of the previous cases, one of the most notable effects is the emergence of a significant secondary audience whose experience of blues music and blues culture is socially and

technologically mediated (Dougan, 2001; S. A. King, 2011).  Each successive transformation appears to generate themes within the discourse on blues music and blues culture of race, authenticity and value, which enable and constrain definitions of the blues aesthetic (L. R. Jones, 1963; Levine, 2007). As a result, the assumption at the outset of this project was that ontological and aesthetic effects on blues music and blues culture might be observed as a direct result of technological mediation in general and digital remediation in particular, which are themselves factors within the diachronic development and enactment of cultural practices (Bolter & Grusin, 1999; Fabbri & Chambers, 1982; Holt, 2007).  In other words:  the development from physical media such as phonograph records and magnetic tape to digital media and computer-mediated communications (CMC) may have an effect on the ontology and aesthetics of blues music and blues culture.

With the above in mind, the central research question (CRQ) was broken down into the research problems illustrated by table 2 below.

| CRQ: "What are the effects of digital remediation on blues music and blues culture?" | |
| --- | --- |
| **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM** | **RESEARCH METHOD** |
| 1 | **What** are the themes which constitute the discourse on blues?  **Who** participates in the discourse on blues in the internet age?  **How** and **where** do participants do this? | • Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) <br> • Participant observation |
| 2 | **How** is information concerning blues music and blues culture stored and shared in the internet age? | • Participant observation |
| 3 | **How** is blues cultural practice perpetuated in the internet age? | • Online ethnography <br> • Participant observation |
| 4 | **How** do the members of a blues community emerge, identify and act through computer-mediated communication (CMC)?  **Who** constitutes this community, and **how** do their behaviours and ideology  relate and compare to [their] behaviour[s] before CMC? | • Questionnaire <br> • Participant Observation <br> • Online ethnography <br> • CDA |
| 5 | **How** does the internet/CMC affect performers of and cultural workers within blues music and blues culture? | • Interview <br> • Questionnaire <br> • Participant observation |

*Table 2: Central and subsequent research questions and methods*

## Research Question 1
***What are the themes which constitute the discourse on blues?***

Chapter 2: **Methodology**

A close reading of the literature, text and talk concerning blues music and blues culture reveals the persistent discourse themes of race and authenticity.  Whilst gender has been foregrounded as a specific theme in recent years (A. Y. Davis, 1998; Hamilton, 2007), this has been subsumed into discussions of authenticity – for example, Davies writes of "Blues-in-name-only" when discussing the pioneering work of Mamie Smith, Bessie Smith and Gertrude "Ma" Rainey during the early 20th century (F. Davis, 1995, p. 58).  US tourist slogans such as "No black, no white, just the blues," attempt to deliver a universalist message which is discussed in chapter 3, but in doing so again emphasise the assumption that blues is often perceived as the music of African Americans (S. A. King, 2011, p. 149).  Similarly, blues music has also been used in advertising to connote reliability, strength and authenticity for products including clothing, alcoholic beverages and motor cars.  In other words, in general cultural terms, blues music appears to connote blackness, and a Leavisite sense of a fictional past in rural America which was partially alluded to by the blues revival of the 1960s (Charters, 1959; Oliver, 1960).  Indeed, the title of this project's primary online ethnography site, *The **Real** Blues Forum*, makes an appeal to authenticity in the face of verisimilitude. Through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) the project sought to identify these themes such as they manifest in the text and talk of participants in the discourse on blues music and blues culture.  This particular method is described in greater detail below.

### *Who participates in the discourse on blues in the internet age?*

The total size of the online audience for blues music and blues culture is difficult to judge with complete certainty.  It is however possible to identify communities which cohere around the appreciation and discussion of blues music on the internet.  These communities are constituted by self-identified blues fans and the demographic make-up of these groups was sought by means of an online questionnaire, whose results are presented and discussed in chapter 7.  This data was important in order to understand whether the online respondents to the survey represent a primary or secondary audience, and to understand how their behaviour through computer-mediated communications (CMC) may enable and constrain current and future ontologies of the blues.

Chapter 2: **Methodology**

*How and where do participants do this?*

Writing in 1998, the beginning of a period which marked exponential proliferation of internet access in Western Europe and the United States (World Development Indicators, 2015), Brooks et al. identified 16 different websites dedicated to blues music and blues culture (L. Brooks, Koda, & Brooks, 1998, pp. 333-336). Of those listed, only three remain online at the time of writing: *Blues World.com* which is essentially a collection of links to other sites such as record labels and artist home pages; *House of Blues Online*, which is the online presence for the restaurant and entertainment venue chain; *Memphis Mojo*, a site which is primarily about the city of Memphis, with pages dedicated to blues events. Since 1998 however, Social Networking Sites (SNS) have emerged as virtual spaces where individuals make interpersonal connections (Baym, 2002, 2010; Hine, 2000). Currently, Facebook is the most popular SNS worldwide with over 1.7 billion active monthly users (Statista, 2016). As discussed in chapter 6, whilst there are a number of live English-language discussion forums on the blues currently active, *The Real Blues Forum*, which is hosted on the Facebook SNS, represented a particularly suitable site for investigation of online blues fandom by virtue of its 12,500 participating members and the volume and frequency of their comments and interactions.

**Case Study 1: Race & Authenticity**

The following case study illustrates the problematic nature of primary and secondary audiences with differing conceptions of authenticity, such as it applies to blues music. Like many socio-cultural constructs, the blues has for the last 100 or so years been in a state of dynamic development as both a performance practice and commercial endeavour. Assisted initially by sheet music, early audio recording technology, broadcast media, and academic interest from many disciplines including musicology (Gioia, 2008; Titon, 1994), cultural studies (S. A. King, 2011), anthropology (Evans, 1982) and sociology (Grazian, 2003), the blues has persisted and proliferated beyond its point of reported origin in the Southern United States. Derived from the oral folk tradition and codified into popular performance practice at a time of increasing autonomy for African Americans within the US (Abbott

& Seroff, 2007) the blues has been, and continues to be, subject to contested definitions. As Fabbri

and Chambers (1982, p. 132) explain, '…a musical genre has different meanings for different people

or at least that, even if it can denote the same thing for different people, it connotes diverse things,'

indicating that popular musical genres and stylistic norms are disputed sites, with individuals and

groups offering competing interpretations of blues music and blues culture. Figure 3 below is

example of this diversity of connotation:



*Figure 3: Mississippi Blues Fest Poster, March 2015*
*(l to r) Miss Jody; Donnie Ray, O.B. Buchana, Bobby Rush, Vick Allen, Lamont Hadley*

Figure 3 is the publicity poster for 'Mississippi Blues Fest 2015'. Its location, Greenwood, Mississippi

has a proud blues heritage. An industrial centre for the cotton trade during the 19th century (Bearden,

2005, p. 9), the town lists among its famous sons blues guitarists Guitar Slim, Hubert Sumlin and

cultural icon Robert Johnson. The poster for the twice-yearly blues festival reproduced here features

the words "Mississippi Blues Fest" in prominent blue poster-style lettering which leans to the right,

indicating dynamism in the design. Aside from this splash of colour, the poster is black and white. The

poster features portraits of the six featured acts, the size of the portrait perhaps indicating the status of the performer; veteran showman Bobby Rush is prominently featured in the centre of the image, whilst singer Donnie Ray is represented by a smaller, less distinct depiction.  All of the acts are black American.  Each of the acts is named at the top of the poster in a style akin to feature-film billing.  All of the performers are smartly dressed, and all (with the possible exception of Donnie Ray) are looking directly at the observer.  The focus is on the charisma and presence of the performer.  The connotations of the words "Mississippi" and "Blues" are emphasised by a line drawing of a suited and seated guitar player reminiscent of blues player John Lee Hooker; this image is partially obscured by the placement of singer Lamont Hadley on the poster.  Despite the monochrome imagery and the race of the performers, few visual cues support the traditional presentation of blues performers.   Absent from the image is anything symbolic or connotative of "down home", "hard times", or prominent imagery of any kind of musical instrument.   The venue for the show, The Leflore  County Civic Centre, has a total capacity of 2,800.

Whilst Donnie Ray's *She Was at the Hideaway*, Ms Jody's *Just Let Me Ride*,  and Vick Allen's *I'm Thankful For My Woman On The Side* maintain lyrically thematic links with previous generations of blues, musical instrumentation and texture for these performers represents a definite stylistic break with the past.  For example; O.B. Buchana's 2015 11-track album *Mississippi Folks* opens with the song *Ghetto Funk*;  the title of the song alluding to a genre of music distinct from the blues.  A syncopated tutti phrase is played by synthetic brass, synthetic bass and electronic drums, before giving way to a mid-tempo, D minor funk groove reminiscent of James Brown's *It's Too Funky In Here* (Polydor, 1979) and Rose Royce's *Car Wash* (MCA, 1976).  The emphasis is on the "one" in the groove, with the rest of the synthetic instruments filling an essentially percussive role.  An electric guitar is present, delivering a muted, syncopated rhythm line.  Harmonically, the piece relies on chords I, IV and V, but this is structured over 24 bars; chord I for 16 bars, chord IV for 7 bars followed by a semiquaver tutti phrase on chord V over beats three and four of the section's concluding bar.  This music owes as much

to Bootsy Collins as it does to B.B. King.  Despite the album's cover depicting a heavily built, bald-
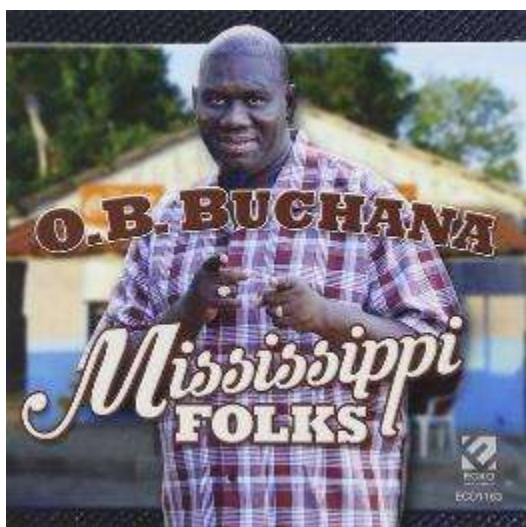


*Figure 4: O.B. Buchana's 2015 album cover for 'Mississippi Folks'*

headed black man in a checked shirt framed in a rural location (see figure 4), his name and the album's title prominently displayed in old-time circus-bill script, and the emphasis on the words "Mississippi" and "Folks" – all signifiers which some observers would interpret as "Country Blues" – the content is stylistically funk.  In this way, a music made by black Americans, for black Americans, performed in the geographic region famed for the genre, and called "blues" by its producers and

consumers falls outside the criteria for being "blues" as observed by the 12,500 members of the Real

Blues Forum:

> "THE MISSION STATEMENT:
>
> *The Real Blues Forum is a private forum dedicated exclusively to the appreciation of blues music as played and sung by African-Americans. Many of us listen to, study, discuss, and appreciate later off-shoots of the African American blues tradition, and we share those enthusiasms elsewhere, where they will be appreciated. We ask that you do as well. Posts that are outside the Real Blues Forum parameters will be deleted without notice. Posters who ignore the guidelines will be banned. (…)*
>
> *We use the standard blues discographies as the parameters for posts in the RBF (see Note 1 below). If still in doubt, please ask BEFORE posting. (…)*
>
> *Note 1: The discographies referred to above are: 'Blues & Gospel Records 1890-1943', by Robert M.W. Dixon, John Godrich and Howard Rye; 'The Blues Discography, 1943-1970', by Les Fancourt and Bob McGrath; and 'The Blues Discography, 1971-2000', by Robert Ford and Bob McGrath. African American blues artists who have recorded since 2000 are also included." (Vernon, 2011b)*

Thus, despite coinciding with the RBF on the problematic criterion of race, O.B. Buchana, Miss Jody,

and the other featured acts at the 2015 Mississippi Blues Fest do not qualify as "real blues".

The contrast evident from the above is between the lived experience of the blues producers,

consumers and cultural workers of Greenwood, Mississippi and the on-line, mediated community of

the RBF.  This distinction might also be characterised as being between a *primary audience* – those

for whom the cultural practice was originally intended, and a *secondary audience*, those who

subsequently consume the products of that culture via technologically mediated means.  Secondary

audiences are distinct from primary audiences by being culturally removed by reasons of geography,

society or time; their interaction with the cultural practice is mediated and acontextual rather than

lived (Gennari, 2006).  In the case of blues music and blues culture, this means mediated by books,

audio-visual material, sound recordings, photographs, or increasingly - the internet.  For blues music

and blues culture, representations of the subtleties common to black American blues performance

could only be transmitted via audio-visual means, since previous media, specifically western musical

notation, lacked the resolution to accurately record the phenomenon.  As a result of this, secondary

audiences may experience what Tagg (2012, p. 182) describes as 'codal interference'; a phenomenon

whereby different individuals, despite sharing a broadly similar store of cultural meaning,

misinterpret the contextual function and/or meaning of certain musical gestures.  For example,

musicians from a secondary audience may struggle to reproduce stylistic elements inherent to the

blues, resulting in a less "authentic" performance for some audience members.  Vocalists socialised

and educated within a 12-tone diatonic system may struggle to interpret and reproduce the

microtonal variations in pitch common to American country blues singers from a different era.  In

this case, the signifier of the vocal melody line is, however subtly, altered in content and as a result,

altered in meaning.  As a specific example; musicians unfamiliar with the product "Red Devil Lye,"

that Howlin' Wolf sings of being mixed into his drinks by a jealous lover in *Commit A Crime* (Chess,

1966) have been heard to substitute "Red Devil Eye" in performance, aware that the misheard lyric

made limited syntactical sense[10].  Thus, the image of an agonising death from ingesting caustic soda

---

[10] **Red Devil Lye** is the name for sodium hydroxide (NaOH) marketed as a drain-cleaning product.  Also known as caustic soda, the compound generates heat on contact with water and is extremely corrosive.  (i) As recently as 2014 in the US, a 67-year-old woman was placed in critical condition after drinking a tea accidentally laced with lye, one sip resulting in 'ulcerated oesophageal burns' (Press, 2014). (ii) During the mid-1980s, on a psychiatric ward for "…54 senile, demented inpatients," for the period of 3 months, a casual worker committed homicide in 11 cases and attempted homicide in 16 cases by oral application of lye-containing disinfectants (Jonsson & Voigt, 1984).

is not communicated by the singer to the audience, resulting in an altered meaning for this part of the song. The discourse concerning the entitlement and ability of 'white men [to] sing the blues,' is examined in greater detail in chapter 3.

As illustrated above, differently interested groups assign the signifier "blues" to musical gestures according to different criteria. Fabbri and Chambers (1982, p. 136), further suggests that a musical genre such as the blues is "…a set of musical events, real or possible, whose course is regulated by a definite arrangement of socially accepted rules." It is the formation and enacting of these formative and normative rules and relationships for the blues in general, and the role of digital media technologies in these processes in particular, which is the focus of this study.

**Method**

The methods used to investigate this question were (a) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and (b) participant Observation (PO). In order to explain this method, it is first necessary to briefly outline a definition of discourse.

**Discourse**

As previously indicated, differently interested groups assign the signifier "blues" according to different criteria. The negotiation of what is and what is not "blues" is, in part, enacted through discourse. Whilst a discourse can mean simply a dialogue between two speakers, linguists further define discourse as the way in which linguistic elements form structures of meaning. This project is informed by Michel Foucault's conception of discourse, as presented in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). Here, Foucault regards discourse as being fundamental to creating social reality, as part of a relationship with knowledge and power. Similarly, for Foucault, power is not a thing, nor is it possessed by individuals or groups; power is a complex flow and a set of relations between different groups and areas of society that changes with circumstances and over time (Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000). Foucault further emphasises the relationship between power and knowledge, indicating that forces of power are predicated upon, imbricated with and facilitated by various bodies

of authorised knowledge. Knowledge is made up of perspectives, ideas, narratives, commentaries, rules, categories, laws, terms, explanations and definitions produced and valorised by disciplines, fields and institutions through the application of scientific principles. Finally, power manifests through discourse. This provides a useful dynamic perspective through which to view blues music, blues culture, the emergence of blues discourse, and the codification of the blues canon.

For Foucault, various social practices and institutions such as education, politics, religion, and the law are both constituted by and situated within forms of discourse which are, in turn, ways of speaking about the world of social experience. Foucault sees a discourse as a means of both producing and organising meaning within a social context. Language is a key notion within this view, for it is language which embodies discourses. As such, language use and textual interpretation constitutes a 'discursive formation'; in other words, discourses are conceived of as signifying ways of systematically organising human experience of the social world in language, and thereby constituting knowledge. From this perspective, a key function of a discursive formation is not merely its inclusivity but also its exclusive role; discursive formations provide rules of justification for what counts as (for example) knowledge within a particular context, and at the same time stipulate what does not count as knowledge in that context. Accompanying this notion of discourse is the concept of subjectivity. From the viewpoint of Foucaultean discourse analysis, subjectivity is constituted by discourse, and hence language (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008, pp. 96-98) [p. 96-98]. For example; subjectivity is an important part of the theme of authenticity in the blues. Performers such as Buddy Guy and B.B. King are celebrated not only for their considerable artistic accomplishments, but also for their commercial and cultural success in the context of a societal system based on segregation and racism. In summary - for Foucault, language understood as discourse is primary when it comes to the issue of understanding questions of culture and society. Discourses contribute to meaning in the service of constituting reality and, as (Fairclough, 1995) indicates, "…meaning in the service of power is ideology".

**Critical Discourse Analysis**

Chapter 2: **Methodology**

In order to interpret the text and talk and thus the power structures at play within the discourse on blues, this project applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to the collected data. Specifically, for the analysis of the discourse on blues as a social practice mediated by online communications, this study turns to the guidance laid out in Fairclough (1992) *Discourse and Social Change* and Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*.

CDA emerged in the 1990s as a practice which is now fundamental to sociolinguistics. CDA is concerned with "…the nature and role of language and other meaning systems in the operation of social relations, and in particular the power of such systems to shape identities, social practise, relations between individuals, communities, and all kinds of authority" (Barker, 2008, p. 152). As Janks (1999) explains, CDA stems from a critical theory of language which sees the use of language as a form of social practice. Social practices are tied to specific historical contexts, and are the means by which existing social relations are reproduced or contested, and different interests are served. It is the questions pertaining to interests - how is the text positioned or positioning? Whose interests are served by this positioning? Whose interests are negated? What are the consequences of this positioning? - that relate discourse to relations of power. Where analysis seeks to understand how discourse is implicated in relations of power, it is called critical discourse analysis.

Fairclough's (1992) model for CDA consists of three inter-related dimensions of discourse, which are tied to three distinct processes of analysis as per figure 5 below:
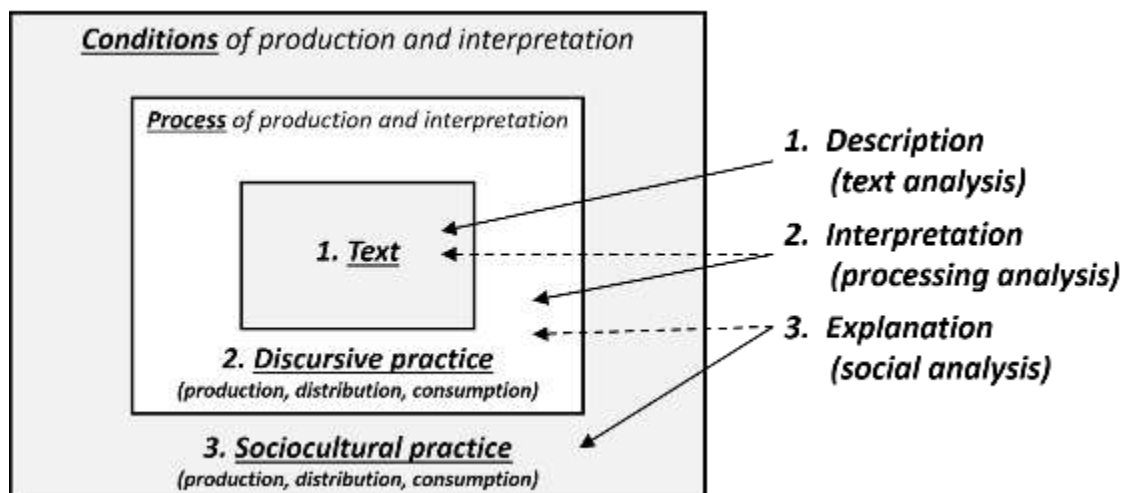
*Figure 5: dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992 p.73)*

1.  **Text:** the object of analysis, including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts;
2.  **Discursive practice:** the processes by means of which the object is produced and received - (writing/speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) by human subjects;
3.  **Socio-cultural and historical practices:** which govern these processes.

In addition, each of these dimensions requires a different kind of analysis

1.  **text analysis (description):** what is being said, and in what ways; the features of the utterance or object;
2.  **processing analysis (interpretation):** who is making the statement to whom.  As Jørgensen & Phillips (2002) indicate, analysis of discursive practice focuses on "…how authors of texts draw on already existing discourses and genres to create a text, and on how receivers of texts also apply available discourses and genres in the consumption and interpretation of the texts";
3.  **social analysis (explanation)** – the socio-political context and inherent consequences of the statement.

This approach allows researchers to focus on the signifiers that make up the text, the specific linguistic selections, their juxtaposition, their sequencing, their layout and so on – for example, consider the connotative differences between blues described as "down home" and "up-town".  In this case, the allusions to height not only position the musical content, but potentially reinforce ideological notions that valorise the urban experience over the rural.  'Down-home' indicates the past, a distance, and generally somewhere other than the present or any distinct future.  In this way, CDA requires researchers to recognise the historical determination of these selections and to understand that that these choices are tied to the conditions of possibility of that utterance. This is another way of saying that "…texts are instantiations of socially regulated discourses and that the processes of production and reception are socially constrained" (Janks, 1999).  This study is concerned with the influence of

digital technologies on this potential or constrain narratives, such as it is enacted through digital means.

Fairclough further proposes a number of tools for discourse analysis.  These include:

- interactional control – the relationship between speakers, including who sets the conversational agenda (Fairclough 1992: 152);
- ethos -  how identities are constructed through language and aspects of the body (Fairclough 1992: 166);
- metaphors (Fairclough 1992: 194);
- wording (Fairclough 1992: 190);
- grammar (Fairclough 1992: 169);

All of these give insight into the ways in which texts treat events and social relations and thereby construct particular versions of reality, social identity and social relations.

In the case of grammatical data, Fairclough identifies two further important dimensions for analysis – **transitivity** and **modality**.  When analysing transitivity, the focus is on how events and processes are connected or disconnected to subjects and objects. The interest lies in investigating the ideological consequences that different forms of text and talk can have (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 94).  For example, the statement "The blues bore witness to these hard times," (House, 2012) first calls to mind a contested genre of popular music broadly connotative of black Americans and their culture as a marginalised and disenfranchised sector of society.  The phrase "these hard times" similarly groups the complex socio-political processes of segregation and racism under a single nominalising signifier, and in the absence of any further specificity imparts a universalising quality; the colloquially generalised 'hard times' of the past are ideologically linked to the quite distinct objective 'hard times' of the present day.  Simply put, this phrase at once locates blues music and blues culture in the past and present, supporting a universalising narrative within the discourse on blues.

The same phrase can be used to illustrate the function of modality in analysis.  Modality focusses on the speaker's degree of affinity with or affiliation to her or his statement - who is speaking, how are they presenting the text, and with what authority?  The phrase "The blues bore witness to these hard times" was in this case was spoken by the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama, on the

occasion of a blues performance at the White House in February 2013.  It is of significance that the President is of black American descent, connotatively underlining a racial connection to the African American experience and by extension (for some), enhancing his credibility in his discussion of blues music and blues culture; the struggles of black men and women in American society in the antebellum and civil rights eras may be in some way analogous to the struggles of a black man in the highest reaches of the American political establishment.  In other words, the racial profile of the President allied to the status of his office adds credibility and authority to his message as part of the discourse on blues, and in service of a discursive event.  Different discourses use different forms of modality, and as (Fairclough, 1992) p 160 explains, discourse participants "…often present interpretations as if they were facts, partly by using categorical modalities and partly by choosing objective rather than subjective modalities," in other words, presenting subjective viewpoints or narratives as objective, with the aim of constituting reality.  The President's speech for this occasion forms a case study and worked example for CDA, below.

**Case Study 2:  In Performance at the White House: Red, White and Blues (21/02/2012)**

"In Performance at the White House" is an occasional series of televised musical concerts which has been in production since 1978 .  The series showcases the diversity of American culture in the setting of America's most famous residence.  As Nancy Reagan noted in her first program, "With the participation of public television, the East Room becomes a concert hall for the entire nation," echoing the title of and implications for this study - "Halls without Walls" .  Previous performers have included Stevie Wonder, Sir Paul McCartney, Burt Bacharach and Hal David, and the concerts are routinely scheduled to celebrate national heritage celebration and awareness projects (WETA, 2015).  The concert held in the East Room of the White House on 21st February 2012 marked Black History Month, and featured a concert dedicated to the Blues. Featured performers included founding fathers of the electric blues - B.B. King and Buddy Guy; musicians who came to global prominence during the blues boom - Booker T. Jones, Jeff Beck, and Mick Jagger; and current members of the performing blues scene - Warren Haynes, Gary Clark Jr., Susan Tedeschi, Derek Trucks, Shemeika Copeland and Troy

Chapter 2: **Methodology**

"Trombone Shorty" Andrews (PBS.org, 2012).  The text for analysis is a transcription of the opening

speech delivered to the assembled audience by President Obama.

*The president enters the room to a standing ovation, whilst the band plays 'Green Onions', a Stax-era mid-tempo blues groove.  As the President reaches his lectern on the stage, the music fades.*

> *"THE PRESIDENT: Thank you! (Applause.)  Thank you so much.  Thank you.  Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat.  That sounded pretty good.  (Laughter.)  I might try that instead of ruffles and flourishes.  (Laughter.)*
>
> *Well, first of all, I want to wish everybody a happy Mardi Gras.  I hear Trombone Shorty brought some beads up from New Orleans.  And I see that we've got some members of our Cabinet here.  We've got some members of Congress.  And we have elected officials from all across the country.*
>
> *One of the things about being President - I've talked about this before - is that some nights when you want to go out and just take a walk, clear your head, or jump into a car just to take a drive, you can't do it.  Secret Service won't let you.  And that's frustrating.  But then there are other nights where B.B. King and Mick Jagger come over to your house to play for a concert.  (Applause.)  So I guess things even out a little bit.  (Laughter.)*
>
> *In 1941, the folklorist Alan Lomax travelled throughout the Deep South, recording local musicians on behalf of the Library of Congress.  In Stovall, Mississippi, he met McKinley Morganfield, a guitar player who went by the nickname Muddy Waters [cheers, whoops, applause].  And Lomax sent Muddy two pressings from their sessions together, along with a check for $20.*
>
> *Later in his life, Muddy recalled what happened next.  He said, "I carried that record up to the corner and I put it on the jukebox.  Just played it and played it, and said, I can do it.  I can do it.  In many ways, that right there is the story of the blues.*
>
> *This is music with humble beginnings -- roots in slavery and segregation, a society that rarely treated black Americans with the dignity and respect that they deserved.  The blues bore witness to these hard times.  And like so many of the men and women who sang them, the blues refused to be limited by the circumstances of their birth.*
>
> *The music migrated north -- from Mississippi Delta to Memphis to my hometown in Chicago.  It helped lay the foundation for rock and roll, and R&B and hip-hop.  It inspired artists and audiences around the world.  And as tonight's performers will demonstrate, the blues continue to draw a crowd.  Because this music speaks to something universal. No one goes through life without both joy and pain, triumph and sorrow.  The blues gets all of that, sometimes with just one lyric or one note.*
>
> *And as we celebrate Black History Month, the blues reminds us that we've been through tougher times before -- that's why I'm proud to have these artists here -- and not just as a fan, but also as the President.  Because their music teaches us that when we find ourselves at a crossroads, we don't shy away from our problems.  We own them.  We face up to them.  We deal with them.  We sing about them.  We turn them*

> *into art.  And even as we confront the challenges of today, we imagine a brighter tomorrow, saying, I can do it, just like Muddy Waters did all those years ago.*
>
> *With that in mind, please join me in welcoming these extraordinary artists to the White House.  And now, it is my pleasure to bring out our first performer to the stage, the King of the Blues, Mr. B.B. King.  (Applause.)" (House, 2012)*

Following (Fairclough, 1992, 2003), and as above, the text for analysis is the President's speech.  The discursive practice is a formal address delivered by the Head of State to an assembled audience of dignitaries and artists.  It is likely (though unconfirmed) that the speech was written by someone other than the President.  The concert and speech are being recorded for television, and will be made available in the US and internationally via the programme website and the internet for an indeterminate period.  In terms of socio-cultural and historical processes, the concert implies that the US Head of State is aware and supportive of the blues, and recognises the value of the music and culture.  Although the live audience is relatively small, via television and the internet, the secondary audience for the presentation is potentially in the millions of viewers over time.

Under analysis, the most persistent theme in the speech is power.  Several times, the President confirms not only the extent of his own authority, but indicates the power of those in the audience and their connections to the power structure within the United States.  The speech constructs a narrative for the blues which emphasises the power of inter-racial co-operation; in this case between Alan Lomax and Muddy Waters.  Waters is the only performer named in the speech, and he is mentioned four times.  In this scenario, the President has the dual role of confirming established blues canon for those familiar with the field, and providing an insight to the music and culture for newcomers.  The speech is part of a discursive event in the discourse on blues, and operates on the musical, political and media planes.

The speech makes a claim for the universality of the blues.  Although slavery and segregation are mentioned, these are conflated under the banner of 'hard times,' (as indicated earlier in the chapter) before the evocation of autonomy and determination in the face of a restrictive society.  From this

point, the President's language seeks to position him as having a special affinity for the blues by virtue of geography.  Further, the blues is related in a non-specific way to 'hard times' in the present, with the suggestion that blues music binds the audience, both real and virtual, to a struggle which will ultimately be won.  The theme of universality and commonality is emphasised by the use of "we" as the subject in a series of declamatory statements which fleetingly mention the present, but strongly evoke an idealised near future and distant past.

In this way, the President confers legitimacy on the blues, and situates the music and its performers as an integral and essential facet of American culture.  Problematically, in emphasising the meeting between Lomax and Waters in 1941, the speech ignores the history of the blues from 1912, a period characterised by the prominence of female performers. Leading on from this, the speech makes no real mention of gender or race; the word 'black' is used only twice, firstly adjacent to 'Americans' and secondly adjacent to 'History Month', both of which are contextually and connotatively strong conjunctions; 'Americans' suggests a unified nation, whilst 'History Month' indicates a period of time reserved for the celebration of a reified and recognised period.   Reference is made to rap and hip-hop, but these are not characterised in geographical, racial or musical terms.  A further narrative omission is that of John Work III, the black American who afforded Lomax and his team access to segregated areas during the folklorist's field trips.  Similarly, although the President mentions the Library of Congress as an institution, the speech omits to mention the work of John Lomax, and by extension his partnership with another black American founding father of the blues – Leadbelly.

In terms of transitivity, a speech delivered by a black President, hosting a blues concert at the  seat of political power perhaps marks the apotheosis of the music, speaking simultaneously of diachronic socio-political progress and the synchronic recognition of cultural capital and artistic power embodied by the artists.  Whilst both Buddy Guy and B.B. King are keen in interview to emphasise their humble beginnings – a trajectory emphasised by the President's speech – between them, the 11 featured performers have won 34 Grammy Awards, as well as selling many millions of albums combined.

Chapter 2: **Methodology**

Despite the speech's emphasis on universality and tenacity, the event underlines power structures on political grounds and also for the artists; in terms of artistic pre-eminence, there are 'fathers and sons' present on the stage. This discursive event also seeks to confer cultural capital and status on the rising stars of the genre by featuring them in this formal, canonising and truth-giving occurrence.

In terms of modality, the President alternates between narrative and rhetoric. As explained, the focus on the past and near future and the avoidance of any emphasis on race or gender assists in making a general claim for universality in the blues. This claim comes from the nation's Head of State speaking from the seat of political power, and so carries significant authority within American society. Clearly, within the limitations of the format the President could not deliver a comprehensive overview of blues history. However, the focus on power and universality, the omission of any explicit reference to race and gender and the emphasis on unity through the use of the word "we" limits the identification of the blues as a music of black origin whilst seemingly explaining and canonising its history. Themes of race and gender are conspicuous by their absence. The speech thus represents an attempt to de-problematise the socio-political origins of the blues whilst emphasising the inclusivity and diversity of its participants and audience. This represents a universalist view of blues music and blues culture, and this is discussed in greater depth in chapter 3.

**Ethnography, field work and participant observation**

In order to engage with the research questions in statements 1-5 above, it was necessary to make use of ethnography in general and participant observation (PO) in particular as research methods. For anthropologist JP Spradley (1980) "Ethnography is the work of describing a culture," whilst Edgar and Sedgwick (2008, p. 115) indicate that ethnography "…entails the close and prolonged observation of a particular social group." In both cases, the aim of the ethnographer is to understand the culture of that group from within, and engage with the **norms**, **values** and **rules** that govern and give meaning to behaviour within the group. The central problem confronting the ethnographer is then that of overcoming the barriers that

exist to understanding and interpretation.  These will be associated with the difficulty of

coming to terms with values and meanings that may be radically divergent from the

ethnographer's own, and recognising the danger of imposing one's own values on the

culture.

Ethnographic practices form the basis for much of the scholarship on blues (Charters, 1959;

Evans, 1982; Grazian, 2003).  The ethnographic method for the project was adapted from

Spradley (1980)'s Developmental Research Sequence (DRS), a practical methodology for

ethnographic enquiry.  The stages of this model are laid out below.

1. Locating a social situation
2. Engaging in participant observation
3. Making an ethnographic record
4. Making descriptive observations
5. Making a domain analysis
6. Making focused observations
7. Discovering cultural themes

Similarly to the discourse analysis, the ethnographic enquiry revealed the persistence of what

(Opler & French, 1945) p198 calls "Cultural Themes". Spradley (1980, p. 141) defines a cultural

theme as *"…any principle recurrent in a number of domains, tacit or explicit, and serving as a*

*relationship among subsystems of cultural meaning*" (italics in original text).   As indicated

previously, these themes were broadly: race, and the valorisation of black performers over

other races or national groups; authenticity of both performance and content, and as adjuncts

to this, credibility; canonicity; and geography.

**Field work and notes**

Field work may broadly be understood as the collecting of empirical sociological or cultural

data, generally through participation in a social activity or culture (hence participant

observation) or merely through close observation of that culture ('field observation'), as in

the field work associated with cultural anthropology (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008, p. 127). Taking a cue from Spradley (1980, p. 61), "…I gathered the material for this project by participant observation, by participating with musicians in the variety of situations that make up their work and leisure lives." At the same time I made the study, I had played the guitar and (sung) professionally for several years and was active in the blues community as a performer and writer. Additionally, my ethnic background means that as a black male, it is relatively easy for me to engage with the fans of blues music and blues culture.

**Participant Observation**

Participant observation (PO) is an empirical research methodology in the social sciences that involves the researcher studying a community or cultural activity of which he or she is a part (typically for the length of the study). Such an approach has the advantage over more controlled and experimental approaches in terms of the richness of qualitative detail that it can yield (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008, p. 237). Spradley (1980) and Guest, Namey, and Mitchell (2013) highlight two key challenges from PO. First, the presence of an observer may distort normal social action within the group (so that the group ends up doing what it thinks the researcher wants it to do). Second, the role that the researcher occupies in the group is important. An inappropriate role can isolate the researcher from important actors or decision-makers within the group, so giving a distorted view of how the group works. Participant observation is, in any case, frequently criticised for lacking objectivity and for being too vulnerable to the value assumptions that the observer imposes, unwittingly, on his or her observations (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008, pp. 237-238).

Spradley (1980) defines five levels of participant observation, as indicated in table 3 below.

| DEGREE OF INVOLVEMENT | TYPE OF PARTICIPATION |
|---|---|
| High | Complete |
| | Active |
| | Moderate |
| Low | Passive |
| (No involvement) | Non-participation |

*Table 3: Levels of participant observation (Spradley, 1980, p.58)*

For this project, I have a high level of participation as a researcher.  This is because the role I play as a performer a) already exists within the community and b) has a significant status and provides opportunities to interact with different members of the community.  In other words, in a PO study of the blues community, as a performer, I have access to the different cultural workers, processes and interactions of benefit to the project.

## Research Question 2
***How is information concerning blues music and blues culture stored and shared in the internet age?***

This question concerns the archive and the remediation of data.  For blues music and blues culture, it is the collection of recordings, oral histories, photographs and journalism that form the corpus of texts that can be referred to as an archive.  Access to these materials is affected by computer-mediated communications, in that materials which are physical and in many cases perishable are able to be preserved, restored and transmitted in a non-rivalrous fashion.  For example, whilst an original copy of a 78rpm phonograph record may have significant objectified cultural capital by virtue of its scarcity value, once the media artefact has been acquired, certain collectors then digitise the contents and make them available via CD and the internet.  This does not diminish the cultural capital objectified within the artefact itself, which still retains a certain aura (Benjamin, 1936; Bourdieu, 1986).  What has changed however is that the musical content has a) been subjected to an expensive process of sonic enhancement in order to eliminate the noise artefacts from the media and b) made available via digital means as either a CD or .mp3 file.  These processes of remediation and distribution are presented and discussed in chapters 4 and 9.

**Method**

Chapter 2: **Methodology**

Participant observation in this context meant engaging with archival materials and archivists both online and in the physical world.   Specifically, I travelled to museums, archives and libraries of blues artefacts and visited collectors who have amassed blues materials over a period of time.  Notes were made concerning accessibility and material content.  As is explained in greater detail in chapter 4, I was invited to join the archival resources of the Real Blues Forum.  This is significant for several reasons.  Firstly, the archival materials available in this space are provided by many individuals such as folklorist and teacher David Evans, blues scholar and performer Bob Hall,  blues author Bob Eagle and writer and performer Elijah Wald amongst many others, all of whom have made notable contributions to the discourse on blues music and blues culture over the last 50 years.  Secondly, access to these materials online as part of the RBF is by invitation only; less than 5% of the total membership of the forum has access to these extensive materials. Thirdly, this appeared to confirm my good standing in the ethnographic study community, and that my participant observation and project was being looked upon favourably.  Additionally to the above, I engaged in primary research regarding the Alan Lomax Archive, whose digitised contents were made available to the general public for the first time during the study period (Rose, 2012).  This was contrasted with the position of the archive of Robert "Mack" McCormick who passed away during the study period, leaving a collection reputed to contain items of immeasurable value to the blues community (Grimes, 2015; Sullivan, 2014).   This hands-on engagement with the material and collectors, allowed an 'insider' view to the way that materials are gathered and shared.  This particular chapter makes persistent reference to Wolfgang Ernst's conception of the digital archive as a confrontational space, defined as much by what it excludes as by what it contains (Ernst, 2013).  Additionally, my perspective is underpinned by Kittler's assertion that "[t]echnologically possible manipulations determine what can in fact become a discourse," (Kittler, 1990, p. 232).  The chapter also turns to both Foucault's notion of the archive as the arbiter of contingent truth (Foucault et al., 1972), as well as Derrida's foundational statements on archival inclusivity (Derrida, 1995).

Chapter 2: **Methodology**

## Research Question 3

***How is blues cultural practice perpetuated in the internet age?***

This question concerns the way that the internet and CMC facilitate teaching and learning blues music and blues culture.    Results from an online survey conducted for this project indicated that many self-identified blues fans were members of online learning communities concerning the blues.   This particular question is significant given the blues origin as an oral tradition and its original transmission as a cultural practice by enculturation (Merriam, 1964).  This is distinct from acculturation, where an individual adopts new cultural norms and gestures beyond those in which they were originally raised, a diachronic process which brings the opportunity for musical syncretism (Evans, 1999; List, 1964; Oliver, 2001).  Problematic here are examples of non-African Americans who learn directly from performers such as the Reverend Gray Davis, Muddy Waters and others, and so acquire a thorough understanding of the musical gestures and performance that characterise blues music and blues culture – but who are rejected as "authentic" blues players as a result of their ethnicity.  These challenges are presented and discussed in chapter 5.  Additionally, the increase in higher education courses specialising in popular music studies increases the focus on blues music from an academic perspective.  Many courses position the blues not only as a semi-autonomous set of musical gestures, but regard the music as part of a continuum of African American music-making which is inextricably linked to socio-political contexts.  Providers offer these courses not only in a classroom environment, but also via the internet as Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) and Small Private Online Courses (SPOCs) (Coursera, 2016b).   The study engages with a UK-based provider to discuss the advantages and limitations of this teaching and learning environment.

**Method**

**Online ethnography**

Given the study's interest in on-line modes of communication, elements of Social Network Analysis (SNA) were used in data collection.  As Garton, Haythornthwaite, and Wellman (2012) explain, "…social networking analysts seek to describe networks of relations as fully as possible, tease out the prominent patterns in such networks, trace the flow of information (and other resources) through

them, and discover what effects these relations and networks have on people and organisations."

Broadly similar to real-world ethnography, SNA and Netnography additionally reminds the researcher of the asynchronous and remote nature of interactions. For the purposes of this study, I joined the Real Blues Forum (RBF) having made plain my status as a researcher and performer. This status afforded me good visibility within the group, in addition to strong support from its members. Over the study period, I participated in conversations, shared and received resources and formed relationships with other forum users. I also joined several discussion forums, including *Modern Blues Harmonica Forum* and *The Blindman's Blues Forum* (www.blindman.fr.yuku.com, 2016), as well as several blues-related Facebook communities beyond the RBF. This, along with monitoring of social networking site Twitter around key events provided a good range of text, talk and interactions around discursive events. Kozinets describes this methodology as Netnography, explaining that "Social network analysts consider the various resources that are communicated between people in online communities and cultures – these can be textual, graphical, animated, audio, photographic, or audio-visual…Netnographers also consider those resources, viewing them as sources of meaning and bearers of culture." (Kozinets, 2010, p. 50). This focus on digital resources as well as identifying patterns and relationships in online interactions offered a reliable method for engaging with this particular research problem. The results of the online ethnographic survey are discussed throughout the project.

## Research Question 4

***How do the members of a blues community emerge, identify and act through computer-mediated communication (CMC)?***

***Who constitutes this community, and how do their behaviours and ideology relate and compare to [their] behaviour[s] before CMC?***

This question concerns the audience for blues music and blues culture, such as they are represented and operate online. The aim of this question is to gain a clearer understanding about "…people's activities in online communities, and also about the way that their online community and online culture activities influence other aspects of their daily lives" (Kozinets, 2010, p. 43). Specifically, I was interested in the demographic characteristics of online blues community members. I was able to

make notes on some of the interactions of visible and vocal members of the community through

participant observation, but as recent studies have shown, "lurkers" may constitute a significant

portion of an online community (Preece, Nonnecke, & Andrews, 2004, p. 202).  Whilst these users

generally do not make posts or interact visibly, they do read content and researchers have suggested

that the anonymised framework of an online survey is an effective way of engaging with such users

(K. B. Wright, 2005).

**Method**

**Online Survey**

The survey document contained 32 questions which sought to collect largely qualitative data,

although there were quantitative elements included.  The full survey and its results are included in

the project as appendix 1.  The survey was administrated through the online service

SurveyMonkey.com.  This was to allow a certain transparency to the process, so that respondents

could see that a known and reputable data collation service was being used.  Similarly, I was keen to

provide links to my University of Salford staff page as well as direction to my research profile, in

order that respondents did not confuse the invitation to participate with a marketing strategy.  I was

assisted in this enterprise by several members of the online community who are of good standing

inviting other members to participate.  I was also careful to make myself available on the various

forums to answer any questions or direct respondents to my research credentials, should they

request them.   In all, the survey received 512 responses.  As indicated in chapter 7, this constitutes

representative sample for the  communities under investigation.  The data results and analysis are

presented and discussed in full in chapter 7, with the section that refers to online learning

communities discussed as part of chapter 5.

## Research Question 5
***How does the internet/CMC affect performers of and cultural workers within blues music and blues culture?***

For this section of the project, the aim was to discover how performing artists and other cultural

workers view and adapt to the affordances of CMC.  Bourdieu defines cultural workers as "…all the

occupations involving presentation and representation (sales, marketing, advertising, public relations, fashion, decoration and so forth) and in all the institutions providing symbolic goods and services . . . and in cultural production and organization which have expanded considerably in recent years" (Bourdieu, 2010, p. 359).  For this project, I have extended this definition to include producers and presenters of internet-based blues radio shows, festival organisers, concert and event promoters and managers, record producers and authors – in short, individuals who work with and promote blues music and blues culture without necessarily being performers of the music itself.

How, if at all, has the internet altered the way that artists engage with fans and promote their performance, recorded material and merchandise?  At what stage did the internet become a viable medium for distribution of blues music and blues culture for performers?  How do artists and cultural workers choose to present themselves via CMC?  Does this medium offer advantages in engagement and presentation over the physical media and networking methods established during the 20th century?  By engaging directly with individuals, I hoped to ascertain how performers and cultural workers perceived and defined the benefits and hindrances of the internet in general and CMC in particular on their practice, as well as soliciting their views on the trajectory of blues music from the perspective of digital media.

**Method**

**Interview**

In order to collect this data, I chose the interview method.  The two fundamental questions presented by this method are firstly, who and how many people should be interviewed and secondly, how should I make and maintain contact with informants?  In both cases, my status as an active blues performer with an international practice afforded several advantages.  I was able to solicit contact with eleven performers with international reputations and in each case, first-hand experience of activity before the proliferation of the internet, and in the present day.  Similarly, each performer has a number of commercial releases to their name, and in several cases have been

recognised nationally and internationally for their artistic contribution to the blues. These

informants are listed in table 2 below:

| Code | Gender | Ethnicity | Age Group | Nationality |
|------|--------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| AG | male | white | 55 to 64 | American |
| CB | female | white | 45 to 54 | French |
| DH | male | white | 25 to 34 | British |
| IS | male | white | 45 to 54 | British (living in EU) |
| JM | female | white | 55 to 64 | American |
| KTB | female | white | 35 to 44 | British |
| LBM | male | black | 55 to 64 | American (living in UK) |
| LG | female | black | 55 to 64 | American |
| NB | male | white | 65+ | British |
| QW | male | black | 18 to 24 | American |
| TJN | male | white | 45 to 54 | British (living in US) |

*Table 3: Project interviewees*

In terms of how many performers to contact, I aimed to find a good mix of opinions and experience.

The interview respondents above were broadly representative of the ethnic mix of performers that I

experienced whilst working as a musician during the study period in the UK and mainland Europe, in

that for each performance I was either the only black performer, or in a racial minority.

I was also able to speak with cultural workers with a similarly international and long-ranging

experience in order to understand the contrast between the pre-internet world and current

contexts.

## 2.2 Why was this the best approach?

The rationale for choosing this group of methods was to create a grounded and triangulated view of

events and their contexts.  By making use of different qualitative data gathering and analysis

techniques, the intention has been to adopt complimentary perspectives on the phenomena of

blues music and blues culture such as it is remediated by CMC.  The research project intended to

uncover the formal and informal norms and behaviours which characterise blues music communities

and to offer an explanation about the main concerns of the various constituent groups of the online

blues community.

Chapter 2: **Methodology**

These specific methods were chosen in order to guard against suggestions of technological determinism. In other words, it is clear that the internet and CMC facilitate behaviour rather than giving rise to wholly new interactive practices. Whilst there are interactions such as "lurking" and "flame wars" which have specific characteristics when observed online, these behaviours have their analogues in the real world and I argue that these are extensions of existing behaviour, rather than ex nihilo practices.

These particular methods indicated that the overriding thematic concerns of the online blues music community appear to be race and authenticity. Application of CDA provided ways of reading the text and talk generated by the community as being linked to notions of power. Whilst this might have been uncovered by any single method described here, that the themes were confirmed by observation, interview and survey lends a stability to this conclusion. From this, it was possible to construct an analytic framework which relied on the work of the theorists named in this chapter - Foucault, Bourdieu, Ernst and Derrida. Additionally, these methods allowed respondents and informants to be specific about the ways that the internet has informed and influenced their practice, meaning that across interviews and textual analysis, further consistent themes could be identified.

Each of the chosen methods can be critiqued. CDA has been criticised for not taking into account that a text can be read in many ways, and for generally not foregrounding the social circumstances under which the text was produced and consumed (H. G. Widdowson, 2004; H.G. Widdowson, 1995). Widdowson further indicates that in some cases, texts are "…found to have a certain ideological meaning which is forced on the reader (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 455). I argue that such a bias is addressed by triangulating statements and observations through the application of the other methods indicated in this chapter. Participant observation is similarly subject to a symbolic interactionist criticism in that behaviours may be interpreted only within the sphere of what the observer understands, leading to issues of inference (Becker, 1958; Spradley, 1980; Tedlock, 1991).

Again, triangulation minimises the potential for misinterpretation as informants and respondents are able to male plain their own 'insider' conception of various phenomena.  An online survey raises issues of sampling, and the potential for questionnaire designers to direct and control responses through the way that questions are phrased.  In other words, how can a researcher be sure that the responses received are a representative sample?  How can a researcher be certain that questions have been fully understood (K. B. Wright, 2005)?  As indicated above, I have related the 512 responses to the 12,500 members of the Real Blues Forum, and statistically, as explained in chapter 7, this constitutes a representative sample.  Additionally, as indicated above, I was visibly available on the forum to clarify any issues that respondents may have encountered.   Additionally, many of the critical research questions included in the survey featured "other" and "none of the above" free-text fields where respondents were able to elaborate on their comments and present any information or perspectives  that were not included in the questionnaire options.

## 2.3 Limitations

This thesis contains limitations on the research and writing.  Firstly, any of the research questions could easily have generated a full-length study of their own.  This might provide an impetus for further research in these areas, such as they apply to blues music and blues culture.  Secondly, qualitative data privileges an experiential view.  Pickering however indicates that attending to experience remains an important task for cultural studies (Pickering, 2008), and as indicated in this and the preceding chapter, much of the work in blues music and blues culture has privileged the experiential through ethnographic practices, particularly given the status of blues music and blues culture as firstly an oral tradition, and secondly the culture of a subaltern sociological group (Evans, 1982; Lomax, 1993).

The research could be enhanced by the inclusion of quantitative data in terms of the size of overall potential size of the audience for blues music.  The limitation here however is that as I have discovered during my own performances and as is indicated here, ontological definitions of "blues"

are so varied and widespread that individuals may not always accurately self-identify as being "blues fans".

The research could have been enhanced by the conduct of a real-world survey as well as that which was conducted online. This might have been conducted at any of the 220 blues performances which I gave during the research period.  This might have enhanced the data concerning the part played by the internet and CMC in persuading the audience to attend the shows.  I argue however that since the main focus for this research was primarily concerned with online blues activity that the online nature of the survey was, in this case, appropriate.

Whilst I did maintain field notes for the 220 performances mentioned above, these were ultimately not relevant to the work as they focused on real-world behaviours and blues performances and so had extremely limited relevance to this research project as they recorded the names of artists who performed, their ethnicity, choice of repertoire, type of venue and other personal notes concerning fee, location and observations concerning the audience and environment.  These may however form the basis for a subsequent work which focuses on representation and the perpetuation of blues music and blues culture outside the United States in the 21$^{st}$ century.

Finally, I would have preferred to speak with more African American interviewees.  Despite this, I am pleased that I made contact with performers from a good range of ages and ethnicities and argue that my informants represent a fairly accurate racial mix in terms of ethnicity of performers at UK, US and EU blues performances.

## 2.4 Other methods considered for the study

Two other methods, Actor-Network Theory and Media Archaeology were considered as approaches for this study.  Ultimately, these were not used.  Whilst these theories were not applied *in toto*, there are several discrete elements from each which this study notes, and applies in part.

Media Archaeology (MA) investigates media history through its alternative roots, neglected ideas and machines that still are useful, whilst reflecting the supposed newness of digital culture.  MA seeks to

construct a non-linear, rhizomatic view of history which challenge perceived relationships with technology and society. Whilst the focus on technology is of interest to this study, the field is very much in development at this time, with methods and definitions under discussion. This study requires a more established and stable tool for enquiry. The element of MA which has been applied is found in chapter 3 and chapter 9. The suggestion that a media artefact is valuable not only for the content it holds, but as a statement concerning the society which produced and used it is a helpful perspective when considering the remediation of phonograph records to compact disc (CD) and from CD to .mp3.

Piekut (2014) describes ANT as a way to study "...different kinds of grouping, the role of non-humans in the creation and extension of those groupings, and the indeterminate shapes that result." ANT is particularly interested in sociological relationships between actors, and makes little distinction between human and non-human agents. There is considerable disagreement amongst the leading theorists of ANT concerning how the field is defined and applied, and concerning the limitations and effectiveness of the tools which are derived from it. This method seemed attractive initially as a way of isolating phonograph records and other non-human agents within the discourse on blues, but the lack of relevant supporting literature or suitable exemplar work in terms of applying ANT in this way made progress frustratingly slow and ultimately, fruitless.

## 2.5 Summary

This chapter outlined the methods applied to the research question employed during the research and analysis for this project. The chapter has explained the central research question, and elaborated on the specific research questions contained therein. Each of these research problems has been approached with a specific research method in mind. Grouped together, these individual methods form the project methodology. The chapter has highlighted the benefits and limitations of this methodology and indicated that the individual methods aim to provide a triangulation of findings in order to reach a supported conclusion. Worked examples have been provided where appropriate to illustrate the application of the research tools. The chapter has also indicated research methods that were experimented with initially, but whose outcomes were not wholly pertinent to the project.

Chapter 2: **Methodology**

The project now turns to the ways in which the internet in general and CMC in particular have remediated the discussions of race and authenticity, such as they apply to blues music and blues culture. The following chapter addresses the persistent question "…can white men sing the blues?". The chapter does not seek to provide an answer to this problem, but examines the way in which CMC mediates the phrasing of the question and the volume and velocity of responses.

## Chapter 3: Race – can white men sing the blues?

> "[White blues performers] can never be bluespeople…because the blues is not something they live but something they do – which makes all the difference in the world.  What distinguishes the bluesperson from the blues performer is cultural-racial make-up, which can only be inherited by a descendant of an ex-American slave." (Finn, 1986)

> "There has never been any doubt that the strength and power of blues music has ensured that its influence can cross all boundaries and cultures with relative ease.  Blues music is here to enjoy, respect and celebrate, and the door is open to all.  Open it wide!" (Brunning, 1986)

Arguments concerning whether or not white or non-African American musicians can play the blues with credibility, authority and validity are persistent and pervasive from around 1960 in the discourse on blues, the point at which the "blues revival" saw white practitioners adopting blues performance styles and composing and performing music based in the blues genre.  White artists such as Eric Clapton (1945-), Paul Butterfield (1942-1987), British blues band Fleetwood Mac, Stevie Ray Vaughan (1954-1990) and, in the 21$^{st}$ century, Seasick Steve (1941-), Susan Tedeschi (1970-), Derek Trucks (1979-) and Joe Bonamassa (1977-) are subject to discussion concerning their status as creators of music of worth within the genre which can be considered as "real" blues.  This argument is most often expressed as "Can white men play the blues?", phrasing which linguistically re-iterates a sentiment that "real" or "authentic" blues is played by men who are black – as opposed to women of the same race and ethnicity, and a notion rebutted by the reality that the first commercially successful 'classic blues' (F. Davis, 1995) performers such as Mamie Smith (1883-1946), Bessie Smith (no relation, 1894-1937), Ida Cox (1896-1967) and Gertrude "Ma" Rainey (1886-1939) were female, and that their equally successful contemporary performer, Marion Harris (1896-1944), was white.

This particular difficult - and for many, uncomfortable - discussion can be regarded as a discursive knot (see chapter 2) which refers to race and ethnicity in addition to the problematic concept within popular music of authenticity, and is an argument based largely in racial politics.  Who has the right to play the blues?  Who has the power to name and represent the genre?  By

what criteria are artists judged in order for them to have credibility or authority?  The internet does not solve this persistent argument, but allows more participants and commentators to make contributions to this particular discourse theme.  The argument itself is a hegemonic process in action; organic intellectuals engage directly with the academy over an issue of racial politics and the problematic notion of authenticity within popular music.  The internet and computer-mediated communications (CMC) imbue this process with an immediacy, velocity and audience inclusion that was not previously possible though print-based media.  This chapter presents several case studies which illustrate this exchange, refuting suggestions of technological determinism but highlighting the shifting definitions and identities of discourse participants as facilitated by CMC.

The initial marketing of 'race records' during the 1920s immediately speaks of the separation and othering (Born & Hesmondhalgh, 2000) of a marginalised societal group to whom blues was originally sold by recording companies such as Brunswick/Vocalion, Columbia, Okeh and Paramount, and by whom it was originally performed.  In other words, blues was originally marketed as black music made by and for black people within a dominant white society.  These origins have, over the last 100 years been identified as a concern for artists seeking to emerge in the genre and have for performers, audiences and commentators generated problematic discussions concerning validity, presentation and definition.  Speaking in 1968, white singer Long John Baldry commented that the blues were "music that is peculiar to American Negroes.  The negro is the one person in the world who can sing it...there are quite a few of us who can interpret it but we can't get inside it.  It is an alien art form, whereas the blues are a natural way of life to the American Negro" (Wilson, 1968).  In other words, Baldry is recognising the distance between the poietic (how music appears to be from the vantage point of those producing it) and esthesic (how that music appears from the vantage point of those receiving it) in blues performance (Moore, 2001, p. 5). The simplest expression of this argument is as the title of this chapter indicates – "...can white men play the blues?"

Chapter 3: **Race** - Can White Men Sing The Blues?

The discussion itself raises ontological questions concerning the blues; can the music still be called 'blues' if it is performed by non-African Americans? During the 1960s, UK magazines *Blues Unlimited* and *Blues World* addressed the issue by labelling any such reviews "WHITE" in the case of the former, and featuring a separate section for such material headed "White Blues" in the case of the latter. These magazines were founded in 1963 and 1966 respectively, and each had the mandate to feature American artists predominantly. Clearly, Caucasian and Mongolian[11] musicians are physically capable of playing notes and chords and singing melodies in exactly the same way as negro musicians. Despite being born in the 1970s in the south of England and having lived all my life to date in the British Isles, I am regularly assured by (presumably) well-meaning members of my audience that my presentation as a blues artist within the United Kingdom and on the European mainland is "real," "authentic," and "genuine". I attribute this almost entirely to my ethnicity – I am a black male. As a performer, I recognise that this important non-musical signifier (Tagg, 2012) assists greatly with my presentation as a blues artist. What is being identified by these comments is a deeply complex racial and political question concerning not *what* blues means, but *how* blues means when it is performed by non-black African Americans. Other contemporary bluesmen such as LeBurn Maddox (1954-), an African American musician now resident in the UK, express a similar sentiment: "As [a] Black American I'm usually the poster boy for their [European blues] festivals. Frequently I'm the headline act."

Maddox's statement above highlights a perception that black blues artists appear to be in a minority as financially successful performers, whilst white artists who openly acknowledge a debt to the founding fathers of blues music and blues culture appear to have access to greater exposure and audiences and by extension, greater financial reward and wider artistic recognition than their heroes. A pertinent example of this process occurred during the 1965 musical "British Invasion" of the United States, when British band the Rolling Stones insisted that Howlin' Wolf (Chester Burnett

---

[11] Anthropologists recognise Negro, Caucasian and Mongolian as the three major classifications of homo sapiens, based on physiological characteristics.

1910-1976) was also booked to perform on the television show *Shindig!* At the band's insistence; at this time mainstream television coverage for black artists in the United States was virtually nil (Schwartz, 2007).  Indeed, it can be argued that the project of black blues performers such as Bobby Rush (1933-), Shemeika Copeland (1979-) and Joe Louis Walker (1949-) is to seek a wider white audience where conversely, white artists seem concerned for the validation that comes from appealing to a minority, black constituency (Rudinow, 1994).  For some commentators, this access and valorisation is seen as an exploitative extension of white privilege.

This chapter does not seek to definitively answer the question of whether or not white people can sing the blues.  Rather, it  traces how the internet and digital communications technology play a part in the perpetuation and development of this specific discourse strand.

## Organic intellectuals and the academy

In the social sciences, intellectuals are those who claim, or are credited with, the right to speak over and above particular interests on matters of general philosophical, ethical and aesthetic importance. What gives intellectuals this role is their own expertise and the authority of reason and truth guiding their discourse (Brooker, 1999).  Marxist writer Antonio Gramsci indicates that any individual is capable of intellectual practice, but that only certain members of society are given the function of intellectuals.  Gramsci proceeds to make a distinction between two types of intellectual; the first, an **organic intellectual**, is one who speaks for the interests of a specific class or social group, whilst a **traditional intellectual** is bound to the institutions of the previous hegemonic order, such as a university (Gramsci, Hoare, & Nowell-Smith, 1971).  For example - in this chapter, Paul Oliver, LeRoi Jones and Corey Harris represent organic intellectuals as they present arguments and scholarly endeavour in the field of blues music and blues culture in a context where the music and its peoples are perceived as marginalised, and with limited intellectual representation in discourse. Conversely, William Randle, Charles Keil and Adam Gussow hold doctoral degrees, and at the time of

writing the examples cited here, were attached as members of staff at their respective universities. In Gramsci's terms, these members of the academy can be described as traditional intellectuals.

Gramsci also describes the condition in process whereby a dominant group leads subordinate groups through what appears to be consensus as **hegemony**. The negotiation of what constitutes knowledge and power within and between dominant and subordinate groups are hegemonic processes which Michel Foucault describes as discourse. In other words, organic intellectuals engaging with traditional intellectuals over issues of (in this case) representation produce a discourse which, in pursuance of the question or topic at hand, seeks to define a position of stable reality and meaning, and facilitate a particular understanding of the world.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine several negotiations of a persistent question of cultural appropriation such as it played out through print media through the blues boom of the 1960s, and examine how the internet and digital technologies facilitate this discussion and negotiation in the digital age. This chapter does not propose that the internet and digital communications technologies provide solutions to the question in and of themselves - which would be technological determinism - but indicates that the hegemonic process of discourse on this topic acquires a greater velocity and number of visible participants in the discussion when pursued via digital means.

## Appropriation, exchange, assimilation

In its most basic form, the argument is concerned with the ability of non-African Americans to successfully perform blues music. Typically, participants in the discourse strand adopt one of two positions:

1) Blues is a 'black music' created by and for African Americans, and only black Americans have the right or ability to perform in this style with authority. White performers may well perform the music but fundamentally, any non-black performer is a skilled copyist. Typically, artists such as Eric Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Joe Bonamassa and more recently Hugh Laurie are dismissed as being inauthentic and are singled out for derision.

2) Whilst the blues may have its origins in the Black American experience, the music is now a universal style which is colour-blind.  Black blues musicians do not have a monopoly on suffering and privation and, as a result, blues may be performed with authority by any individual regardless of race, gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

In the social sciences, the processes described in the first argument are called **Cultural Appropriation,** and are largely regarded as a negative phenomenon (Young, 2010).  Cultural appropriation refers to a sociological power dynamic, in which members of a dominant culture take elements from the culture of people who have been systematically dominated by that dominant group (ibid).  For many commentators, the simple act of non-blacks attempting to play the blues is an act of appropriation.   This differs from **cultural exchange**, where members of different cultures share mutually with each other.  Cultural exchange lacks the systemic power dynamic inherent in cultural appropriation and is in large part the position of the second argument.  Finally, **cultural assimilation** is a sociological process whereby marginalised people adopt elements of the dominant culture in order to survive conditions that make life difficult if they do not adopt, for example, modes of dress, speech, behaviour and outward expressions of taste and preference.  In the context of blues music and blues culture cultural assimilation necessarily features as both a positive and negative position in both arguments.

## 3.1 Case Studies

The audience for the blues began to shift from black to white during the "blues" revival" of the early 1960s.  At this time, many white members of the blues and folk audience such as singer and guitarist Bonnie Raitt (1949-), Dave Van Ronk (1936-2002) and harmonica player Paul Oscher (1950-) began to compose and perform blues music publically; in the case of Oscher, he was, from 1967 a member of Muddy Waters' touring and studio band on the Chess label.  As blues writer Paul Garon (1995) emphasises, some of these performers even came from poor working-class families, and many had known suffering themselves. In June, 1968, B.B. King's appearance at the Fillmore West in San Francisco represented a key discursive event in the shift in audiences from older African Americans to young middle-class whites.  This significant performance, which represents King "crossing over" from a minority black to a majority white market (Adelt, 2011) is examined in greater detail in

Chapter 3: **Race** - Can White Men Sing The Blues?

Chapter 8.  1969's *Fathers and Sons* album positioned Muddy Waters (1913-1983) as a central, paternal blues elder alongside white musical disciples and protégés such as guitarist and composer Michael Bloomfield (1943-1981), harmonica player and vocalist Paul Butterfield and the Stax label session bass player Donald "Duck" Dunn (1941-2012) as featured players. *The London Howlin Wolf Sessions* (1972) performed a similar function of placing an established, black American seminal electric blues artist with an emerging generation of British players including guitarist and vocalist Eric Clapton, keyboard player and singer Steve Winwood (1948-), bass player Bill Wyman (1936-) and drummer Charlie Watts (1941-). Watts and Wyman were, at the time of recording, the rhythm section for The Rolling Stones - a band named after the 1950 Muddy Waters Chess recording.  These two albums represent not only a reinforcement of the passing on of the blues tradition from one generation to the next, but from a certain perspective the endorsement of white blues players and their graduation into the blues performance tradition by elder statesmen of colour and unassailable blues credibility.

Perceived racial inconsistencies in the presentation and performance of blues music during the 1960s UK blues boom were highlighted by contemporary popular musicians.  Guitarist Danny Kirwan indicated that "…the blues is a black man's language…something that stems from the black nature of man" (Wilson, 1968), whilst John Lennon's distorted, 6/4 blues shuffle in E *Yer Blues* (1968) mocked the burgeoning blues scene (MacDonald, 2008).  Most directly, The Liverpool Scene's caustic *Fleetwood Mac Chicken Shack John Mayall Can't Fail Blues* (1969) satirised the incongruity of young, white, British musicians attempting to compose and perform in the blues style, with direct reference to the exploitation of the music.  Over a backing which veers between slow blues and a thick-toned guitar-led ostinato reminiscent of Howlin' Wolf's *Smokestack Lightning*, Adrian Henri sings in a American-accented drawl:

*Woke up this mornin' and my agent was standin' in my room*
*Oh yeah, woke up this mornin' and my agent and a man from Blue Horizon records and Mike and*
*Richard Vernon were all standing in my room, yes they were*
*Well they said "you better learn some blues son, 'cause there's gonna be a boom"*

Chapter 3: **Race** - Can White Men Sing The Blues?

*I got the Fleetwood Mac Chicken Shack John Mayall can't fail blues*

*From the deep, deep south of the river Thames*
*Bottleneck guitar is the latest trend*
*Gonna earn more money than I can spend*
*I got the blues…*

*I'm gonna pick that cotton and do my thing*
*I don't know the chords and I just can't sing*
*But there's lots of noise and the drums don't swing*
*I got the blues…*

*I got money by the spoonful, I got money by the handful*
*I got money by the roomful, I got money by the bankful*

Singled out for attention alongside Fleetwood Mac and (Stan Webb's) Chicken Shack is John Mayall, a performer whose band, The Bluesbreakers, were instrumental in launching the careers of guitarists Eric Clapton, Peter Green and Jimmy Page – all young white musicians who rose to fame as performers of blues music.  The debate appears to enter the realm of surrealism with the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band's 1968 musical satire "Can Blue Men Sing the Whites?" In which singer Viv Stanshall describes a middle-class musician deliberately swapping his mohair suit for dirty jeans and going unshaven in order to deliver an authentic performance to [presumably white] blues enthusiasts. Each of the examples cited here (The Beatles, The Liverpool Scene and The Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band) include stylistic features of the electric blues in order to underscore their satirical points: instrumentation focuses on distorted electric guitar played with a slide, electric bass, drum set and male vocal; musical form is based in whole or in part around a 12-bar I-IV-V structure, and rhythmic textures are characterised by the use of shuffles, swing, and stop-time devices.

## Paul Oliver vs. William Randle (1960-62)

As the number of white blues practitioners increased during the blues revival of the late 1950s and 1960s, so too did discussions of validity, credibility and authenticity of "white blues". These questions focused increasingly, although not exclusively, on the meaning and function of white practitioners performing blues music in contexts far removed from the origins of the music. Writing in the founding work of blues scholarship *Blues Fell This Morning* (1960), Paul Oliver stated

that "…only the American Black, whether purple-black or so light skinned as to be indistinguishable from his sun-tanned white neighbor [sic], can sing the blues".  Here, Oliver is advancing that the blues is absolutely a matter of race and the province solely of African American singers.  This position, whilst obliquely acknowledging the socio-political context of African Americans who certainly produced the music, does not allow for the inclusion of white musicians from the same context who were part of the cultural exchange process – participants in what Holt (2007) refers to as a constellation of diverse styles, which coalesce into a specific performance practices.  Given that the blues which Oliver refers to within his project were experienced solely via recordings, and that the recording policy of the labels previously mentioned in this chapter separated black artists from white for marketing and commercial purposes, a process Miller (2010) describes as "segregating sound", it is immediately problematic to assume the validity of this statement previous to 1960.  Put another way – there is a very real possibility that white people DID sing the blues.

Whilst certain commentators expressed disappointment in the extended sociological framing of Oliver's work and its focus on lyrical analysis at the expense of a musical narrative (Dawbarn, 1960), other contemporary sources regarded the book as "a remarkable documentary" (Stewart-Baxter, 1960) and regarded the author as "a serious writer…for the serious student" - an academic allusion that mirrored the passion of Oliver's organically intellectual prose. Reviewing Oliver's work in the pages of the United States published *Phylon* academic journal however, William Randle (1962) indicated concern that "…there is considerable danger…that peculiar and unscientific racial doctrines will gain circulation and have status."  This opinion expressed by a traditional intellectual represents a response to Oliver in a peer-reviewed context, precisely the arena of discussion that this first scholarly treatment of the blues was [perhaps] intended to address. Pertinently, Phylon is a journal founded by sociologist, civil rights activist and historian W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963) and published by Clark Atlanta University, which is considered a black seat of learning

(HBCU)[12].  In other words, this cautionary rebuttal to Oliver's assertions comes from a senior

(professor) academic in an academic context and in academic terms, and some three years after the

book's original publication.  The audience for this important exchange is however limited given the

selective circulation and specialist readership of the Phylon journal relative to the wider audience for

Oliver's book.   The point being illustrated is that whilst readers may have registered the scholarly

tone and assertions of Oliver's work, they were not privy to a challenging and cautionary response of

similar tone and weight.

### LeRoi Jones vs Charles Keil (1963-1966)

During the same period, and concurrent with the American Civil Rights movement (1954-

1968) during which black Americans sought to redefine both themselves and their contribution to

contemporary culture and wider society in the United States, writer LeRoi Jones (later Amiri Baraka)

published *Blues People* (1963) which defined the blues as a  product of African American culture, and

resistant to white influence or ownership.  For Jones, "The idea of a white blues singer seems an

even more violent contradiction of terms than the idea of a middle class blues singer," thus

reinforcing the notion that the blues was the cultural property and birth right not only of black

Americans, but poor black Americans.

Reviewing the work two years after its publication for the *Ethnomusicology* journal, Charles

Keil (1965) praised Jones' achievement in "a most significant book on Negro music in

America…despite the author's ethnocentric stance and manifesto prose" (p. 61).  Keil commends

Jones for "[h]is documentation of the…commercial and mechanical stages of various styles as they

passed from the Negro sub-culture as they passed into the culture of white middle-class America,"

(p. 62), but notes that "[u]nfortunately, the author is very definitely a "hobbyist"…vis-à-vis the

realms of social science" (p. 61).  Keil finds it "…incredible, even tragic, that LeRoi Jones, writing a

---

[12] Historically Black College or University: "…any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, **whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans**, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation." (Education, 1965)

book of this kind, should leave out of his analysis the contemporary blues scene…[t]here is no discussion whatever of…B.B. King and Bobby Bland – or their relationship between their music and today's 'Blues People'"(p. 62).

Keil's own book, *Urban Blues* (1966), addressed precisely this perceived deficiency the following year.  Here, Keil examined the expressive role of electric blues bands and performers in an urban setting, and stressed the necessary hybrid ethnicities and genders of performers.  For Keil "The blues has probably always been about whites learning from blacks, blacks learning from whites – the mutual effort to laugh and sing and cry away the pains of American racism expressed in the metaphors of love gone sour"(p. 233).  The author however is dismissive of  purveyors of "Phony folk blues [reinterpretation or re-creation of older styles] – Odetta, Josh White, Harry Belafonte," and creates a separate taxonomical category for "'White' Blues", which includes "Jimmy Rodgers, Woody Guthrie, Paul Butterfield, The Righteous Brothers, [and] British imitators The Rolling Stones and The Beatles" (p. 221).

In this exchange, Jones is cast as the organic intellectual, whilst Keil takes the position of the traditional academic.  In contrast to the Oliver/Randall exchange, whilst the positions of the protagonists is clear and the responses similarly play out over a three-year period, the rejoinder from the academy is in the form of a book-length project which draws on Oliver's earlier, scholarly work for reference[13].

### Joel Rudinow vs. Paul C. Taylor (1994-1995)

The exchange between Joel Rudinow and Paul C. Taylor in the pages of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* took place between winter 1994 and Summer 1995.  Although both participants in this discussion were members of the academy, it is of note that since the publication

---

[13] It should be noted that at least one academic review of Keil's work (Deakin, 1967) praised *Urban Blues* for its "considerable knowledge of jazz and blues and a wide range of information drawn from reading in sociology, anthropology, musicology and social psychology" and "dazzling reportage" in his engagement with the contemporary blues scene, but criticised Keil for "…a string of leaden assumptions," and an overly forgiving and in places a "patronizing…anxiety to do well by [LeRoi] Jones."

of *Blues Fell This Morning* thirty-five years earlier that the question concerning the validity and credibility of white blues performance had made its way into the scholarly arena.  At the time of the exchange, Rudinow was on staff at Sonoma State University, California, whilst Taylor was attached to Le Moyne College in New York.  Both academics were members of their relative institutions' departments of Philosophy and so brought the ontological concerns of the field to the question in hand.

Rudinow's paper *Race, Ethnicity, Expressive Authenticity, Can White People Sing the Blues?* (1994) adopts the analytic method[14] in order to summarise and respond to the body of non-philosophical writing concerning authenticity in blues performance. He calls attention to the logic that supports criticisms of the appropriation of blues music and blues culture by white musicians and audiences.  Addressing selected critics of white appropriation including Oliver (1960), and Gleason (1960) – in particular the latter's unequivocal assertion that  "[The] blues is black man's music and whites diminish it at best or steal it at worst.  In any case they have no moral right to use it," - Rudinow focuses on the social and conceptual issues embodied by white blues musicians (Gracyk, 2008).

Rudinow identifies and refines the cultural appropriation argument into two further distinct positions: firstly, 'the proprietary argument,'  which states that when one cultural community owns a musical style, its appropriation by another group constitutes a serious wrong - white blues players participate in a racist appropriation that deprives African Americans of what is rightfully theirs; secondly 'the experiential access argument,' which indicates that white musicians lack relevant experiences that are necessary for expressive authenticity in the blues tradition. This second argument states that, in the most generous analysis, white musicians produce blues-sounding music that cannot mean what the blues have traditionally meant. Unable to draw on the full cultural

---

[14] Analytic philosophy (also known as linguistic philosophy) is an approach to philosophical problems that emphasises the study of language and the logical analysis of concepts.

resources that inform the blues, white appropriations will be expressively superficial (Gracyk, 2008).

Rudinow responds to the proprietary argument by indicating that there is no plausible analysis of

ownership according to which a community or culture can "own" an artistic style, and similarly

dismisses the  experiential access argument by arguing that this approach assigns inauthenticity to

recent African American blues performances as well as to white appropriations. Specifically, in an

argument which partially pre-figures Holt (2007), Rudinow points out that after a century of

development and change, the African American experiences were expressed in early blues cannot

realistically be the standard for evaluating contemporary blues. An evolving tradition that includes

white participants is no more or less a departure from the core tradition than was, for example, the

introduction of electric guitars. He further suggests that, African American experience is sufficiently

diverse to allow some white musicians routes of initiation into experiences that can, in combination

with mastery of the musical idiom, add validity to white blues performance (Gracyk, 2008).

Paul C. Taylor's *…So Black and Blue: Response to Rudinow* (1995) in the spring of the

following year re-asserts the experiential access argument. He argues that a blues performance is

authentic only if it "…can properly bear witness to the racialized moral pain that the blues is about"

(p. 314), and it can only do so if it generates an appropriate feeling in informed listeners. These

listeners prioritise the racial identity of performers, and regard white performers as less capable of

bearing witness to the African American experience. As a result, white appropriations do not

generate the proper feeling in blues fans and therefore white blues performances are not

expressively authentic.  Rudinow's *Reply to Taylor* (1995) offers two counter arguments - firstly, that

Taylor suggests a criterion for expressive authenticity that cannot be applied to most other music,

and secondly that Taylor's argument appears to assume that the development of blues is a static

racial project (p. 317). Rudinow further indicates that many African American musicians and

audiences admire the best white blues performers, and since Taylor's argument links authenticity

with audience response, this would appear to validate the expressive authenticity of some white

blues performances.

Chapter 3: **Race** - Can White Men Sing The Blues?

That the three stages of this exchange took place with greater velocity than any of the previously mentioned examples and in a scholarly arena indicates that by 1994 the various positions in the argument had acquired adherents in the academy that Gramsci would regard as traditional intellectuals.  In other words, by the end of the 20th century, blues music and blues culture had become a field of enquiry of real and serious philosophical interest beyond that proposed by organic intellectuals such as Paul Oliver and LeRoi Jones.

## Living Blues Magazine

The first magazines dedicated exclusively to blues music and blues culture were based in the United Kingdom. *Blues Unlimited* was a monthly publication founded in 1963 by Mike Leadbitter and Simon Napier as the official journal for the Blues Appreciation Society with an initial circulation of 250 subscribers, which by 1970 had increased to 750 (Leadbitter, 1971).  Alongside *Blues World* which was founded in 1968 by Bob Groom, these magazines focused almost exclusively on African American artists with occasional unfavourable reference to white British blues players such as Fleetwood Mac, John Mayall and Eric Clapton, whose band The Yardbirds were described as "…not just pale imitators – they were bad" (Napier, 1964).  In the United States and following irregular and increasingly infrequent  features in *Jet* and *Ebony* magazines during the 1960s, blues music received its first dedicated American publication in 1970.  Based in Chicago, *Living Blues* was initially a quarterly publication "…with individual subscriptions under one thousand and distribution to about eighty to one hundred book and record stores" (Adelt, 2010), edited by Jim O'Neal and Amy van Singel and staffed after the first 5 editions by writers Paul Garon and Bruce Iglauer[15].  Each of these individuals remain active in blues music at the time of writing as record-label owners, authors and radio station DJs[16].  Their legacy and continued influence as cultural workers in blues music is discussed in the greater depth in chapter 4.

---

[15] Writers Diane Allmen, Andre Souffront, and Tim Zorn left the publication of the fifth edition in 1971.
[16] Bruce Iglauer founded and maintains blues label Alligator Records, Jim O'Neill is XYZ and Amy thing is a DJ on WACZ and XYYX (check sources and data).

Chapter 3: **Race** - Can White Men Sing The Blues?

Subtitled "The Magazine of the African American Blues Tradition," and catering to a majority white readership which by the 1990s had extended to Europe, Japan and Australia, *Living Blues* played a fundamental role in the continuing canonisation of artists and narratives within the discourse on blues by pursuing an exclusive policy of featuring only black blues artists.  The position of the magazine was emphasised by Paul Garon in the editorial for the Spring 1973 edition of the magazine:

> "*Living Blues* does not accept an acoustic definition of the blues. We feel that the blues is a black American working-class music that developed in response to numerous determinants; that these determining factors were in a real sense specific to the black working-class is borne out by the fact that it was they, and they alone, who produced the blues. … Deprived of its historical base by the white performers, the blues, as purveyed by whites, is no longer the blues, and thus is not the concern of *Living Blues*." (Garon, 1973)

This ontological characterisation of blues music and blues culture as part of a specifically black, working-class cultural project is in accordance with L. R. Jones (1963), and in part descended from the essentialist assertions of Oliver (1960). The critical difference in this instance however is that Jones was an African American writing from an 'insider' perspective who recognised blues as a synchronic moment within a living tradition, and one which had progressed diachronically to jazz - enacted as a form of cultural resistance to white hegemonic power.  In contrast, Garon is an educated white American who describes the blues as a living tradition, yet rejects the possibility that blues music as a racial project has evolved to include white performers as part of its development and perpetuation.  Supporters and opponents of this position responded via the closed community of the magazine's letters page in steady but even numbers, leaving Harriet Choice (1973) to widen the debate by asking in her Jazz column in the Chicago Tribune "How can an all-white staff put out such a magazine as Living Blues?   And why are there no black writers on staff?...[T]ho [sic] they print interviews with black bluesmen "verbatim," wouldn't a black writer as different questions of, and get different answers from, a black musician?  So if the interviews in Living Blues are filtered thru [sic] white people, do they still stand up?"  Here, Choice alludes to the concerns expressed by Randle

(1962) concerning the construction of a blues narrative and ontology that is subjective, selective, and potentially, distorting for readers and performers alike.

## 3.2 Digital spaces

The preceding case studies illustrate the interaction between organic intellectuals such as Paul Oliver and LeRoi Jones with the academy through print-based media in the 1960s.  These interactions took place during the formation and stabilisation of the blues community following the revivalist practices of the 'Blues Boom'.  Further, these interactions illustrate both the emergence of blues scholarship (Oliver, 1960) and the concretisation of blues narratives and canon, as well as the creation of blues intellectuals and critical thinkers.  Largely absent from the discourse at this early stage of development are the voices of the musicians themselves, except for as interview subjects.  This is perhaps as it should be; the primary concern of musicians is, after all, making music.  The attribution of meaning and value by a secondary audience of scholars and critics such as the staff of *Living Blues* magazine however has real consequences for the musicians in question.  Consulted on this topic, African American blues musicians frequently offered the opinion that the instrumental ability of white blues players was less important than vocal performance.  David "Honeyboy" Edwards indicated that "A lot of these white boys play the blues real good.  Ain't but one thing about most of them though: most can't sing a thing," (Edwards & Frank, 1997) a sentiment echoed by Lee Conley Bradley (aka Big Bill Broonzy) "[white players] couldn't sing the blues.  They could say the blues words…but not the real Mississippi Blues" (Broonzy & Bruynoghe, 1955).  This emphasis on the voice is understandable in the context of comparatively low literacy rates amongst the first generation of blues players (Oliver, 1983).  Many black performers appeared less concerned with ethnicity than members of the emerging scholarly secondary audience.   In many cases, the musicians appeared publically to welcome the incursion of white protégés and enthusiasts, and in many instances thanked white performers for "…keeping the music alive," and '…open[ing] a lot of doors,' (B. B. King & Conforti, 1969) to a new, young, majority white audience.

The essentialist appropriation vs. universalist cultural exchange arguments continued through the second blues revival of the 1990s and were typified by Lawrence Hoffman's guest editorial in Guitar Player Magazine "At the Crossroads," which argued that it was "…absurd to think that the lifeblood of blues could ever be extended by anyone who, in essence, could never be more than a convincing, expressive copyist" (Hoffman, 1990 ).  The article provoked "mountains of vituperative abuse," from readers who asserted their right to play the blues based on past suffering or various iterations of the cultural exchange argument (Garon, 1995).  In the same year, Ebony magazine asked "Are Blacks Giving Away The Blues?" and featured quotations from musicians such as B.B. King and John Lee Hooker, concerned not that white players were usurping their position on stage, but that black audiences were deserting the music and being replaced by crowds that were "95 percent…white and yuppie-ish, clap[ping] arrythmically" (Whitaker, 1990).  A pained response from "…a black musician who is capable of playing any style" indicated that "Whites see the blues as entertainment; for us it is a way of life" (Spight, 1990).

## Digital spaces

The following section provides a description of blogs, and the rise of digital magazines – particularly the publication of *Living Blues* in this format.   Featured analysis of the interaction between musician Corey Harris, and Adam Gussow is offered.  Harris is an African American musician whose blog post "Blues is Black Music!  Can White Men Play the Blues?" (Harris, 2015b) invited much commentary, as well as a featured response from Gussow who is himself a very successful blues performer, white, and a university professor at University of Mississippi.  Gussow has written extensively on the blues (Gussow, 1998, 2002, 2007).  Harris is cast in the role of an organic (and problematically polemic) intellectual in the mould of Stokely Carmichael and LeRoi Jones.  Gussow represents the current development of the traditional intellectual.

### Digital context

In the two decades between 1993 and 2013, use of the internet increased from 0.51 per 100 in the UK and 2.27 per 100 in the US to 89.84 per 100 in the UK and 84.2 per 100 in the US (World

Development Indicators, 2015).   Internet users are individuals who have used the internet (from any

location) over the preceding 12 months.  For these figures (fig. 6 below), these users accessed the

internet via a computer, mobile phone, personal digital assistant, games machine, digital TV or

similar devices. The steepest growth in use occurred  between 1996 and 2006.  During this period,

search company Google was incorporated (1998); social media site Facebook was launched in 2004;

video-streaming service YouTube came online in 2005 and was bought by Google in 2006, and micro-

blogging site Twitter began offering its services in 2006.  Each of these sites offer services which, for

many users, define their experience of and access to the internet and computer-mediated

communications.
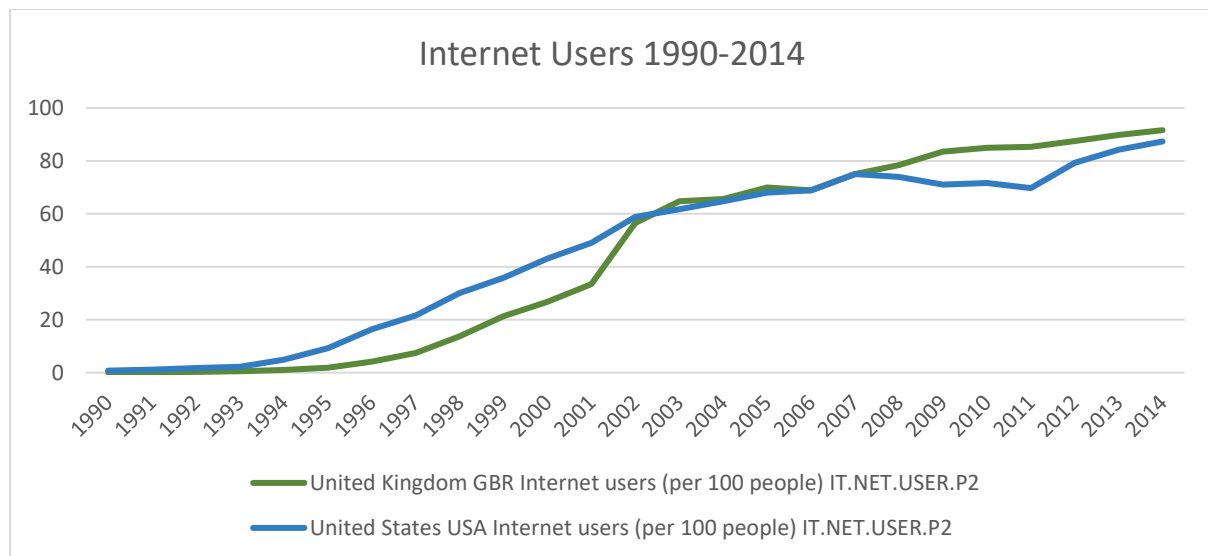


*Figure 6: UK and US interrnet usage 1990-2014*

*The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory* defines a blog as "A frequently updated Web site

consisting of dated entries arranged in reverse chronological order so that the most recent post

appears first" (Walker, 2005).  Kozinets (2010, p. 189) adds that a blog should ideally be frequently

updated, and is a "potential site of online community and culture".  Web logs were originally link-

driven sites that emerged at the same time as the worldwide web itself during the 1990s.  Named by

Peter Merholz, the original blogs were a loose collection of hyperlinks, commentary, and personal

thoughts and essays (Blood, 2000). At the beginning of 1999, there were approximately 23 blogs

listed on the internet. By the end of that year, and following the introduction of software which

allowed authors to easily produce blogs without the need for any programming knowledge, there were hundreds.

Blogs re-cast the relationship between producers and consumers (see ch.2), expanding the range of voices in the public sphere, and facilitating the creation of on-line social networks. As such, blogs are part of a significant technical shift from "…a culture dominated by mass media, using one-to-many communication, to one where participatory media, using many-to-many communication is becoming the norm" (Rettberg, 2008:31).  In other words, blogs allow their authors to bypass the potential constrictions of peer-review in publishing and address an audience directly.  In this way, blogs re-shape the potential for participatory communication and social connectivity (Kreiss, 2009, p. 18) by uniquely combining forms of oral and print communications and in so doing, re-working the distinction between dialogue and communication (Peters, 1999).  Rettberg (2008) notes that blogging is grounded in different standards of authority than the professional press, as blog-writers (bloggers) prize personal authenticity, narrative subjectivity and conversational participation over the credibility of institutions, objectivity, and finished news products.  Additionally, whilst the audience for a given blog may be limited to "…fifteen close friends, or…fifteen people who are genuinely interested in what you are writing about" (p57), a writer may capitalise on their celebrity in another sphere of activity such as performance or academia to drive audiences toward their content.  This is certainly the case with musician, broadcaster and on-line guitar teacher Corey Harris, whose polemically-titled blog *"Blues is Black Music!"* generated over 250 responses from commentators, including a lengthy open letter from Professor Adam Gussow, when published in May 2015.

## Corey Harris vs. Adam Gussow (2015)

On May 10th 2015, blues musician and activist Corey Harris published the essay *Can White People Play The Blues?* on his internet blog "Blues is Black Music!" (Harris, 2015b).  Leaving aside problematic notions of what constitutes 'Black Music' (Tagg, 1987), Harris presented a short essay (2,765 words) which generated much discussion in several blues-dedicated spaces across social

media.  It is the velocity of commentary and the ability of contributors to join the discussion via digital means which marks the difference between the previous case studies and this particular exchange of views.  Like L. R. Jones (1963), Murray (1978), and part of the central argument of this thesis, Harris recognises the blues as a diachronic project whose defining synchronic moments have passed; "The blues of the thirties, forties and fifties, the way it was played and sung – can never be recreated…blues is still relevant, but now more as a reference point within other styles of black music that it spawned and not as a predominant style" (Harris, 2015b).  However, Harris stresses cultural appropriation and the proprietary argument, and configures the blues as a racial and culturally experiential project which necessarily excludes non-black performers from producing music of any serious worth in the field.  It is this latter point that is most consistently stressed, to the point where Harris' potentially universalist message that white performers should create music that references blues without attempting to mean the blues in the same way as black performers is lost beneath a polemic concerning authenticity.

In terms of transitivity (i.e. what the speaker says - see ch.2), Harris' language echoes many of the arguments given in the cultural appropriation case studies in this chapter.  The essay is particularly concerned with race, and authenticity.  For example, Harris suggests the inability of white performers to sing the blues "…[m]any white singers have embarrassed themselves by serving up cheap imitations of what they *think* Black vocals should sound like," with the same inflection, skill or validity as a black performer – also invoking the experiential access argument.  Interestingly, Harris does not stress that the performer needs to be African American – only that they should be black. automatically more valid than that of a white practitioner born and raised in the Southern United States in 1958 (Gussow), which makes a tacit claim for race memory as well as indicating the subjective importance of non-musical signification for an audience.  Specifically in terms of signification, Harris emphasises that "[a] white singer can never sing the same songs as a Black singer and have the songs keep the same meaning."

Chapter 3: **Race** - Can White Men Sing The Blues?

The modality – who is saying what and how – is that Harris is an African American guitar player who has presence in the performance field as an organic authority on the subject.  At the time of writing, Harris has released 17 solo albums, and made contributions to several other projects including Martin Scorsese's series of documentaries (Scorsese et al., 2003).  Born in 1969 in Denver, Colorado, Harris' recorded output was initially very focused on blues; 1995's *Between Midnight and Day* interpreted songs originally recorded by Charley Patton, Bukka White, Muddy Waters and others. Writer Tony Russell has described these efforts as "occasionally pallid" (Russell, 1997, p. 117). Since 2005's *Daily Bread* album, Harris has increasingly included a reggae influence in his work – which itself might be interpreted as appropriation. Despite being awarded an honorary doctorate in 2007, Harris is not formally attached to an institution.  Despite this, and perhaps ironically, Harris is an active teacher on the sonic junction website, offering lessons in blues guitar technique to subscribed learners – some of whom, presumably, are white.  This is discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.

Within hours of the essay being posted, several hundred responses had been received.  These broadly fall into four categories.

1) It's racist to hold such positions as Harris';
2) Suffering is universal and whites suffer, too;
3) Ability is beyond racial barriers; many white players are great musicians;
4) Blues was once the expression of black cultural life, but now it is the expression of white as well as black feeling.

The most significant of these responses came from writer and performer Adam Gussow.  Again of significance to this study is that the *Open Letter To Corey Harris* (Gussow, 2015) was posted not only on Harris' blog, but on Gussow's own Harmonica teaching website, as well as via Facebook.  Broadly occupying position 4 above, Gussow focusses on the notion that Harris' arguments represent "…an oversimplification made for polemical purposes," and emphasises that "the arguments that [Harris] make[s]….have all been made before; they're almost all half-truths."  Gussow then specifically attacks Harris' modality – "...to the extent that you think you're uttering the final word on the blues, from a position of high and mighty righteousness, you're fooling yourself."

Chapter 3: **Race** - Can White Men Sing The Blues?

Where Harris concentrates on race and authenticity in his essay, Gussow's counter argument draws on geography and inter-racial co-operation.  This is perhaps unsurprising, given that Gussow is a white male (now resident in  Mississippi) who served his blues apprenticeship as a street-performer with African American guitarist and singer Sterling Magee as 'Satan and Adam'.  The inter-racial duo found international fame when included in the music documentary *Rattle and Hum* (1988), and the material from their four albums *Harlem Blues* (1991), *Mother Mojo* (1993), *Living on the River* (1996) and *Back in the Game* (2011) are very much in the acoustic blues guitar/harmonica/vocal tradition typified by Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee (1959).

Gussow emphasises that from the outset, the blues was a multi-racial project, citing the early examples of Jimmie Rodgers, Roscoe Holcomb, Marion Harris and Elvis Presley.  The open letter is not entirely forgiving of white performers however, making mention of a "…fair number of talentless, minstrelesque white blues players on contemporary blues radio" (Gussow, 2015), implicating the gatekeepers of a blues scene in the US who seem to exclude black performers such as Harris from festival line-ups and other public performance opportunities.  However, Gussow emphasises that this mixed-race "mainstream" audience is also Harris' audience, rather than the soul-blues performers such as O.B. Buchana, Miss Jody and Bobby Rush mentioned in chapter 2 who have a predominantly black American following.  In other words – if Harris believes that blues is black music, why does he omit mention of contemporary blues performers who play for a predominantly black audience – or actively seek this audience for himself?  Gussow goes on to emphasise dynamism and diachronism in the development of the blues, citing the Senegambian roots of the music and the Arabian and European trade routes that carried the music to the United States. He reinforces his own modality as a teacher and performer by indicating that his own blues harmonica tutorial site has subscribers from 175 countries around the world as illustrated by Google analytics[17] – and stating that at this point, the blues is "way, way beyond the black/white thing."

---

[17] Google Analytics is a free web analytics service offered by Google that tracks and reports website traffic.

Chapter 3: **Race** - Can White Men Sing The Blues?

Here, in line with the arguments of this thesis, computer-mediated communications appear to be implicit in the perpetuation and dissemination of blues music and blues culture. As with Harris' involvement with the Sonic Junction tutorial site, this is discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.

On May 24th, Harris responded with another article – *Can Black People Write About the Blues? (Harris, 2015a)*. Citing Lawrence Hoffman's 1990 editorial in Guitar Player magazine, which explicitly stated that white blues was a feeble shadow of the 'real' music played by black performers (Hoffman, 1990 ), Harris continued to draw heavily on themes of race and authenticity to support his cultural appropriation argument.  Of interest and significance is Harris' direct engagement with the critics of his previous essay, including Gussow.  Of particular interest is Harris' direct engagement with commentators via computer-mediated communications.  The following exchange is indicative:

> **antidote42 (May 25, 2015 at 6:50 PM)**
>
> *I'm a white woman and have read through both blogs, have seen your facebook posts, and was a member of sonic junction and attempted some of the slide pieces you teach.*
>
> *I'm wondering why you teach your versions of black prewar blues- and one lesson is singing pointers- to non-blacks?*
>
> *Harriet*
>
> **Corey Harris (May 25, 2015 at 7:13 PM)**
>
> *Greetings and thanks for your comment. I teach to encourage students to be themselves while learning music they love. Many play very well but are challenged by singing. I teach that they must find their own voice and not just imitate.*
>
> **antidote42 (May 26, 2015 at 5:15 AM)**
>
> *No. My question was the broader WHY do you teach/encourage non-blacks to sing black blues - in their own voice or not. What is your reasoning and goal there.*
>
> *This assumes that some are going to want to perform, and maybe your versions no less, and may further take opportunities away from black performers, contribute to a more non-black marketplace.*
>
> *Why in the world would you do that?*
>
> **Corey Harris (June 8, 2015 at 10:26 AM)**

> *I see your line of reasoning here. I teach because there are not many opportunities for me to make a living in music. What takes opportunities away from Black performers is historic racism, not Black people giving music lessons online. What contributes to a "more non-Black marketplace" is white control of the industry, since Black people have no real power in the industry and don't call the shots.*

This direct engagement from one of Harris' own students appears to highlight the weakness in Harris' argument – and illustrate the point made by Gussow in his open letter.  Whilst Harris is keen to emphasise black 'ownership' of blues music and blues culture and decry the influence of non-black performers on the music, he also appears to be actively encouraging the uptake of the music by white performers by teaching performance techniques.  Also of interest is that during his response, Harris identifies many of his critics by race – "What was most interesting to me is the range of reactions of those (mostly white) people who were clearly offended by the mere question." It is unclear how Harris was able to identify the race of his respondents.  Similarly, when challenged concerning his own adoption of reggae music as a non-Jamaican, his response that "…even though Jamaicans have and continue to define the art form, it does not only speak to Jamaican or West Indian reality, but to the reality of Afrikan people around the world," which is at least the application of a double-standard, or at worst, outright hypocrisy.

## 3.3 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has not been to attempt to answer the persistent question of whether or not non-African American performers can sing or play the blues.  The intention here has been to illustrate the argument through a number of media from 1960, and trace an example of this particular discourse strand such as it is found on the internet.  The Harris vs. Gussow interaction above highlights that this discussion is still taking place within the discourse.  The use of computer-mediated communications appears to assist with the volume and velocity of commentary and further, allows commentators to participate directly in the debate.  In other words, where the discussion began in the 1960s in specialist communities and between traditional and organic academics, it is now taking place in a more easily accessible public forum where participants such as

antidote42 above are able to make simple and direct observations to the main protagonists in the

discussion.

The last case study presented above also highlights that very many people around the world are now

using the internet to learn performance techniques in the blues style.  In this way, the internet

assists with the perpetuation and dissemination of blues music and blues culture.  As shown, Corey

Harris offers blues guitar and vocal lessons via the Sonic Junction website, and as Adam Gussow

indicated, his own Modern Blues Harmonica lessons have subscribers from 175 different countries.

In addition, the case studies in this chapter have featured interactions between academics and

intellectuals.  With this in mind, the following chapter discusses the intersection between blues

music and the academy, with particular reference to acculturation, enculturation, and the

acquisition of skills and expertise within the field such as it is assisted by digital means.

# Chapter 4: Archive and the blues

> "There is no political power without control of the archive, if not memory.
> Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion:
> the participation in and access to the archive, its constitution, and its
> interpretation."(Derrida, 1995, p. 4)

> "Who controls the past…controls the future; who controls the present
> controls the past." (Orwell, 1949, p. 44)

## 4.1 Introduction

The archival discourse is central to our developing understanding of blues music and blues culture as an unfolding cultural phenomenon.  Drawing on the work of theorists Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Wolfgang Ernst, this chapter examines the development and continuing evolution of the blues archive in the digital age, and considers the role of the internet in creating repositories of public knowledge of blues music and blues culture.

For blues music and blues culture, it is the collection of recordings, oral histories, photographs and journalism that form the corpus of texts that can be referred to as an archive.  Private collections of 78 rpm phonograph records, LP reissues, sepia photographs and theatre handbills constitute our understanding of the culture of a subaltern class of African Americans at the beginning of the twentieth century.  Subsequent arrangements of these artefacts juxtaposed with the ethnographic field-recordings and notes of folklorists such as Howard W. Odum, Guy Johnson, John Lomax, Alan Lomax, and Lawrence Gellert constitute the library of materials that inform our understanding of the blues, and it is the provenance of these documents alongside the subjective and revisionist interpretation of generations of amateur and professional sociologists and musicologists which shape our developing conception of blues music and blues culture.

As a central question for this chapter - when the interplay between texts is facilitated by digital media, to what extent is the narrative and historical reality of the blues produced as much as reflected? The once privileged historical permanence and stability of the physical archive is ruptured by increased access to a profusion of digital and digitised texts, removed from their

context and subjected to new interpretive and knowledge-producing practices; as philosopher

Jacques Derrida asserts "…archivization produces as much as it records the event" (1995, p. 17).

Distinctions between author, reader, archivist, collector and scholar are blurred in late- and post-

modern digital spaces as content is uncoupled from media and formed into semi-autonomous

assemblages.  In other words, as computer-users are increasingly able to construct meaning from

diverse digital material which purport to represent primary sources, how should we consider the

blues archive - which is itself the production of a subjective corpus of mediated texts?

This chapter explores the origins of the blues archive from the work of Howard Odum and Guy

Johnson, through the folkloric ethnographies of John and Alan Lomax on behalf of the Library of

Congress and examines case-studies of contemporary collectors and archivists Joe Bussard and

Robert "Mack"  McCormick; in the case of the latter, this is a case of what media theorist Jussi

Parikka  describes as "the double-bind of the modes of storage and transmission between old

media and new media cultures" (2013, p. 2); in other words – just because information and

artefacts exist, there is no automatic entitlement to access.  Conceptions of the archive proposed

by Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Wolfgang Ernst are employed to illustrate the mediating

influence of technology and the internet as an archival resource, with specific reference to named

case studies, and the online archives of the Real Blues Forum, in order to illustrate the different

uses of collections and archives in blues music and blues culture.

## Theories of the Archive

Traditional conceptions of the archive are often based around the notion of a physical space whose

tangible contents and records are maintained by dedicated historians and archivists, individuals

tasked with establishing and preserving the narrative context and provenance of the texts in their

care.  As political theorist Irving Velody  writes, "As the backdrop to all scholarly research stands

the archive.  Appeals to ultimate truth, adequacy and plausibility in the works of the humanities

and social sciences rests on archival presuppositions" (1998, p. 1). This figuration of the archive

indicates the faith placed in stored texts as the ultimate authoritative representation of the past;

the intellectual powerhouse which contains the raw materials of a given scholarly discipline, culture, society or civilisation and its systems of thought.  In antiquity, the library at Alexandria is depicted as one of humanity's earliest centres of focused learning and scholarship, whilst modern conceptions of archive and archival administration originate in revolutionary France with the founding of the National Archives in 1789 (Ferreira-Buckley, 1999, p. 578).  Philosopher and historian Michel Foucault  rejects the figuration of the archive as "…the library of all libraries" (1972, p. 130), or "…the sum of all texts that a culture has kept upon its person as documents attesting to its own past" (ibid., p. 128-129), preferring the more abstract notion that "[t]he archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the existence of statements as unique events…composed together in accordance with multiple relations" (ibid., p. 129).  This conception allows us to see the archive as a space – real or virtual - where truth is contingent and subject to negotiation; a view which coincides with Will Straw's observation that record collecting is a "…controlled economy of revelation, a sense of how and when things are to be spoken of" (Straw, 1997, p. 8).

Growth in the academic study of popular culture has led to the expansion of materials deemed appropriate for research library and archive collections (Manoff, 2004, p. 13).  This notion is helpful when considering the primacy of sound recordings in the formation of the archive of blues music and blues culture, and the importance placed on such recordings by collectors of 'race records' from the middle years of the twentieth century.  Derrida (1995) indicates that the methods for transmitting information in fact shape the nature of the knowledge that can be produced by an archive and interpreted by its users, an echo of Franz Kittler's suggestion that "[t]echnologically possible manipulations determine what in fact can become a discourse" (Kittler, 1990, p. 232).  Specifically, Derrida states that the archive is shaped by external social, political and technological forces; if the archive cannot or does not accommodate a particular kind of information, then it is effectively excluded from the historical record.  This approach to the "archivization of knowledge" (Derrida, 1995, p. 11) is of particular importance when discussing electronic and digital media texts

in relation to blues music and blues culture – where the creation of narrative and canonicity is achieved through a catalogue and taxonomy of early recordings, and as Parikka  indicates "…obsolescence is persistent" (2011).

In summary, Derrida and Foucault offer differing, yet complementary, conceptions of the archive. For Foucault, the archive "…is the general system of the formation and transformation of statements" (p. 130), implying an inherently structuralist framework within whose bounds knowledge is created, developed and exchanged.  In other words, for Foucault, libraries, archives and museums are fundamental participants in the discourse, whose utterances and gestures can be described as "truth-giving".  Derrida on the other hand focuses on the ontology and limitations of the artefacts which constitute and define the archive as a conceptual whole (Derrida, 1995, p. 17).

## 4.2 Libraries, Museums, Archives, and Repositories of Public Knowledge

Often, there is slippage between the definitions of the library, the museum and the archive, each being seen as a site where texts are stored, displayed and presented for scholarly and cultural consultation.   As Dupont indicates, "As cultural heritage institutions, libraries, archives, and museums share common goals to acquire, preserve, and make accessible artifacts and evidences of the world's social, intellectual, artistic, even spiritual achievements" (2007, p. 13), and as such contain different forms of societal memory.  Usherwood, Wilson et al.  note that "The pervasive philosophy combining each of these Repositories of Public Knowledge (RPKs) is one of equality and excellence; providing an equality of access to all who choose to use mediated, objective, non-judgmental and inclusive collections of information sources, artefacts and exhibits" (2005, p. 50).  Broadly speaking, libraries, museums, and archives can be contrasted by the degree of access afforded to their users.  Public libraries will generally allow users to access and remove items from their sites, where museums will display their artefacts within a given physical space.  Accessing a physical archive is not always easy; "One needs to obtain permissions, make arrangements, follow strict rules of conduct, and get introduced to the whole system of how the archive has been organized" (Parikka, 2013, p. 1).  Clearly, there is much scope for movement within this generalised

illustration.  For example, the British Library was consulted for part of the research for this project.

Membership of this particular library is restricted to those members of the public over 18 years old

who have a specific and demonstrable need to see items in the library's collection, as arbitrated by

staff who will "….have an introductory discussion with you about your need to use our collections.

They may suggest more appropriate libraries or sources for your research" (Library, 2016),

indicating a gate-keeping function to the physical space.  Whilst collection items can be transported

to either the London reading rooms or the institution space 200 miles north in Boston Spa, items

may not be taken off-site.  This behaviour may appear more in line with an archive than a public

library, and the various assemblages of texts are referred to as "collections".  Since 'collection' is

defined as "[A] group of things collected or accumulated" (Stevenson & Waite, 2011, p. 281) the

interchangeable use of the term in discussions of the archive can often obscure the practical

differences between libraries, archives and museums.

A practical illustration of the overlap between institutions can be found by examining excerpts from

the mission statements of five RPKs dedicated to blues music and blues culture.

### 4.2.1 Delta Blues Museum (founded 1979)

*The Delta Blues Museum is dedicated to creating a welcoming place where visitors find meaning, value, and perspective by exploring the history and heritage of the unique American musical art form of the blues.*

*Since its creation, the Delta Blues Museum has preserved, interpreted, and encouraged a deep interest in the story of the blues. Established in 1979 by the Carnegie Public Library Board of Trustees and re-organized as a stand-alone museum in 1999, the Delta Blues Museum is the state's oldest music museum.*

*Since 1999, the Delta Blues Museum has been housed in the historic Clarksdale freight depot, built in 1918 for the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad. The building was designated a Mississippi Landmark Property in 1996. The former freight area and the adjacent Muddy Waters expansion - about seven thousand square feet of ground floor space - is devoted to permanent and traveling exhibits.*

*A 2013 recipient of the IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Services - the nation's highest honor for museum and library service to the community - as well as a 2014 winner of the National Arts & Humanities Youth Program Award, **the Delta Blues Museum is dedicated to creating a welcoming place where visitors find meaning, value and perspective by exploring the history and heritage of the***

*unique American musical art form[18], the Blues, as a Great River Road Interpretive Center (deltabluesmuseum.org, n.d.).*

### 4.2.2. University of Mississippi Blues Archive (established 1984)

*The Blues Archive at the University of Mississippi acquires and preserves blues and blues-related materials in a variety of formats for scholars of the blues, African American studies, and southern culture. With over 60,000 sound recordings, in most audio formats; over 20,000 photographs; more than 1,000 videos; over 34,000 books, periodicals and newsletters; and numerous manuscripts and ephemera, the Blues Archive houses one of the largest collections of blues recordings, publications, and memorabilia in the world.*

*Established in 1984, the Blues Archive serves not only students and faculty within the University of Mississippi, but researchers worldwide. This non-circulating collection is located within the Department of Archives and Special Collections on the third floor of the John Davis Williams Library.*

*Audio and video recordings may be accessed in the Special Collections media room (University_of_Mississippi_Libraries, n.d.).*

### 4.2.3 BB King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center (founded 2008)

*The B.B. King Museum may be the most inspiring stop you'll ever make. There's nothing else like it in Mississippi. The Museum opened in 2008 to rave reviews and delivers an unparalleled experience. The exhibits include thousands of rare artifacts, award-winning films, computer interactives [sic], and a story that will give your emotions a workout (bbkingmuseum.org, n.d.).*

### 4.2.4 National Blues Museum St Louis, Missouri (founded 2016)

*"[Our mission is] (t)o be the Premier Entertainment and Educational Resource Focusing on the Blues as the Foundation of American Music…[b]eyond celebrating the music, the National Blues Museum connects the world to American history and culture and provides a pathway which transcends boundaries of race and background. Through artifacts and cutting-edge technology, the Museum allows Blues aficionados to explore and revel in its history and will engage new audiences in the genre" (nationalbluesmuseum.org, n.d.).*

### 4.2.5 Chicago Blues Experience (opening 2017)

*The Chicago Blues Experience will be a world-class cultural attraction for the City of Chicago. The Museum will feature state-of-the-art interactive technology that takes visitors on an eye-opening, immersive journey into the past, present, and future of the blues. Exhibitions, memorabilia, a live music venue, and restaurants will reinforce the history and culture from which the blues emerged.*

*Through community outreach efforts, the Chicago Blues Experience Foundation will help play a vital role in providing positive experiences for youth through music education and immersion, creating sustainable and enriching activities for young people. The foundation's overall objective is to use the blues and all popular music*

---

[18] The highlighted and repeated words in this extract are reproduced verbatim from the Delta Blues Museum's webpage.

> *genres as an educational gateway to inspire and cultivate creativity, critical thinking, and self-expression (chicagobluesexperience.com, n.d.).*

The transitivity of the Delta Blues Museum's statements emphasises the permanence of the museum relative to the transience of its visitors. Mention of trains and freight central to blues iconography combine with images of permanent and travelling exhibitions underscore the resilience of the institution in a context of impermanence.  The suggestion that "…visitors find meaning, value and perspective" alludes to scholarly and philosophical pursuits,  situating the institution as a site of interpretation, learning and reflection.  The use of the third person is impersonal and distant, perhaps in pursuit of an objective and academic modality.  The authenticity of the site is emphasised alongside its geographical relevance to its task of "preservation".  Although any notions of race are elided by describing the blues as an "American musical art form," the only artist mentioned by name is Muddy Waters – an African American. The site's date of foundation is emphasised as are its awards and credentials as a museum, library, and a site of youth learning, alluding to a sense of tradition, reliability, and national prestige befitting an educational establishment.  Critically, the statement makes absolutely no mention of what the museum contains – there is no indication of what (if any) artefacts are on display or which exhibitions might be found.  In simple terms, the museum describes itself less as a centre of attractions or repository of public knowledge, but more as an almost monastic educational institution.

In contrast, the Blues Archive at the University of Mississippi (also known as 'Ole Miss'), makes its function and target audience clear from the outset.  In common with the Delta Blues Museum (DBM), the Archive mentions its preserving function, but unlike the DBM places this function in the indicative present tense, 'preserves', rather than the indicative perfect 'has preserved', suggesting an ongoing function rather than one which has been completed.  In further contrast to the DBM, the Ole Miss Blues Archive is expansive and inclusive regarding its audience; 'scholars of the blues' need not necessarily be academic scholars.  Where DBM elides the issue of race, Ole

Miss is specific in mentioning African American studies.  Similarly, Ole Miss is explicit in its description of the size, scope and format of its holdings.  Whilst also mentioning its long-standing existence, Ole Miss emphasises the global and accessible nature of its collection and services.  There is an allusion to its permanence in the "non-circulating" nature of its collection. The multi-media nature of the collection is indicated in passing, but the overall modality is of a scholarly library which invites users worldwide to make use of its institutional services.

The B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center (KMDIC) addresses readers and potential visitors directly, in the second person present tense.   Perhaps in common with the introduction of a live musical or theatrical performance, the museum stresses the spectacle and emotional response that the museum will generate in visitors.  The multi-media modality of the museum's holdings is emphasised, and engagement and interaction with visitors is stressed.  In this way, the KMDIC stresses a multi-sensory interactive and play-based narrative learning experience akin to a school or perhaps an amusement park, whilst making allusions to the museum and archive via its mention of 'artifacts'.

The newly opened (at the time of writing) National Blues Museum (NBM) offers its position as an "Entertainment and Education resource" with a universalist agenda which takes blues music and blues culture as its starting point.  The museum makes it clear that it wishes to transcend 'boundaries of race and background' in line with the Mississippi Tourist Board's "No Black. No White. Just the Blues," slogan (S. A. King, 2011, p. 149).  The museum also appeals to an audience of "Blues aficionados," perhaps underlining its ambition to grow "audiences in the genre".  The museum's reference to 'artifacts' and 'cutting-edge technology' moves its potential beyond that of a traditional museum space and, like the KMDIC positions the institution as a multi-modal centre of engagement and learning rather than one of purely exhibition.

Finally, the Chicago Blues Experience (CBE) combines themes of universality which are centred on blues music and blues culture to promote the city of Chicago and "…all popular music genres".

Chapter 4: **Archive** and the blues

Avoiding the label 'library', 'museum' or 'archive', CBE encompasses the functions of each under a broad and inclusive banner which references specific functions of each of these RPKs as an immersive and interactive experience.  In common with libraries, museums and archives the CBE offers exhibitions and memorabilia; similarly to a traditional seat of learning the institution promises technologically-driven interaction with blues history and blues culture in order to fulfil the role of academic truth-giving  by building a contingent, teleological and biographic narrative (Foucault, 1976, pp. 112-113).  The CBE's academic potential is further supported by promising engagement with young people through music education and community outreach projects.   In addition to these and beyond the previously mentioned RPKs, CBE offers a live music venue and restaurants, further emphasising its multi-modal and multi-sensory immersive engagement with users who might equally be described as scholars, tourists, pupils, audience-members, researchers, customers or consumers.

The significance of the above illustration, comparison and analysis is that increasingly libraries, museums and archives dedicated to blues music and blues culture overlap in their practical function in the physical world.  These bricks-and-mortar institutions also offer a multi-sensory physical experience beyond the static presentation of artefacts and information, leading to a more immersive and interactive experience than has traditionally been provided by physical repositories of public knowledge.  With the exception of the Delta Blues Museum, all of the institutions here reference state-of-the-art [digital] technology which is deployed to provide physical, mental and emotional *interaction* with the materials in order to promote the engagement with blues music and blues culture.  Whilst this use of digital technology is not perhaps explicit in the case of Ole Miss, curator Greg Johnson explained to the *Oxford Eagle* newspaper that "…one of his most frequent jobs is digitizing donated audio materials, transforming them from their current format on things like reel-to-reel tapes, audio cassette or 78 rpm records into more accessible digital audio files. Depending on usage agreements and copyright laws, some of these audio files are available for streaming from the Blues Archive from anywhere [in the world], while others are

accessible only through computers at the J.D. Williams Library" (Posey, 2016).  Additionally, each

of the institutions offers a unique perspective on what is essentially the same narrative; DBM and

CBE primarily from the perspective of geography and authenticity, Ole Miss and NBM from that of

an HBCU/educative stance, and  KMDIC using B.B. King as a diachronically unifying biographic

presence.

Further, the discourse on blues is partly formed by institutions such as libraries, archives and

museums, which delimit the ontological boundaries of the cultural practice.  As Foucault explains,

"…the archive is that which differentiates discourses in their multiple existence and specifies them

in their own duration" (1972, p. 129).  In other words, institutions such as those discussed so far

both produce knowledge, and enable and constrain meaning.  For example, the B.B. King Museum

and Delta Interpretive Center is telling a specific story from a specific point of view.  This is

particularly important as the perspective is that of an African American blues performer – King

himself.  This perspective is significant as overwhelmingly, the interpretation of the blues and the

telling of its story outside performance has been undertaken by a secondary audience – as is

discussed in chapters 4 and 5.   In support of this point, Foucault further teaches that "[t]he

archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the existence of statements as

unique events…composed together in accordance with multiple relations" (ibid., p. 129).  In

simple terms, repositories of public knowledge such as the Delta blues Museum and the Chicago

Blues Experience offer definitions of what can be considered as 'the blues'.  These are contained

within "…the general system of the formation and transformation of statements"  (ibid., p.130).

The difference in the names of the institutions – one a museum, the other an experience – makes

plain how the visitor/consumer is to interact with blues music and blues culture; on the one hand

from a mediated distance as in a museum, and on the other from a close-up and seemingly

immediate sensory perspective as with an 'experience'.   In both cases however, the perspective

is constructed and subject to the control of a unifying and directional curatorial gaze.

## 4.3 Anarchives, the Internet, and the Blues

The lines between libraries, museums and archives are further blurred in the present day in regard to their online existences. Ultimately, each of the repositories mentioned is concerned with societal memory.  Which memories are collected, and which types are privileged, are the main reasons why Foucault (1989) indicates that all cultural institutions are quite political in nature.  Extending this idea, Foucault describes RPKs as heterotopias, spaces which have more layers of meaning or relationships to other places than immediately meet the eye.  Specifically, spaces such as libraries, museums and archives "…exist in time but also exist outside of time because they are built and preserved to be physically insusceptible to time's ravages" (1984, p. 11).  This timeless space, which contains artefacts suspended in webs of shifting heterogeneous meaning begins to describe the rhizomatic, online, digital materials available via the internet and computer-mediated communications.

Turning specifically to archives, societies favour the symbolic and scopocentric – in other words, that which can be inscribed, such as language or notation, and that which can be objectively seen. For millennia, the archive, the library, and the museum could only contain tangible *things* (Ernst, 2013, p. 173).  Even before considering digital spaces, this presents archival challenges for music in general and popular music in particular, since music is distinctly alogogenic - having properties that cannot adequately be put into words; non-conducive to verbal expression (Tagg, 2012, p. 592) - and intangible.  The introduction and development of musical notation from around the 9th century in Europe partially addressed this problem, but with the limitation that the notation is not an inscription of any given performance, but is of a graphic representation which allows symbolically literate performers to realise the music in real-time.  Further to this, until the introduction of free education in the United Kingdom in 1870, literacy was the preserve of an educated élite minority (Tagg, 2012, p. 84).  These societal factors combined to limit the dissemination of folk and popular music by any means other than the oral tradition.  In other words, until the introduction of sound

recording technology at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was no way for actual *performances* of

music to be stored in an archive.

## Technical recording vs. symbolic transcription

From 1877, Thomas A. Edison's phonograph working with wax cylinders and from 1888 Emil

Berliner's gramophone were able to register, record and re-play a whole range of acoustic events.

Whereas in musical notation a symbolic recording takes place, the phonograph registers the

physically real frequencies.  The symbolism of notation reduces acoustic events to the "musical"

(harmonic order), whereas the acoustic register of the real encompasses the sonic (including noise,

arhythmical temporal phase shifting, the "swing," differing amplitudes and frequencies)—what

Wolfgang Ernst describes as an ***anarchive*** of sonic, aural sensory data in technological storage as

opposed to the archival order of musical notation (Ernst, 2013, p. 174).  What the gramophone

medium was able to record was not only the poietic performance but an informative surplus: the

non-musical articulations, the noises in the background.  For example, Alan Lomax's 1941 recording

of "Shetland Pony Blues" by Eddie "Son" House (DOCD-5689) begins with House's clear, bell-like

slide guitar ostinato which gives way to a pulsing rhythmic figure, evocative of a galloping horse.  As

the musical statement is established and House begins to sing, there is the murmur of voices in the

background, emphasising that this music is being created in a public drinking house.  The recording

also features the sound of a steam locomotive powering through the night outside the barrelhouse

where the sound recording was made.  This interruption and non-musical sound brings the listener

not only House's voice and playing from the past, but also places the musician in the context which

indicates the socio-political standing of African American blues musicians.  Absent is the middle-

class reverence for House as a blues player that would characterise his later performances.  Absent

too is the sanitising focus of musical notation which would necessarily exclude these extraneous

sounds.  The sound of the train for 30 seconds starting at 1':11" and taking up one tenth of the

recording indicates the pervasiveness of the railroad in the musicians' lives, its shuffling, self-

contained syncopation cutting across House's musical and artistic statement. This chaotic addition

to Lomax's field recording and House's performance highlights the inclusive and ***anarchivistic*** aural scope of the sound recording beyond anything available in Western symbolic notation, which would in any case struggle to effectively capture the microtonal nature of House's vocal performance or his polyrhythmic resonator guitar accompaniment. Quite simply, House's performance is, in places, too complex to be written down in standard notation. The only way to capture such performances for archival purposes is by the use of technology. This sound recording challenges the listener to accept the social circumstances of rural, poor African Americans, and to a further extent invites the listener to expand their understanding of what can be considered 'musical' by including a societal, real-world sound as a wholly unplanned part of the performance. In a very real sense, as listeners consume the music, they must consume the social context of its production.

As indicated in chapter 1, blues music and blues culture undergo transformations of form and circulation when oral practices are first transcribed as sheet music in the early twentieth century. As Odum explains, "[T]he character of a people is accustomed to be expressed in their literature. The negro has no literature save that of his folk-song and story" (1909, p. 5). In other words, the archive of African American music-making practices that would subsequently develop into blues music and blues culture was not systematically preserved in writing, inscription or musical notation prior to the early 20th century. This is problematic for blues historians, since traditionally, archives are built from inscribed sources which in some way record the musical practices which they describe. With a largely illiterate population whose inscriptions were not preserved, this means that the only archive until the advent of sound recording is, as Odum indicates above, oral. For example: whilst the identity of a figure such as Henry Sloan – the man who taught Charley Patton how to play guitar in the blues style – is known, few other facts beyond his birth in 1870, musical influence on his protégés and subsequent migration to Chicago can be confirmed (Palmer, 1981). Simply put, Henry Sloan's existence in culture is not primary or direct; Sloan exists as a cultural ghost, an orally-invoked and stylistic memory of those whose sonic inscriptions were first captured

by technology.   Sloan's presence is defined by his archival absence, his disjuncture; his hauntology (Derrida, 1994; Schroeder, 2004).  This raises even more challenges for early blues archivists and historians.  If, as cultural theorist Clifford Geertz suggests "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun" (1973, p. 5), how should we understand the history of subaltern societal groups, when that history is recorded by a dominant social group?  In other words, how true and complete can our vision of the blues, facilitated by historiographic and archival approaches be, when the practice of rural African American music- and culture-making was recorded and archived not by the participants in and primary audience for those cultural practices, but overwhelmingly by collectors from a secondary audience separated from the culture by distance, time, culture or society?

Historiography is founded on teleology and narrative closure, in service of a desire to privilege continuity against the experience of ruptures, and promoting the possibility of an unbroken biographical perspective – such as that demonstrated by the presentation of blues culture favoured by the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center.   Specifically in that case, the 20th century history of the blues is presented relative to King as a centrally unifying figure.  Similarly, media history seeks to privilege continuities instead of counting with discontinuities, since any implicit narrative, which is always a linguistic operation, permanently produces connections between heterogeneous parts (Ernst, 2013, p. 115). As indicated by Foucault (1972, p. 131) however, archives and collections deal with possibilities, discontinuities, ruptures,  gaps and absences, in opposition to the historical discourse.  As Sven Spieker indicates, "Archives are less concerned with memory than with the necessity to discard, erase, eliminate." (Ernst, 2013, p. 113).

This perspective on archival construction is illustrated by the early history of blues music and blues culture scholarship.  Musicologist and folklorist John Lomax's efforts to collect and record material during the early 1930s were in part motivated by the desire to preserve African American rural music-making for posterity for the Library of Congress before the influence of popular music and

broadcast media standardised negro cultural practices against regional variation and idiolect (C. K. Wolfe & Lornell, 1992, pp. 106-116).  Lomax was succeeded in this enterprise by his son, Alan, whose field recording activity during the 1940s captured the first performances of McKinley Morganfield, aka Muddy Waters. Father and son were both keen to preserve the country blues in its raw state before its performers and their context passed from the Earth (Lomax, 1993); both were acutely aware of the fundamental contribution of African Americans, and by extension the blues, to American popular culture.  Both were aware of how, as Foucault indicated, the archive of American culture contained ruptures and inconsistencies in its disregard for this contribution, and both were keen to address this omission.  This was only made possible by the ability to record sound, as opposed to the exclusive use of symbolic notation which would have fundamentally failed to capture that which made the music unique in performance.  These early ethnomusicological expeditions and projects provide the foundation for the field of blues scholarship, and the efforts of John Lomax, Alan Lomax and others such as Zora Neale Hurston, Lawrence Gellert and John Work III find their modern equivalence in the Blues Foundation's annual "Keeping the Blues Alive" award.  These specific canonising practices are discussed in greater depth in chapter 5.

Running parallel to the efforts of the Lomaxes and other early blues ethnomusicologists from 1920 onward was the commercial production of 78 rpm blues records as popular culture for consumption by a largely black contemporary audience.   Record labels such as Black Swan, Columbia, Gennett, Okeh, Paramount, Victor, and Vocalion recorded artists such as Mamie Smith, Bessie Smith (no relation), Marion Harris, Charley Patton, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Gus Cannon, and Kokomo Arnold and sold the recordings as 10" black shellac records of varying quality and fidelity. In this way, the 78 functions on (at least) two levels, explicitly as a form of commodity culture meant for entertainment purposes, and implicitly as means of transcribing cultural history (Dougan, 2001, p. 160).   By the mid-1940s, James McKune had become the first serious collector of country blues records, the archetypal "blues nerd" and godfather of what would become known as the

"Blues Mafia" by attaching cultural capital to certain artists (most notably Charley Patton) and labels (particularly Paramount and Gennett) and imposing a canonising framework of subjective taste on the field (Hamilton, 2007, pp. 175-178).  The legacy of McKune is discussed later in this chapter as part of the ethos and existence of the Real Blues Forum.

The activity of collecting blues 78s again highlights archival ruptures and discontinuities.  Early collectors such as McKune, Pete Whelan, and Joe Bussard were able to acquire the records when they were "cheap and plentiful" (Dougan, 2001, p. 180), however the fragility of the media combined with the low numbers of certain pressings – Son House recorded only eight songs (four records) for Paramount, and only eight copies of these records are reported to exist in the world - has made the process of acquiring certain discs time-consuming, expensive, and in recent years, fruitless.  In simple terms, the media was fragile, was considered ephemera by its primary audience, and in some cases no longer exists – leaving gaps in collections and catalogues.  For example, for Paramount records: of the thousands of 78s pressed, many were lost, broken or melted down, and of the 1,356 titles said to have been issued in the 12000-13000 'race record' series, roughly one third or more are of genres other than blues.  That contemporary collector John Tefteller owns  around 800 of these is particularly impressive, given that the 12000 series ceased production in 1927, and the 13000 series finished its run in 1932 (Petrusich, 2009).

## 4.4 Collectors, canonisation and the internet

Prior to the widespread availability of the internet in the mid-1990s (table 11, chapter 7) several challenges faced blues researchers and enthusiasts of blues music and blues culture, particularly those based outside the United States.  Whilst collectors such as Joe Bussard were able to acquire extremely rare recordings during the 1960s for "…less than twenty dollars" or in the case of blues musicologist and archivist Dick Spottswood, locate rare Charley Patton Paramount recordings in domestic waste scheduled for recycling (Dougan, 2001, p. 145), folklorists and researchers such as Paul Oliver, Simon A. Napier, Mike Leadbitter, and Tony Russell who were based in the United Kingdom were geographically removed from the sites where the music was lived and performed.

Chapter 4: **Archive** and the blues

As a result, these British writers and researchers experienced blues music and blues culture as part of a secondary audience, separated from the culture by distance, time, culture and society. A further consequence of this is that these influential and canon-forming non-American cultural workers were at the mercy of several selection processes; in other words, their understanding of blues music and blues culture was mediated not just by technology, but by:

1) The selections of talent US talent scouts during the 1920s and 1930s who had chosen which artists to record
2) The tastes of primary audiences (largely African American) who had influenced which recording artists were to be commercially successful
3) The taste of US canon-formers such as Samuel Charters, James McKune, and Alan Lomax who had decided which materials should be valorised over others.

As a result, what might have been considered 'archival' resources are more accurately regarded as 'collections', as these sets of data reflect the priorities and blind spots of the archivists and the zeitgeist in which they operate (Ernst, 2013, p. 194). That these collectors were overwhelmingly white, middle-class and male has been the focus of several texts in recent years which challenge established blues narratives (A. Y. Davis, 1998; Hamilton, 2007; Wald, 2004). Primary research amongst individuals who identified as part of an online blues community carried out for this study indicates that this demographic remains consistent in the present day; of 512 respondents, 62.9% were aged 45-64, 95.1% were located in Europe or North America, 94.1% identified as White/Caucasian, and 80.4% identified as male.

Despite the subjective nature of their aesthetic and critical choices, collectors such as McKune (and his protégés in the 'Blues Mafia', a dedicated clique of blues record enthusiasts) and Lomax provided a valuable service in making the music accessible and available to other consumers of the style. For McKune, collecting was a sacred pursuit – a way of salvaging and anointing songs and artists that had been unjustly marginalised (Petrusich, 2015). Despite his lack of clear description – records are described as 'great' or having 'greatness' seemingly based on how much like Charley Patton they sounded – his desire to inform a wider public meant that the music was re-issued on labels such as the Origin Jazz Library label founded by Pete Whelan in the early 1960s. These re-

issues were vital in allowing non-collectors access to the pre-war blues of artists such as Charley Patton, Skip James and Henry Thomas.  In the case of Alan Lomax, his own collection was shared in the UK via radio shows for the BBC, made whilst he was taking extended visits to the country to escape the McCarthyist communist hunts (Schwartz, 2007, pp. 45-46).

Joe Bussard and John Tefteller continue this tradition of old-time 78 rpm record collectors who have shared their finds with the world.  As mentioned in the previous chapter, John Tefteller paid $37,100 (£28, 365) for a copy of Tommy Johnson's "Alcohol and Jake Blues" (Paramount 12950, 1930) in late 2013.  Having previously purchased the only other known copy in existence, Tefteller licensed a digitised copy of the recording to Document records in order that it could be released on Compact Disc.  Similarly, Bussard had for years made available copies of any of the sound recordings he had collected to interested parties around the world.  For these specific collectors, the thrill appears to be in the chase to locate and purchase a rare recording.  Once the record has been found, additional pleasure seems to come from sharing the content with other enthusiasts - since after all – the collector now has the only copy of the original media.  The content is returned to the world and can be heard.  In this way the content can be seen as non-rivalrous (Katz, 2010) in that many individuals may digitally access the content of the record(ing) without the ownership of the original media being threatened.

The chapter now turns to three brief case studies which illustrate contrasting attitudes to archival collection and access, such as this applies to blues music and blues culture.  Firstly the chapter explores the work of Alan Lomax, with specific regard to the digitisation of his collection of folklore; secondly, the case of Robert "Mack" McCormick whose extensive archive has remained largely closed to researchers is discussed; thirdly, the Real Blues Forum, which makes otherwise expensive and hard-to-find documents and materials available to its members, is examined.   The chapter closes with a summary of the significance of online collections, such as they relate to the object of this study.

Chapter 4: **Archive** and the blues

## 4.5 Case Studies
### Alan Lomax Archive

As a folklorist, ethnomusicologist, and archivist, Alan Lomax (1915-2002) spent his life cataloguing the folk music of indigenous subaltern cultures around the world.  During the 1930s he travelled to the southern states of America with his father, John, and catalogued African American music for the Library of Congress, in the process discovering Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter, a critical figure in exposing white American audiences to black American blues. Lomax undertook further expeditions for the Library of Congress between 1941 and 1942 and in the process discovered and recorded Muddy Waters, and re-discovered Son House – powerfully central figures in the establishment of Chicago Blues during the 1950s and the blues revival of the 1960s respectively. During these trips, Lomax made use of sound recording technology rather than notation in order to capture performances, remarking in later life that he "…could perceive patterns from…listening to records that [his] musicological friends were not getting through their notation," (AlanLomaxArchive, 2012a) indicating that symbolic recording was inadequate to capture the idiosyncrasies of indigenous performance traditions such as the blues – or any music for that matter (Rose, 2012).

Envisioning a tool that would integrate thousands of sound recordings, films, videotapes and photographs made by himself and others, Lomax founded the Association for Cultural Equity (ACE) in 1983 in order to make available his accumulated research materials. He hoped that this 'Global Jukebox' would make it easy to compare music across different cultures and continents using a musicological system of his own devising called Cantometry[19]. In the present day, the aim of the archive is to make all of the ethnographic recordings, notes, photographs and video material accessible to anyone, anywhere in the world.  In a 1991 interview with Charles Kuralt for CBS, which pre-dated the widespread uptake of the internet he said, "The modern computer with all its

---

[19] The sound of the voice indicates the cultural context of the song, according to 37 different elements of taxonomy including loudness, accent, aspiration, compass of melody, and so on.

various gadgets and wonderful electronic facilities now makes it possible to preserve and

reinvigorate all the cultural richness of mankind" (AlanLomaxArchive, 2012b 5':20")

In March 2013, an archive of over 17,400 sound recordings and many tens of thousands of digital

artefacts from Lomax's 60-year global ethnographic and folkloric career between the 1940s and

1990s was placed online.  This is significant for several reasons.

The archive provides access to a large amount of material which has been collected over an

extended period of years.  In the case of the blues, this includes the first recordings of seminal

figures in the style, particularly Muddy Waters' (guitar, vocal) first recordings with Son Sims

(fiddle).  This is accompanied by photographs and ethnographic notes which provide a vision of a

critical moment in cultural history.  As Lomax indicated in interview (ref) "If the communication

system is made available to a living tradition, it takes off.  Like the Blues…I wanted the real raw

stuff, right out of the back woods and off the creeks.  The stronger it was, the better."  As stated by

the mission statement for the ACE, the aim here is to give subaltern cultural practices "visibility and

dignity" (culturalequity.org, 1996a).

The challenge however is that information is not the same as understanding.  Whilst Lomax

collected all of the recordings and documents over almost 60 years, there is little organisation in

the presentation beyond chronology of the collecting trips.  In other words, Lomax is the central

organising principle in the collation of the data, rather than any specific historiographical gaze or

narrative.  In this way, although such a large amount of data navigated by image or sound may

produce unexpected statements, insights or perspectives, this may also lead to paralysis in

interpretation as users are cast adrift on a sea of data, without specific archival guidance or

contextualisation.

This hermeneutic impasse represents an opportunity and a challenge.  The opportunity is, as Lomax

wished, for individuals – scholars, researchers and enthusiasts alike – to engage with oral histories

which provide direct engagement with cultural history.  For example, singer and activist Beyoncé

has made use of the archive to source audio samples to underpin the themes of freedom in her

2016 album *Lemonade* (Lomax-Wood, 2016).  Similarly, the blues tapes, where urban blues players

Big Bill Broonzy, Sonny Boy Williamson and Memphis Slim discuss the privations of living, working

and performing within a rapidly transforming hegemonic milieu during the late 1940s represent an

opportunity to experience the social history of the blues from the perspective of biographical

narratives which illustrate the contemporary socio-political position of African Americans (ACE,

1947).

The challenge however is not only to hear the 'signal' of the recorded material, but to be mindful of

the 'noise' of its collection.  As indicated in Chapter 2, Spradley (1980) and Guest et al. (2013)

highlight two key challenges from Lomax's type of collection/participant observation.  Firstly, the

presence of an observer may distort normal social action within the group (so that the group ends

up doing what it thinks the researcher wants it to do), and secondly, the role that the researcher

occupies in the group is important.   Lomax was a white man in a black social context and as A. Y.

Davis (1998), Hamilton (2007) and Wald (2004) have indicated, his membership of the patriarchy

may have had an effect on the behaviour of the participants being observed, and almost certainly

affects the nature of the narrative reported.   If this were not the case, it would not have been

necessary for Zora Neale Hurston and John Work III – both African Americans – to have

accompanied and advised Lomax on his 1936 and 1941 trips to assist with the ethnographer's

integration into black social situations.  The danger in this situation is that as blues scholar Jeff

Todd Titon observes – "…by our interpretive acts, we constructed the very thing we thought we

had found" (Titon, 1993, p. 223).

## Robert "Mack" McCormick

> "You're not allowed to sit on these things for half a century, not when the
> culture has decided they matter." (Sullivan, 2014)

Media archaeologist Jussi Parikka observes that accessing a physical archive is not always easy;

"One needs to obtain permissions, make arrangements, follow strict rules of conduct, and get

introduced to the whole system of how the archive has been organized" (2013, p. 1). As this case study will illustrate, in the case of *New York Times* writer J.J. Sullivan and blues scholar Robert "Mack" McCormick (1930-2015), entitlement and access to texts are contentious issues in the digital information age.

On April 13th 2014, the *New York Times* published an article by writer John Jeremiah Sullivan which detailed his investigation into the identity and background of two female Texas blues singers, Elvie Thomas and Geeshie Wiley '…who changed American music and then vanished without a trace' (Sullivan, 2014).  In spring 1930, the two women recorded two songs, "Motherless Child Blues" and "Last Kind Words Blues," for Paramount (L-254-2) which are regarded as masterpieces of the pre-war blues.  These recordings have inspired essays, cover versions, novels, films, and even classical arrangements. Echoing the zeal of the researchers and enthusiasts of the 1960s blues revival following the publication of *The Country Blues* (Charters, 1959) and the early work of blues scholar Paul Oliver (1960, 1965), Sullivan determined to solve the mystery of the women's identities by consulting one of the most learned folklorists in the US – Mack McCormick.

Since 1946, McCormick had conducted ethnographic research in and around Texas.  Where Alan Lomax travelled vast swathes of the United States and worked internationally, McCormick concentrated on a more localised area in the US, carefully following the trails of the musicians who made the blues records that he loved.  During his career, he collated data and oral histories on musicians such as Henry Thomas – a seminal figure (akin to Henry Sloan) who was one of the oldest musicians to record blues music in the 1920s and so was able to provide the vital link between previous music-making traditions and those found in the 20th century and recording age.  Taking a job in the census bureau in 1960, he was able to research Texas' fourth ward, a historic district which was settled by freed slaves who migrated there from the South.  The ward also contained early blues phonograph records, and was populated by many musicians who he encountered and interviewed during the course of his house-to-house enquiries (M. Hall, 2002).

Chapter 4: **Archive** and the blues

During this period, McCormick was able to research other important figures in the blues.  He contacted the family of Blind Lemon Jefferson, the first 'blues superstar' of the 1920s, and acquired one of only two existing photographs of the musician; the photograph has been verified, but has yet to be published (M. Hall, 2002).  In a similar vein, McCormick researched the life of Robert Johnson, another pivotal figure in blues music and blues culture through contact with his (then) living relatives.  This research was destined to be included in an eagerly awaited biography titled "Biography of a Phantom" which also contained a verified but to this date unseen photograph of Johnson – a tantalising prospect for blues fans and social historians since the 'Complete Recordings' album went platinum in the mid-1990s (E. Komara, 1998, p. 361).  In addition, McCormick re-discovered singer and guitarist Mance Lipscombe, and re-vitalised the career of Lightning Hopkins.  Hopkins up until that point had been living a life of quiet dissolution but as a result of McCormick's intervention and management, ended his days as a central figure of the blues revival of the 1960s.  Perhaps McCormick's most notorious cultural moment came at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965 where Bob Dylan, having 'gone electric', was eating into time reserved for one of McCormick's folk acts, a group of prisoners due to perform acoustically.  McCormick pulled the plug on Dylan to get his band off the stage, securing his place in folk and Dylan history (Grimes, 2015; M. Hall, 2002).

As a result of McCormick's decades in the field, he amassed one of the most extensive private archives of Texas musical history in existence. McCormick called his archive "The Monster", a term of both affection and fear.  The archive contained hours of unreleased tapes and perhaps twenty albums' worth of field and studio recordings by Hopkins.  McCormick had taken pictures everywhere he went and owned some 10,000 negatives, many of famous artists and many more of unknown performers.  There were notebooks, holding thousands of pages of field notes and interviews, testifying to the diversity of Texas music beyond the blues.  Much of the archive remains in storage in Houston, and more at a place McCormick owned in the mountains of Mexico (M. Hall, 2002).

Chapter 4: **Archive** and the blues

Suffering from bipolar disorder and notoriously anti-social in later life (Grimes, 2015), McCormick agreed to meet Sullivan to discuss the materials that he held in the Monster. It transpired that McCormick had met and interviewed L.V. "Elvie" Thomas in 1961. These materials were ancillary to McCormick's work, but central to Sullivan's project. The two men agreed that the archive needed organisation. McCormick had in fact confessed in a letter to *Blues Unlimited* magazine in 1976 that he was terrified that the collection would overwhelm and consume him. Sullivan agreed to provide a college student to assist with this task. For reasons Sullivan does not disclose, McCormick and the assistant did not work well together, and the relationship was short-lived. The assistant did manage to take photographs of the LV Thomas interview transcript with a smartphone camera without McCormick's knowledge, however, and transmitted these images to Sullivan, who completed work on his project for the *New York Times*.

The fallout from this was predictably negative. McCormick's daughter accused Sullivan and his assistant of theft and the deception of an 80-year old man over his private property and life's work (Kassel, 2014a). Sullivan vigorously refuted the allegation of deception, although he did admit to "quasi" theft (Kassel, 2014b). The blues community was split; many agreed that McCormick had held back on sharing his archive for too long and to the detriment of the field, whilst others defended McCormick's right to retain ownership of his collection and decide who should – or should not – have access to the materials (Kassel, 2015). In addition, the epigraph at the head of this section alludes to the sense of entitlement individuals such as Sullivan feel toward archival materials in the information age.

The significance of this case study is to mark the contrast between Alan Lomax and Mack McCormick. Although both men were exhaustive archivists and of critical importance to the research, preservation and dissemination of blues music and blues culture, Lomax was, for the most part, publically funded. The materials that he amassed had a home in the Library of Congress and so were always destined to be available to the wider world. McCormick was working privately,

and the materials he acquired and collated were part of a personal store of documents. Lomax published his work widely and often, working with ethnomusicologists around the world to further promote the cause of cultural equity. McCormick on the other hand was working largely alone, and collaborations – most notably over a 500,000 word manuscript with British blues scholar Paul Oliver concerning the Texas Blues – were shelved, and have yet to see the light of day (M. Hall, 2002). Additionally, Lomax was a Communist (Schwartz, 2007, p. 45), a political stance which manifested as a desire toward increased cultural understanding, and a sharing of information and resources. McCormick's political stance is less clear, but in the retention of materials he is in opposition to the Derrida quotation that opens this chapter, "Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and access to the archive" (Derrida, 1995, p. 4).

The issue that this brings to light is that although an archive of source materials may exist, and despite the fact that there is clearly great cultural value in the materials, the archivist is critical to the enterprise. In both cases, Lomax and McCormick are the organising principle of the materials. In both cases, it is the vision of the archivist which guides the formation and availability of the documents and ultimately, it is the archivist who brings coherence to the materials. Without this, an archive contains *information* – but this is critically distinct from *knowledge*. Here again, we might apply the ideas of Foucault; there is power in the micro-relationships which govern the retention, interpretation and dissemination of knowledge (Foucault et al., 1972).

## Real Blues Forum

The preceding case studies illustrate the distinction between private and public archives, and highlight the importance of a curatorial presence in bringing coherence to a corpus of materials. This can be further illustrated in a digital space by the way Facebook group The Real Blues Forum makes available and organises the materials shared amongst its members. The significance of and participants in the Forum will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 6.

Chapter 4: **Archive** and the blues

The Real Blues Forum (RBF) is a closed social group hosted on the social media site, Facebook. The forum has at the time of writing approximately 12,682 members worldwide, with the majority of these concentrated in Western Europe and Northern America. The 'closed' nature of the group means that members must request membership, and this membership must be approved by another member. The interactions which take place within the group are not visible to the wider Facebook membership. The membership of the RBF includes leading lights in blues music and blues cultural research such as David Evans, Elijah Wald, Gayle Dean Wardlow, Bruce Conforth Adam Gussow, and Howard Rye – all of whom have published extensively on the subject and made substantial contributions to the field.

The significance of the forum in this archive chapter is that the group is broken down further into 12 sub-forums which have specific functions beyond the general membership, as below:

| Real Blues Forum (total membership 12,682) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sub forum name | Forum type | membership | % of total RBF |
| UK Blues 78s | CLOSED | 578 | 4.56% |
| The RBF Book Room | CLOSED | 621 | 4.90% |
| The RBF Paul Oliver Library | CLOSED | 320 | 2.52% |
| RBF Discographical Research | SECRET | 211 | 1.66% |
| RBF – the AFBF Files | CLOSED | 642 | 5.06% |
| RBF Flicks | CLOSED | 505 | 3.98% |
| RBF Documents | CLOSED | 390 | 3.08% |
| RBF – Max Hoffner's Art | CLOSED | 429 | 3.38% |
| RBF – Tano Ro's photo archive | SECRET | 367 | 2.89% |
| RBF Reference | CLOSED | 314 | 2.48% |
| RBF Exchange | SECRET | 487 | 3.84% |
| RBF Magazine Archive | CLOSED | 658 | 5.19% |

*Table 1: real blues forum sub-forums*

The significance here is that only a very select percentage of the overall membership is privy to these groups, and that these groups contain many rare blues journals, periodicals, and visual material for study by this select audience. For example, *Blues Unlimited* was a British monthly magazine, published between 1963 and 1987. Whilst some collectors have copies of the magazine and certain editions are available in the National Newspaper Archive in the UK, almost the complete run has been digitised and uploaded to the RBF Magazine archive – which additionally

includes near-complete runs of magazines such as *78 Quarterly* which are otherwise quite difficult to find and also expensive to acquire (B. Hall, 2016a).

In theoretical terms, this represents what cultural theorist Pierre Bourdieu (2010) would call distinction based on cultural capital, on two levels.  On the first level, the RBF has laid down strict rules for its 12,682 members to be included within the group – specifically, its description of what constitutes 'blues' as discussed in chapter 1, and further investigated in chapter 6.  Within this group, a further distinction is made concerning who can access specialist materials.  These materials are of high value to those who need access to them – particularly given that for the most part, they will allow the users to further progress their own research.  As writer Amanda Petrusich (2015) notes of the original 78 rpm record collectors "…it was about training yourself to act as gatekeeper, a saviour; in that sense, it was also very much about being better (knowing better, listening better) than everyone else."  The gatekeeping function is visible here with the digitised materials available through the RBF and the limited number of users who have access.

Several of the sub-groups are also 'secret' groups.  This means that the groups are not visible to any users, aside from those who are members of the group.  Members of these groups are selected from the general membership by administrators, and the materials here are particularly rare; in some cases, copyrighted to the extent that members are expressly forbidden to share the content outside the boundaries of the group without specific permission.  For example – Tano Ro's photographic archive was listed on the RBF as a secret group.  Ro has worked as a European blues booking agent since the late 1960s and so his archive contained over 600 rare and in some cases unpublished photographs of seminal blues artists.  Despite the clear instructions "DO NOT 'borrow' any images from here for re-posting" some users shared these beyond the confines of the group, leading to the materials being completely withdrawn after a year's availability.  As a result, membership of the other secret groups was reduced, and whilst specialist and rare materials remain in circulation in these areas, users are very careful to observe rules within the boundaries of

the sub-forums.  I am particularly grateful for this practice as this has allowed me specific access to

both scholars and materials for this study that would have otherwise been impossible.

The contrast between the Lomax archives, the McCormick archives and the RBF archives is that the

materials available on the RBF have largely been provided by the members, and are a mix of

primary and secondary sources, rather than overwhelmingly primary sources in the previous

instances.  The RBF archives occupy the middle ground between public access (Lomax) and private

access (McCormick), and these materials are subject to a steady archival gaze from the RBF

moderators and administrators.  Similarly, as with a physical, real-world archive, admission and

membership is restricted to a specific group who attach specific value to the materials and to other

members.  The specific composition and operation of the RBF will be discussed in greater detail in

chapter 6.

As illustrated by figure 7 below, RBF members discussed the fate of "the monster".  In the main,

the concern was that archivists unacquainted with the value of the materials might be careless with

these primary sources.  A persistent theme was that institutions lacked the resources and ability to

recognise the value of the artefacts, images and texts, as below:



**Paul Vernon** IMHO, it's generally better for the major collections to be disseminated among other collectors rather than given or sold in bulk to an institution; Instions have a nasty habit of locking things up for years AND, occasionally, and more worryingly, having a "change of direction", often at the behest of a newly appointed head to "radilcaize" the collection and dump stuff. The indivudual collectors CARE much more deeply, and almost always know way more, and as demonstrated her, the willingness to share informatiom, graphics and sound files has few borders. Leave it to the folks who actually KNOW WTF they are doing, not some temporary politoical appointee who often knows way less (ie Jack Shit), or indeed, cares. I've seen it happen. There's stuff locked away in British and Portuguese archives that'd make you weep...
Like · Reply ·    11 · 14 April at 18:34 · Edited

*Figure 7: RBF Chief Forum Administrator (CFA) offers his opinion on archive materials*

Here, the Chief Forum Administrator (CFA) advocates breaking up the collection in order that the

materials might be housed with individuals who understand their relative worth.  What is unclear

however is how these materials might be recognised as a single collection if the items are

dispersed, or how this worth might be shared with a wider public. Additionally, there appears to

be an antipathy toward museums and libraries that perhaps verges on anti-intellectualism. The

CFA also underlines his 'insider' status and thus his authority by intimating that he has access to

these privileged materials. This stance perhaps echoes the radicalism of some members of the

counterculture. The comment is followed by an emphatic response:



*Figure 8: RBF member expresses concern over institutional care of blues archives*

This comment illustrates the gatekeeping function which some members of the online blues

community believe that they occupy. As previously indicated, John Tefteller has made notable

financial investment in locating, restoring and sharing primary sources in the shape of phonograph

recordings. Tefteller's position and that of the CFA is challenged as below:
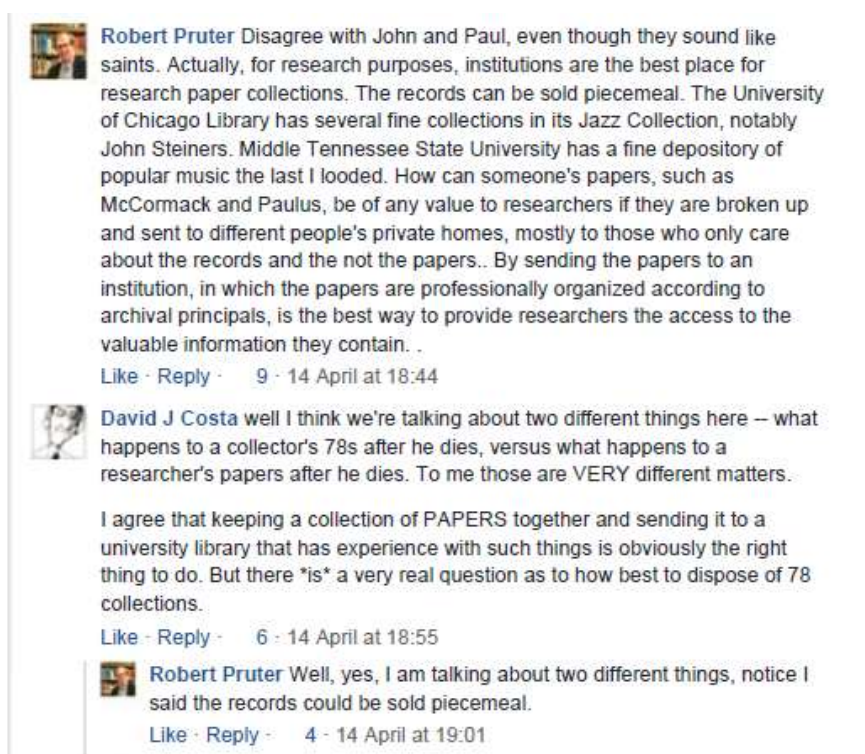


*Figure 9: RBF members further debate the fate of archival materials*

This perhaps brings into question the distinction between an archive and a collection; when the

materials are separated and housed with different collectors, at what point do they constitute a

single group of materials?  How should we recognise the contents of McCormick's "monster" if its

constituent elements are distributed between individuals with no official academic or institutional

status?  At this stage, Pruter seeks to make a distinction between "personal papers" and other

primary sources.  Tefteller responds as below:



> **John Tefteller** Saint John here....Robert, as far as paperwork, maybe...and that is one big maybe...but records have a very poor history of being cared for by Institutions. My dream is that one day there will be something established, with funding enough to continue for hundreds of years, that is safe and yet available to people and not subject to tons of red tape. To this day, I don't know of anything like this and I have witnessed far too much material just buried in buildings with no access....even with something like the University Of Chicago,
>
> while holding John Steiners stuff, at least one Paramount metal master has managed to walk out the door and is now unaccounted for. So count me out of these Institutions until some radical changes are made and I can see that they will care for the material as well or better than I can.
>
> Like · Reply ·    4 · 14 April at 19:00

> **John Tefteller** And THAT is the other problem with archives and institutions. Records that should/could be available for remastering and release are simply locked away with no access. Yes, it goes a long way to prevent theft, but it also means that the music is inaccessible. I don't a good solution except to keep everything possible in private hands and some of the people on this thread are right, doing that is not always optimal either.
>
> Like · Reply · 15 April at 02:11

*Figure 10: RBF users appear to describe an internet-type mediated access archive*

In political terms, Tefteller here appears to argue for the Marxist approach applied by Lomax to his

materials in terms of access to be applied to McCormick's collection of materials.  Specifically, the

description of "…something established, with funding enough for hundreds of years, that is safe

and yet available top people," in part describes the function of the Library of Congress in terms of

institutional status.  Tefteller's vision also appears to echo the mission statement of Alan Lomax's

Association for Cultural Equity project, to "…stimulate cultural equity through preservation,

research, and dissemination of the world's traditional music, and to reconnect people and

communities with their creative heritage" (culturalequity.org, 1996a) .  This is significant as this

constitutes a view of the historic reference materials as a shared resource rather than a single

researcher's collection, suggesting a conception of  single blues community with a common goal.

Tefteller goes on to note:



*John Tefteller* Mack MacCormick's papers are miles long and only he, now dead, would be able to make sense of them. I would be particulry skeptical of any institutions ability to figure them out and it will take decades to do so, if it is possible. Someone VERY knowledgable could probably figure it out, given enough time (such as Paul Verson!) but even someone like Paul would need YEARS to make sense of it all. Mr. MacCormick was not "playing with a full deck" and his papers are a big reflection of that. As someone who has seen them, I can attest to the fact that this is one job that no one will want, almost no one is qualified to do and will take years to accomplish.

Like · Reply ·    4 · 15 April at 19:35

*Figure 11: RBF member underlines the unifying theory applied by archivists to their collections*

In this statement, Tefteller emphasises the challenges previously highlighted by this chapter in distinguishing understanding from information.  Whilst the Lomax archives are available, users perhaps require a clear understanding of the organisational theory applied by the collector and his archivists in order to derive value from the content.  Indeed, Lomax referred to his own sizeable collection of  tapes, photos, films and videos, and notes and manuscripts as "…'the orifice,' because it swallowed so much" (culturalequity.org, 1996b). As above, whilst clearly there is an expectation that McCormick's archive contains items of illuminating value within the field, what is also necessary is the archivist's perspective in order to make general sense of the sources.

## 4.6. Summary and  conclusion

This chapter has examined the development and continuing evolution of the blues archive in the digital age, and has considered the role of the internet in creating repositories of public knowledge of blues music and blues culture.  The overlap between the library, the museum and the archive has been discussed in order to emphasise the collapsing boundaries between these RPKs and in the physical world and online.  The distinction between public and private archives has been drawn, and examples illustrating the challenges posed by the presences and absences of archival gatekeeping and the "curatorial gaze" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, p. 167) have been discussed.

Chapter 4: **Archive** and the blues

The video streaming platform YouTube has been excluded from this specific discussion, as despite the presence of blues material on the service, YouTube is not specifically a blues outlet.  YouTube does however represent an important source of acculturation and enculturation for blues music and blues culture, and is discussed both as part of the academy in chapter 5, and as a presentation platform for performers in chapter 8.  Similarly, although sites such as archive.org make available wax cylinder and 78rpm recordings in the public domain, the blues is only a very small part of its total output, and so its function and that of similar sites is represented by the discussion of the Alan Lomax Archive.

The impact of the internet on the blues archive seems primarily to have made recordings and disparate published works more readily available, and to have provided new avenues for investigation.  Several black newspapers, for example, *The Chicago Defender*, have now been scanned and up-loaded to provide topical information about performers' activities (pqarchiver.com, n.d.).  Census data from the early 20$^{th}$ century available through government sites similarly supports scholarly research into the background, movements and whereabouts of performers.

There are still omissions, ruptures and discontinuities, however.  The archives of some deceased early researchers were donated to various universities and museums, where they lie uncatalogued and in some cases unavailable to scholars.  The huge collection of 78 records (including many blues records) in the EMI vaults in Hayes, Middlesex is apparently no longer accessible since the demise of John R. T. Davies (B. Hall, 2016a).  The tensions and frustrations caused by this inaccessibility and seeming neglect within the blues community have been illustrated in this chapter here by discussion of the archive of Mack McCormick.

Very few costly new transcriptions of pre-war blues records are now being issued by companies like Yazoo because they are immediately copied by cheap labels like JSP and Document.  The bible of pre-war recording research, Blues & Gospel Records 1890-1943 by Dixon, Godrich & Rye is not yet

available on-line, although I understand that the 5th edition is forthcoming and will be issued "on

CD-ROM" (Vernon, 2016). This physical format is itself unusually dated given that many laptop

computers now no longer contain optical drives (Kyrnin, 2016), and so this may alter before its

publication.

The developing nature of the blues corpus from oral to physical to digital has expanded the

availability of materials and increased the fidelity of archival recordings beyond the limitations of

western symbolic notation. What can we expect from twenty-first century archive theory, beyond

digitization and database architectures? Will the elites, as illustrated by the RBF, establish

safeguarded "islands in the Net" where essential knowledge is stored, leaving the majority floating

in their own data trash (Lovink, 2013, p. 194)?

This chapter has highlighted the challenges with addressing the media of the past in digital spaces,

without the guiding authority of a curatorial presence. Should these materials be grouped

narratively, or by discrete alphanumeric ciphering, such as signatures of documents and objects?

These questions are problematic, because the answers themselves depend on the very agencies

being thematised: the archive, the library, and the museum. Whatever will be said, stored or

shown has already passed "...a process of selection, transport, inventarization, and storage

according to classification," (Ernst, 2013, p. 117).

The Internet is no archive indeed but rather a collection. The  function of archives exceeds by far

mere storage and conservation of data. Instead of just collecting passively, archives actively define

what is at all able to be archived (Kittler, 1990, p. 232), insofar as they determine as well what is

allowed to be forgotten, because  "...the archival operation first of all consists of separating the

documents. The question is to know what to keep and what to abandon." (Ernst, 2013, p. 92)  Such

is the difference between a paper-based (state) archive in the strict, memory-institutional sense,

and the Internet: the archive is a given, well-defined lot; the Internet, on the contrary, is a

collection not just of unforeseen texts but of sound and images as well, an ***anarchive*** of sensory

data for which no genuine archival culture has been developed.

According to Jacques Derrida (1995), "The twentieth century, the first in history to be exhaustively

documented by audio-visual archives, found itself under the spell of what a contemporary

philosopher has called 'archive fever,' a fever that, given the World Wide Web's digital storage

capacities, is not likely to cool any time soon."

# Chapter 5: Academy
## 5.1 Introduction

> "...it is through education, enculturation, [and] cultural learning, that culture gains its stability and is perpetuated, but it is through the same process of cultural learning that change takes place and culture derives its dynamic quality. What is true for culture as a whole is also true for music; the learning process in music is at the core of our understanding of the sounds men produce." (Merriam, 1964, p. 163)

As indicated by previous chapters, this study is less about the equivocal and egalitarian processes of cultural exchange or diffusion – but that the treatment of blues music, blues culture, and its practitioners, is about power. In other words, there is tension over the potential re-creation of the blues and its history in the image of the dominant culture, whose negative treatment of African Americans brought the cultural practice into existence in the first place.

This chapter addresses the role played by the internet in perpetuating, developing and disseminating blues music and blues culture with specific regard to enculturation, acculturation, education and schooling for individuals bounded by notions of race, geography, gender, and by extension, perceived authenticity. In other words – how do blues musicians learn, and what part is played in this by computer-mediated communications? Early examples of technological mediation in this area are discussed with reference to radio, phonograph records, and instructional videos. Discussion of teaching and learning in digital spaces is presented with reference to the acquisition and development of practical instrumental skills, and engagement with academic and theoretical content accessed via video streaming services, Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) and discussion forums. The chapter is underpinned by the ethnographic and theoretical work of Herskovits (1948), McLuhan (1962), Merriam (1964), Ong (1982), and Green (2001).

Blues scholar Jeff Todd Titon observed that prior to the blues revival of the 1960s, blues had been a music by and chiefly for black Americans, and that the revival turned it into a music by black and white Americans for Americans and Europeans (1993, p. 223). Similarly, Evans noted that by the end

of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the blues had become dominated by whites in its documentation, writing, promotion, audience support and performance (2011, p. 273).  For Gussow, by the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, blues had been transformed from what had for many decades been primarily a black folk and popular music into a kind of global subculture, indicated both by the universalist 2006 *Mississippi Believe It!* campaign slogan "No Black.  No White.  Just The Blues," and the presence of a Vietnamese blues scene with regular blues nights in Ho Chi Minh City (2016, p. 5).  As discussed in Chapter 4, these transformations have given rise to ontological debates concerning race and geography, as well as persistent discussions of authenticity - voiced as (1)  a concern for what constitutes 'real' blues, (2) questions concerning who might be regarded as 'real' blues performers, and (3) a concern for the diminishing position of African Americans within a music of arguably, black origin (Gussow, 2015; Harris, 2015a, 2015b).

This chapter continues to address the central research question of role played by digital technologies in facilitating the perpetuation, development and dissemination of blues music and blues culture beyond its point of origin in the southern United States with specific regard to the ways that (a) blues musicians learn, and (b) students learn about the sociological, non-musical narrative of blues music and blues culture.  In other words, the chapter looks at the ways that practical musicianship skills are passed from one generation to another, and between members of the same generation.  This is achieved by exploring how theoretical and narrative knowledge concerning blues music and blues culture is taught across geographic and temporal boundaries and facilitated by computer-mediated communications (CMC).

In order to address these questions, this chapter briefly outlines the ways in which blues practitioners shared and developed their skills prior to the widespread introduction of sound recording, and indicates the impact of media such as radio and phonograph records on pre- and post- war blues artists such as Robert Johnson, and the 'Blues Boom' artists.   The chapter also briefly discusses instructional pre-digital literature – books, magazines, audio recordings and video-

tape - as self-directed learning media, and discusses how these are remediated in digital spaces.  The

chapter presents three case studies of online blues teaching and learning. Firstly, practical

instrumental skills with a particular focus on blues harmonica, facilitated by video-streaming site

YouTube via the *Modern Blues Harmonica* channel (ModernBluesHarmonica, 2007b); secondly, the

conduct of theoretical and academic learning based on blues literature, a Massive Online Open

Course (MOOC) offered by the *BluesTalk* channel, again facilitated by YouTube and supported by an

online community (Gussow, 2012); and thirdly, a computer-mediated distance-learning course

focused on the historical narrative and sociology of blues music and blues culture offered by the

University of Exeter in the United Kingdom (O'Connell, 2014).  The chapter also draws on informant

interview statements  regarding the ways that blues musicians learn and teach through digital

media, as well as referring to responses to questions 22-27 in section 8 of the survey carried out for

the project (chapter 7 section 6, appendix 1), which focused on online blues learning communities.

The chapter now turns to the ethnographic definitions which underpin teaching and learning in blues

communities and Western popular music, as well as briefly outlining the socio-cultural principles

active in the diffusion of blues culture from African American to wider audiences.

## Enculturation, Acculturation, Diffusion, Education

Anthropologists generally support the argument that cultural traits are learned, rather than inherent

(Oliver, 1970, p. 11).  The concept of musical ***enculturation*** refers to the acquisition of musical skills

and knowledge by immersion in the everyday music and musical practices of one's social context,

and for popular musicians in general and blues musicians in particular, this is generally achieved

through informal processes rather than within the confines of a school or university (Green, 2001).

Green  also indicates that almost everyone in any social context is musically enculturated, since we

cannot close our ears to sound.  She goes on to identify three main ways of engaging with music and

thus becoming musically enculturated; (1) playing (to include singing), (2) composing, (to include

improvising) and (3) listening (to include hearing). These processes of enculturation through which

the habits of one generation, its values and its customs, are passed on to subsequent ones may

account for the persistence of some cultural elements within performance music, while the process

of *acculturation* - where the meeting of (at least) two distinct cultures may lead to the evolution of a

new one - is also at play in the perpetuation, development, and dissemination of blues music and

blues culture. Of particular importance in this case is the influence of media, in particular audio

and/or video recording to support mimetic[20] learning. Oliver describes blues as "…a product of

acculturation, of the meeting of African (notably Senegambian) musical traditions with Euro-

American (notably British) ones" (2001, p. 125). For anthropologist George List, three factors

determine the degree of acculturation: (a) the vitality of the competing cultures, (b) the degree to

which the dominant culture accepts or shows tolerance of the values of the culture upon which it

impinges and (c) the degree of compatibility of the musical styles in question (1964, p. 20). This

leads to what List calls 'hybridization', and what Evans describes as 'syncretism' (1999, p. 381). In

other words, African and European musics exhibit certain common features which facilitate cross-

fertilization – specifically polyphony, and the use of harmonic thirds and fifths. The basis thus existed

for an amalgamation of musical styles. The further necessary factor, tolerance on the part of the

dominant European culture for the music of the subaltern African American culture, also existed in

the United States. Allowing for Evans' processes of syncretism, which includes reinterpretation of

cultural practices as a mimetic function, the result in the early years of the 20th century was the

development of a new musical form – the blues (List, 1964, p. 20). To these may be added the

process of *cultural diffusion*, or the spread of culture by imitation and influence (Oliver, 1970, p. 11).

> A full documentation of the chain of influence and education whereby blues
> singers learned their instruments and their music would reveal much concerning
> the passing on of tradition and technique, while an impartial study of the people
> and places for whom they played might be instructive on the meeting of black and
> white music (Oliver, 1970, p. 86).

---

[20] Mimesis – the deliberate imitation of the behaviour of one group of people by another as a factor in social change (Stevenson & Waite, 2011, p. 909).

Chapter 5: **Academy**

Musicianly behaviours are then subject to normalisation and adaptation in the individual musician through the influence and guidance of teachers, mentors, peers, local communities and society at large.  In other words, successful performance of a technique is rewarded and thus encouraged, where poor performance receives demotivating reactions such as "…scolding, warning, ridiculing, [and] the use of sarcasm," (Merriam, 1964, pp. 150-151).  This engagement with a mentor or teacher extends to a special subdivision of enculturation which is *education*, which may be defined as the directed learning process, both formally and informally  carried out, for the most part during childhood and adolescence - which equips the individual to take his place as an adult member of society (ibid., p. 146).  Finally, the most specific aspect of enculturative learning is *schooling*, which refers to "those processes of teaching and learning carried out at specific times, in particular places outside the home, for definite periods, by persons especially prepared or trained for the task'' (Herskovits, 1948, p. 310).  It should be perhaps noted that while some non-literate societies lack formal education institutions, particularly in the areas of music – indeed, some cultures have no separate terms for 'music' or 'dance', seeing the two elements as culturally interdependent (Small, 1987) - this in no sense means they have no musical education system.  Culture persists, and since culture is learned behaviour, learning must take place (Merriam, 1964, p. 146).

## 5.2 Mentoring and mediation

Writing on the anthropology of music, Merriam indicates that learning music is part of the socialisation process.  Specifically, learning to create and perform music may take place through education -  for example, when an elder or peer teaches a learner how to perform on a musical instrument, and schooling may be operative in an apprentice system (1964, p. 146).  Education and schooling are represented throughout the history of the blues in the shape of mentoring.  For example; Bessie Smith (1894-1937) was the first commercially successful blues artist by virtue of her record sales between 1923 and 1935, starting with *Down Hearted Blues/Gulf Coast Blues*, making her "…the first real 'superstar' in African American culture, attracting a significant number of white people to her performances,"  (A. Y. Davis, 1998, p. 141) and earning the soubriquet 'Empress of the

Blues'.  Smith was however mentored by Gertrude "Ma" Rainey (1886-1939) during the time when

the two toured together in the S*tokes Minstrel Show* around 1912, and again as part of the *Tolliver's*

*Circus and Minstrel Show* in 1913.  Similarly, at the time of Smith's breakthrough as a blues vocal

artist at the 81 Theatre in Atlanta, Rainey's pianist and arranger Thomas Dorsey indicated that

"When I worked at that theatre in Atlanta, Ma taught Bessie Smith…[s]he taught Bessie Smith, [and]

a lot of those black actors who came along in that day.  That's why they called her Ma." (Lieb, 1981,

pp. 15-16). Important to note is that Rainey and Smith came out of vaudeville and minstrel tradition,

and so whilst the "Mother of the Blues" (Rainey) may not have specifically taught Smith how to sing,

sources are in agreement that the older and more experienced performer offered advice on

repertoire, stage presence and other critical aspects of professional presentation and business

conduct over a period of years (Albertson, 2003, pp. 14-15).  Additionally, Dorsey's allusion to

parental guidance, alongside Rainey's nickname, resonates with Merriam's description of musical

education as a form of enculturation and socialisation; in other words – the mother taught her

children.

Further evidence of informal learning, mentoring, and apprenticeship is present in many narratives

of early blues artists.  For example – Blind Lemon Jefferson was one of the first commercially

successful country blues artist in the mould of a male, singing guitar player.  Between 1912 and 1917

he was accompanied during his itinerant phase by Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter, who would himself

progress to become a seminal figure in the development of blues music and blues culture by virtue

of his (a) involvement with John and Alan Lomax during their song-collecting trips during the 1930s

and (b) embodiment of the blues as an African American performer beyond the confines of the rural

South. During this time, Jefferson shared repertoire, performance technique, and presentation

experience with Ledbetter as they travelled; Ledbetter acting at times as the guide for Jefferson as

well as at times making contributions to his mentor's performance (C. K. Wolfe & Lornell, 1992, pp.

45-48).  As another example, Delta blues musician David "Honeyboy" Edwards is explicit concerning

his apprenticeship to guitarist "Big" Joe Williams during 1932. In his autobiography, Edwards

explains that "Joe was the first man that learned me how to hustle on the road," when the two men

spent nine months traveling down through Mississippi to New Orleans.  Although Honeyboy's blues

apprenticeship involves a certain amount of formal musical instruction—the partnership begins

when Big Joe first watches young Honeyboy play guitar and says "I can learn you,"— the education

process is as much about how to work the music, how to travel, and make money with it, as it is

about how to play an instrument (Edwards & Frank, 1997, pp. 40-44).

The clearest example of the enculturation process and its intersection with technology in blues

music and blues culture is found in the story of seminal Delta Blues musician Robert Johnson (1911-

1938) – the musician who reportedly "…sold his soul to the devil," in return for musical prowess

(Guralnick, 1990; Schroeder, 2004).  According to Eddie "Son" House (1902-1988), himself a blues

artist of stature, Johnson would regularly attend the dances at which he and his fellow guitarist and

singer Willie Brown (1900-1952) performed.  Johnson was at this time in his mid-to-late teens, and

> "…could blow harmonica real good.  Everybody liked it. But he just got the idea that he wanted to play guitar…He used to sit down between me and Willie.  And we'd be sitting about this distance apart, and [Robert] would come and sit right on the floor, with his legs up like that, between us.
>
> So when we'd get to a rest period or something, we'd set the guitars up and go out – it would be hot I the summertime, so we'd go out and get in the cool, cool off some.  While we're out, Robert, he'd get the guitar and go bamming with it, you know?  Just keeping noise, and the people didn't like that.  They'd come out and they'd tell us, "Why don't you or Willie or one go in there and stop that boy? He's driving everybody nuts."
>
> I'd go in there and I'd say "Robert, don't do that, you'll drive the people home." I'd say "…just leave the guitars alone."
>
> But as quick as we're out there again, and get to laughing and talking and drinking, here we'd hear the guitar again, making all kind of tunes "BLOO-WAH, BOOM-WAH" – a dog wouldn't want to hear it!" (House, quoted in Wald, 2004, pp. 109-110)

Here, House reports evidence of the young Johnson using imitation to learn (Green, 2001;

Merriam, 1964).  Similarly, House alludes to Johnson's harmonica playing and indicates that

the younger musician received praise from his community for his performance on this

instrument, in line with Merriam's comments concerning social acceptance in which "…the

individual must learn behaviour which is specified in the culture as being correct or best."

The learning musician is then rewarded by the community with approval and/or

valorisation.  Additionally, Johnson receives "…scolding, warning, ridiculing, [and] the use of

sarcasm," (Merriam, 1964, p. 151) at the hands of House and the audience for a

performance which is not deemed satisfactory or conducive to the social context.

Further brief examination of the Johnson narrative provides evidence of education, schooling and

mentorship.  Following the death of his wife in childbirth in 1930, Johnson left Robinsonville, where

he had encountered House and Brown.  Wald (2004) and Rothenbuhler (2007) each report that

Johnson spent the following two years in Hazlehurst, where he encountered guitarist Ike Zinnerman

– a less well-known figure in the Delta who never recorded for a label, but who "…claimed to have

learned to play by visiting graveyards at midnight" Palmer (1981, p. 113).  Zinnerman reportedly

guided Johnson's learning throughout this period.  Additionally at this time, Johnson "…must have

had access to Victrolas…on which he could closely listen to his contemporaries on records"

(Wardlow & Komara, 1998, p. 199).  Specifically, many of his musical influences "…came from

phonograph records, and during the next few years, while Robert was cementing his reputation as

the most formidable young bluesmen in the Delta, he borrowed heavily from recordings by…Kokomo

Arnold, Peetie Wheatstraw, and Skip James" (Palmer, 1981, p. 114).  Johnson therefore had primary

oral and mimetic 1:1 teaching from Zinnerman, as well as using secondary oral materials available

via new media in the form of radio and 78rpm records.  This facilitated – but did not *determine* - the

development of Johnson's unique style which is not formed solely by local influences, but draws on

sources outside the region which are clearly audible when comparing his *Sweet Home Chicago*

(Johnson, 1990b) with Kokomo Arnold's "Old Original Kokomo Blues" (Decca 7026, 1934), Charlie

McCoy's "Baltimore  Blues" (Decca 7007, 1934) - or indeed, any of the recordings included on 2007's

*The Road to Robert Johnson and Beyond* CD (JSP 7795, 2007) with the 29 pieces available on *Robert*

*Johnson – The Complete Recordings* (Johnson, 1990a).  Then, as now, it appears that talent borrows,

genius steals (Eliot, 1920).  As Rothenbuhler (2007) also indicates, as Johnson learned, in part, from

phonograph records, this also had an effect on his own compositions in terms of song structure, length and content.  In other words, Johnson's work featured a for-the-record aesthetic rather than the open-ended improvisatory form which characterised many early Delta Blues recordings.  For Rothenbuhler, this standardisation of form in line with the affordances and limitations of 78rpm media contributed to Johnson's accessibility and musical intelligibility to a secondary audience separated from his original context by time and space – a secondary audience which included British Blues Boom artists such as Eric Clapton.

Johnson's narrative illustrates several ideas proposed by Merriam and Herskovits with regard to enculturation, education and schooling.  Further, even if the logical confluence of Johnson's talent and technology is abandoned in favour of the 'crossroads' myth – there is still evidence of mentoring and tutelage in the form of the 'big black man' - who may be the devil, the Yoruba God Orisha, or the voodoo intermediary Papa Legba - interacting with the supplicant Johnson at the crossroads, and on whom supernatural skills are conferred.

In summary, Johnson is significant to this study for several reasons.  His performance and recording practice makes manifest the influence of recording technology in terms of his repertoire, which draws on recorded sources for influence. In turn, his own compositions are commodified for distribution and consumption beyond their point of origin, and these exert influence over popular musicians and critics who are attracted to the style.  Simply put, Johnson is one of the major artists who represents the bridge between the oral and technological transmission of blues music and blues culture, particularly in the way that (a) he is influenced by phonograph records and passes on his own influence through the same media and (b) he was valorised and mythologised by a secondary audience decades after his passing in 1938.  Further, in terms of the "…sold his soul at the crossroads," myth, it is possible to trace the racial tension in the hegemonic relationship between African Americans and the dominant white culture.  As indicated above, Johnson was an aspiring

guitar player who suffered a traumatic life event in the shape of the death of his young

family. He then spent time being tutored by Ike Zinnerman, and, with access to phonograph

records, spent two years developing his musicianship.  In short, he put in the hours and

learned to play the guitar.  In Western culture, written references to a deal with the devil in

return for diabolical favours are found from the 6th century; Theophilus of Ardana

apparently sold his soul for ecclesiastical power.  Christopher Marlowe's 1604 play Doctor

Faustus also features this central plot point, and 19th century classical violinist Niccolò

Paganini is subject to the same claim.  The repetition and persistence of the story indicates

that for some, it is easier to believe that an African American from Johnson's time could

only acquire his incredible talent via a deal with the devil, rather than the more prosaic

option that Johnson sat with widely-available phonograph records over many hours

patiently practising and honing his craft.  This version of the story is rather less marketable

– and preserves the essentially racist idea that African Americans such as Johnson have only

a limited cognitive ability, and are unable to develop skills over time without the

intervention of the supernatural.

### 5.2.1 Technological mediation and secondary orality

The significance of the preceding illustrative cases is that for blues music, as "…a product of

the oral tradition" (Eastman, 1988, p. 161), the primary method of cultural transmission is

enculturation, and the influence of a mentor and teacher.  Further, since "…most of the

[country blues] players were functionally illiterate and so had no means of recording their

songs in written notation" (ibid., p. 165) performance techniques and content had to be

passed on physically by a practitioner to a student before the widespread availability of

sound recording.  Robert Johnson's probable interaction with phonograph records

illustrates that "…the ability to get songs from records is the essential process for the

transmission of [rock] music" from the middle period of the 20th century (Green, 2001, p.

60), echoing Bennett's  suggestion that "…by far the overriding learning practice for the

beginner popular musician…is to copy recordings by ear" (1980, p. 138). Certainly, this is

borne out by the experience of British blues guitarist Eric Clapton who explains that

> "The first song I chose to learn was a folksong, 'Scarlet Ribbons', which
> had been made famous by Harry Belafonte, but I also had a bluesy
> version by Josh White. *I learned it totally by ear, listening and playing
> along to the record.* I had a small portable Grundig tape recorder, my
> pride and joy, a little reel-to-reel thing that [my grandmother] had given
> me for my birthday, and I would record my attempts and listen to them
> over and over again, until I thought I'd got it right." (Clapton & Sykes,
> 2007, p. 22 italics mine)

Quite aside from the confirmation that his early learning experiences came via

technological mediation - "…all the music I was learning form was on record," (ibid., p. 49) -

Clapton is also here indicating that his experience of blues was that of a secondary

audience member. In other words, the immediate culture that produced Josh White's

music was different from that of a white teenager from the South East of England.

However, the sounds of the music clearly resonated with the young guitarist;

> "The first time I heard blues music, it was like a crying of the soul to me.
> I immediately identified with it. It was the first time I'd heard anything
> akin to how I was feeling, which was an inner poverty. It stirred me
> quite blindly. I wasn't sure why I wanted to play it, but I felt completely
> in tune." (Clapton, quoted in Coleman, 1985, p. 28)

As a white male from the United Kingdom, arguably, Clapton had limited purchase on a

music which was originally produced by and marketed to black Americans. As Adelt argues,

Clapton translated a complex music that is at least partly a community-based response to

hegemonic dominance into a remedy for his personal emotional deprivation, a deprivation

that can be linked to what he felt was his ''whiteness'' and lack of identity in his formative

years (2010, p. 62). Mindful of the arguments raised in chapter 4, Adelt's stance is perhaps

countered by Murray's statement on the blues:

> It is not a matter of having the blues and giving direct personal release
> to raw emotion brought on by suffering. It is a matter of mastering the
> elements of craft required by the idiom. It is a matter of idiomatic
> orientation and of refinement of auditory sensibility in terms of
> idiomatic nuance. It is a far greater matter of convention, and hence

> tradition, than of impulse. It is thus also far more a matter of imitation
> and variation and counter-statement than of originality (Murray, 1978,
> p. 126).

With this in mind, it is possible to see that Clapton, like Johnson before him, internalised

the music that resonated with him as a creative musician, adapted the material that he

encountered, and continued the diachronic process of acculturation described by List

(1964).  For Johnson (as with Muddy Waters and others) the use of recording technology

and media facilitated their development as musicians through access to a greater range of

source material.  This is taken further by Clapton who transcends barriers of space, time,

and race as he participates in and contributes to the tradition.   Clapton's – and other white

and non-African Americans' - canonisation as blues players is discussed in greater detail in

Chapter 7, which discusses the phenomenon of valorisation by association in the blues,

often seen as a 'passing of the torch' to a new generation of performers.  How then did a

secondary audience go on to acquire the techniques necessary for the style, and to play the

blues in the pre-digital age?

### 5.2.2 Literacy and Secondary orality

Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) gives an account of the move from orality to literacy, and

describes the homogenising effects that he believes that this has had on Western thought.

Specifically, McLuhan argues that literacy and the introduction of movable type in the

production of the printed book encourages the standardisation of culture and alienation of

the individual, indicating that "…the alphabet is an aggressive and militant absorber and

transformer of cultures" (McLuhan, 1962, p. 48), which encourages "…homogeneity,

uniformity [and] repeatability" (ibid., p. 58).  For the blues, this meant that whilst media

such as books and phonograph records contained content, critically, they lacked the

dimension of primary social context.  Eastman also indicates the importance of phonograph

records in the transmission of the blues music and blues culture (1988).  Specifically, the

media  meant that songs, melodies and verses could be shared without the necessity of

being in the physical presence of performers or the context of the performance.  As the

records could be played repeatedly and studied closely – what Katz (2010) also calls

'repeatability' after McLuhan, – this exchange of information was accomplished "…by ear,"

in the manner of all communication within the oral tradition (1988, pp. 164-165).

The first blues instrumental instruction book to be published was *The Josh White Guitar*

*Method* (White & Mairants, 1956), in which polish-born jazz and classical guitarist Ivor

Mairants transcribed seven of White's songs, outlining a basic guide to White's style and

"…offering a window into the world of blues guitar for young players on both sides of the

Atlantic" (Wald, 2000, pp. 245-246).  Quite aside from White's influence on Clapton (as

above), the book was a key influence on English guitar player John Renbourn (1944-2015),

who was one of the most important guitarists to come out of the UK folk revival.

Renbourn's interest in blues had been stirred by seeing White in concert, and the book

"…provided the basis for the style of many of the players of his generation" (ibid., p. 246).

Again in the United Kingdom, it was not uncommon for visiting African American artists to

offer lessons in technique.  Interviewed for this study, blues scholar and performer Bob Hall

explained:

> "…touring the UK [in 1964] Howlin' Wolf would show young people how
> to play things on the guitar. I remember him teaching [guitarist] Dave
> Kelly to play "Down In The Bottom" (B. Hall, 2016b).

A similar tutorial is captured on *The London Howlin' Wolf Sessions*, where the older blues

performer teaches Eric Clapton how to play the signature guitar statement to *Little Red*

*Rooster* in the recording studio (Chess CH-60008).

Also during 1964 in the United States, Jerry Silverman published *The Art of Folk Blues Guitar*

– a book which was accompanied by the style's first specifically instructional phonograph

record (Silverman, 1964a). Over 11 tracks, Silverman explains the basics of the blues guitar

style, offering guidance on choking strings, arpeggio patterns and finger-picking.  On the

opening track, Silverman offers contrasting ontological explanations  of the blues, before

inviting listeners to "…let your own definition grow out of your own experience, as you

develop musically with the blues" (Silverman, 1964b).  This direct address to the listener in

the establishment of a teacher-student relationship is described by historian and

philosopher Walter Ong as *secondary orality*.

> At the same time, with telephone, radio, television and various kinds of
> sound [recording], electronic technology has brought us into the age of
> secondary orality.  This new orality has striking resemblances to the old
> in its participatory mystique, present moment, its fostering of a
> communal sense, its concentration on the present moment, and even its
> use of formulas (Ong, 1971, pp. 284-303) (Ong, 1977, pp. 16-49, 305-
> 341).  But it is essentially a more deliberate and self-conscious orality,
> based permanently on the use of writing and print, which are essential
> for the manufacture and operation of the equipment and for its use as
> well.
>
> Secondary orality is both remarkably like and remarkably unlike primary
> orality.  Like primary orality, secondary orality has generated a strong
> group sense, for listening to spoken words forms hearers into a group, a
> true audience, just as reading written or printed texts turns individuals
> in on themselves. But secondary orality generates a sense for groups
> immeasurably larger than those of primary oral culture - McLuhan's
> global village." (Ong, 1982, p. 136)

In other words, although there is an illusion of the spontaneity and focus of primary orality,

secondary orality is intended for a much larger audience and, like print, emphasises the type of

consistency and potential homogeneity inherent to literacy which concerned McLuhan (1962).

A further example of secondary orality in the teaching of the blues to a secondary audience can be

found in the UK work of guitarist and writer John Pearse (1939-2008).  Pearse presented a guitar

tutorial television show for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) between 1965 and 1968,

eventually accompanied by a book and LP some years later (Pearse, 1972).  As project informant

Phil Wright explains:

> "…in the 60s the BBC ran a TV series where a Brit folkie guitarist of
> some repute but I can't recall his name who, over the course of a few
> weeks taught budding guitarists how to play Big Bill [Broonzy]'s 'Guitar
> Shuffle', I remember buying the book but quickly realised that playing

centre forward for Scotland, and playing the guitar were 2 items I was
not going to be able to check off my bucket list" (Wright, 2016).

Wright's comments hint at the perceived complexity of learning the style.  Also included in Pearse's

televised lessons were pieces by blues guitarist Reverend Gary Davis (1896 – 1972).  In this way,

musicians in the United Kingdom received a standardised approach to the understanding and

performance of the music.  Ironically, in the United States, as blues author Mary Katherine Aldin

shares:

> There were a very few instruction books. If you lived in a major city you
> could take lessons at local venues: Chicago had the Old Town School,
> L.A. had the Ash Grove, if you lived in NYC, for $5 a lesson you could
> learn directly from Rev. Gary Davis…all through the 60s and into the
> 70s. Ash Grove closed in 73 but you can still take lessons at McCabe's
> here. Old town school still operating, still teaching. Gary Davis gave
> lessons through the 60s and 70s until shortly before his death.  Bernie
> Pearl taught blues guitar at both the Ash Grove and McCabe's. He
> learned directly from Lightnin' Hopkins, Fred MacDowell, Gary Davis
> and Mance Lipscomb, and taught all their styles (Aldin, 2016).

Here, separated by the Atlantic ocean, we see the processes of primary and secondary orality in

teaching the blues of a specific artist (Davis) running concurrently.  Pearse's use of television in the

UK equates to secondary orality, whilst in the US, students could learn directly from the artist(s)

themselves. It is also noteworthy that in the cases of Mairants, Silverman and Pearse, the teaching

musicians are non-African American, illustrating the acculturation and cultural diffusion processes

indicated earlier in this chapter.

Speaking from Sweden, informant and blues guitarist Bo Carlsson shared that:

> The thing - at least for me living in Sweden - was that a few books with
> tabulature [sic] didn't do much. Luckily I get to see and meet many of
> the greats. And later play with some .. And we always hung out and
> listened.  And learned from others on the same trail. But - I must say
> that we older guys have more personal styles compared to many
> younger players. They seem to learn from the same sources more
> (Carlsson, 2016).

This comment, again, highlights McLuhan's concerns about homogeneity.  Also of note is that the

majority of the instruction materials relating to blues focused on the guitar, rather than the voice,

emphasising the split (discussed in chapter 4 and emphasised in chapter 7) between *playing* the

blues and *singing* the blues – with many African Americans emphasising that the voice is the

primary expressive instrument in the style; "…they play so much, run a ring around you playin'

guitar.  But they cannot vocal like the black man." (Muddy Waters, quoted in Palmer, 1981, p. 260).

Instructional material continued to be produced from the late 1960s and into the 1970s, almost

exclusively by non-African American performers such as Stefan Grossman (1968),  (1969),

(Grossman & Block, 1971).  The latter citation is of interest as blues guitarist, singer and author

Aurora "Rory" Block is a white female performer in the style, something which is obscured by her

masculinised stage name, "Rory".  Block took advantage of her location in Greenwich Village to

build on her institutional education as a classical guitar player by taking lessons in blues and gospel

music from the Reverend Gary Davis, Son House, and Mississippi John Hurt and absorb their

techniques first-hand (Block, 2010).

In summary, the pre-digital methods for teaching and learning blues music took place in two

sociological stages.  The first was focused on primary orality in the shape of 1:1 teaching,

mentoring,  and enculturation within context, style and genre.  As cultural diffusion occurred and

acculturation of the secondary audience took place, tutorial books and LPs emerged to allow

interested musicians from outside the music's primary socio-cultural sphere to acquire

performance techniques relevant to the style.   These developments can be characterised as a

move from orality to literacy, and subsequently to secondary orality.  The chapter now turns to the

ways in which secondary orality in teaching and learning performance styles and historical narrative

is operative through digital media in the perpetuation, development and dissemination of blues

music and blues culture.

## 5.3 Learning to play an instrument in the blues style

Online communities exist as valid and congregational spaces as part of everyday life in the early

twenty-first century (Baym, 2010).  Since its launch in 2005, video streaming site YouTube has

become an increasingly relevant hub for such communities, by virtue of its focus on user-generated

content (UGC).  As Waldron indicates, the different ways in which people employ UGC such as

YouTube videos for music teaching and learning as part of online participatory communities has

significant implications for music education in on- and off- line contexts (2013, p. 1). As has been

indicated in the first half of this chapter, teaching, mentoring, and learning is a fundamental part of

the perpetuation, development and dissemination of blues music and blues culture.  With this in

mind, the methods in which this takes place through new, digital media given the passing of the first

generations of blues performers, makes significant contribution to the spread, persistence, and

acculturation to blues music and blues culture in the present day.

UGC is created with the intention of sharing via upload to the internet.  In contrast with Web 1.0

models which were essentially static content, UGC underpins the Web 2.0 model of user pro-activity

and consumption by what Waldron   calls "prosumers" (2013, p. 5), by encouraging comment and

interaction with the materials presented (Burgess & Green, 2009).  In the case of YouTube, this can

and often does, function as a platform for participation and debate, particularly within online affinity

groups by (a) active producers – those who make content,  and (b) passive users – those who view,

interpret, and sometimes respond to content through posting or texting (Schackman, 2008).

> YouTube's popular videos are contributed by a range of professional, semi-
> professional, amateur, and pro-amateur participants, some of whom produce
> content that is an uncomfortable fit with the available categories of either
> 'traditional' media content of the vernacular forms generally associated with the
> concept of 'amateur' content. University lectures and educational materials, such
> as those uploaded by institutions, including the University of New South Wales
> and The University of California – Berkeley, are examples of content which strain
> to fit anywhere in relation to the traditional media/user-created content
> dichotomy (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 55)

Several studies have examined the viability and validity of YouTube as a teaching and learning

medium for music in general, and folk music in particular.   Rudolph & Frankel indicate that vocal and

instrumental lessons delivered on line, including those uploaded to YouTube, have the potential to

enhance musical understanding for learners, "…especially in situations where geographical or socio-

economic restrictions would make it difficult to find a suitable instructor otherwise," (2009, p. 15).

Chapter 5: **Academy**

Waldron (2012, 2013) investigates the teaching and learning of traditional Irish folk music across various instruments and voice with a consideration for YouTube, in order to understand the ways that online and offline pedagogic practices merge.  This study demonstrates a specific concern for the online ethnographic considerations of Hine (2000) and Baym (2010) – each of whom emphasise the creation of meaningful asynchronous and geographically distributed communities in cyberspace with clear and adaptive reference to Goffman (1956) and McLuhan (1962).  Finally, Kruse and Veblen (2012) examine the teaching of North American traditional, folk or roots music across several sites including YouTube, but to the exclusion of the blues and gospel styles.  Whilst there are further studies that consider the validity of YouTube as a teaching and learning platform, such as Burgess and Green (2009), at this time there seems to be no specific or comprehensive overview of the ways in which YouTube is active and/or effective in the teaching and learning of blues music and blues culture.

### 5.3.1 Communities of practice (CoP)

E. Wenger's "Communities of Practice"  (1998, p. 77) provides a theoretical framework for researchers to structure examinations of online communities from the perspective of teaching and learning  (Baym, 2010; Kear, 2011; Waldron, 2012). Communities of Practice focus on 'learning as social participation' which comprise four components; identity, community, practice and meaning, bound in three practical dimensions:

1. Mutual engagement of the participants;
2. The negotiation of a joint enterprise which is defined by the participants in the very process of its pursuit;
3. A shared repertoire of texts and developmental practices.

As Wenger indicates:

> Communities of practice [situated online] offer a useful perspective on technology because they are not defined by place or by personal characteristics but by people's potential to learn together. Communities often start tentatively, with only an initial sense of why they should come together and with modest technology resources. Then they continuously reinvent themselves. Their understanding of their domain expands. New members join, others leave. Their practices evolve. (E. Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 11)

Chapter 5: **Academy**

Wenger's description encapsulates the asynchronous and geographically dispersed learning communities that form online around YouTube videos.  In addition to their function as teaching texts, YouTube videos "…serve as vehicles of discourse – in their function as artefacts – and collaboration in online community discussion forums, thus serving useful music learning purposes in other, though less obvious, ways"  (Waldron, 2012, p. 11).

The content available via YouTube is contributed by a range of professional, semi-professional, pro-amateur and amateur participants.  Increasingly since 2005, as the platform has become more pervasive as a content discovery tool, materials uploaded fall between obvious categories of information, education and entertainment.  Videos  which form pedagogic content such as University lectures and educational materials "…are examples of content which strain to fit anywhere in relation to the traditional media/user-created content dichotomy" (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 55).  In addition, audio-visual recordings of first- and second- generation blues performers transcend their existence as primary sources and become educational and instructional material.  As Waldron (2012, p. 10) explains in her informal classification of YouTube teaching videos, many of the uploads are made by "…professional musician-instructors who use YouTube specifically for teaching reasons – in other words, their videos are intentionally structured lessons".   In theory then, this opens up the platform to any teacher who is suitably equipped in order that they might address and engage with a learning community of similarly equipped and interested students.

## 5.3.2 Blues videos on YouTube

| Rank | Title | Instrument | Presenter Gender | Uploader | No. of views | Date uploaded |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Acoustic Blues guitar lesson spice up that bluesy playing | acoustic guitar | male | rockongoodpeople | 8,994,573 | 26/11/2008 |
| 2 | Hank Williams: Lovesick Blues | band | male | Les Puryear | 4,499,516 | 18/11/2006 |
| 3 | how to play harmonica (the blues) | harmonica | female | Beck Wenger | 4,147,324 | 23/09/2008 |
| 4 | How to play lead electric guitar blues solo skills lesson | electric guitar | male | rockongoodpeople | 3,516,144 | 14/12/2008 |
| 5 | Learn to play slide guitar | electric guitar | female | rockongoodpeople | 3,471,437 | 10/12/2007 |
| 6 | acoustic blues scale - sun easy beginner guitar | acoustic guitar | male | rockongoodpeople | 3,092,732 | 10/12/2010 |
| 7 | Acoustic blues guitar lesson | acoustic guitar | male | active melody | 2,443,853 | 16/03/2012 |
| 8 | Learn to play Lead Blues guitar licks and phrasing lesson | electric guitar | male | rockongoodpeople | 2,220,982 | 01/12/2008 |
| 9 | Blues guitar chords | acoustic guitar | male | guitarjamzdotcom | 2,196,769 | 09/03/2010 |
| 10 | Blues Harmonica Secrets revealed | harmonica | male | Modern Blues Harmonica | 2,073,072 | 02/03/2007 |
| 11 | How to Play Minor Blues Guitar Chord Progressions | electric guitar | male | Berklee Online | 1,977,103 | 25/07/2006 |
| 12 | How to Play Blues Harmonica - Blues Harp - Beginner Lesson | harmonica | male | guitarjamzdotcom | 1,893,436 | 30/01/2010 |
| 13 | Learn the funk electric guitar lesson rhythm and strumming | electric guitar | male | rockongoodpeople | 1,565,359 | 05/11/2008 |
| 14 | The Secret to Lead Guitar | electric guitar | male | SecretGuitarTeacher | 1,522,237 | 04/11/2012 |
| 15 | Johnny Cash - Folsom Prison Blues (Country Guitar Lesson) | electric guitar | male | DarioCorteseSongs | 1,397,437 | 21/03/2011 |
| 16 | How to Play Fast Blues Licks on guitar a la Stevie Ray Vaughan and Joe Bonamassa | electric guitar | male | GuitarJamz | 1,396,070 | 16/10/2012 |
| 17 | Step by Step Harmonica Lessons - 1 | harmonica | male | Mitch Grainger | 1,374,151 | 06/03/2012 |
| 18 | The Blues Scale (Minor Pentatonic) and the Major Pentatonic Scales on the Guitar | electric guitar | male | Active Melody | 1,335,042 | 14/04/2010 |
| 19 | Learn guitar jazz rhythm & how solo w/ Harmonic Minor Scale | electric guitar | male | rockongoodpeople | 1,157,779 | 03/03/2009 |
| 20 | Folsom Prison Blues - Johnny Cash (Easy Songs Beginner Guitar Lesson BS-502) How to play | acoustic guitar | male | JustinGuitar Songs | 1,140,111 | 21/12/2011 |

*Table 4: Top 20 "Learn to play blues" YouTube uploads, filtered by views*

YouTube does not represent the only online blues music tutorial site, but it is however the most popular destination from desktop computers for streamed video content; in December 2015, Facebook recorded 18.65 trillion visits from desktop computers, YouTube collected 15.7 trillion visits, and search engine Google achieved 14.9 trillion (McCoogan, 2016). A search on video streaming site for "learn to play blues music" filtered by 'most viewed content' returns 516,000 results (YouTube, 2016b).

Of the top 20 results, 15 are for guitar; of these, 10 feature the electric guitar, and 5 favour the acoustic instrument. Of the remainder, 4 videos focus on harmonica, and the last is a performance video of Hank Williams' *Lovesick Blues* (MGM-10352). None of the top 20 videos are concerned with bass, drums, keyboard - or voice. Each of the presenters in the top 20 videos are white[21]. This

---

[21] Although the Hank Williams video is a performance presentation, he is still a middle-aged white man.

perhaps supports the notion that non-African Americans are chiefly concerned with learning

instrumental rather than vocal techniques in the blues, underpinning the comments of the first- and

second- generation of blues performers that white players privilege playing over singing, which

appears to remain the preserve of African American performers in the style (Broonzy & Bruynoghe,

1955; Edwards & Frank, 1997; Harris, 2015b; L. R. Jones, 1963; Oliver, 1960; Palmer, 1981; Wilson,

1968)[22].

Of the top 20 videos, only two are presented by women; one for harmonica (B. Wenger, 2008) and

one for slide guitar (rockongoodpeople, 2007).  Of these two, *how to play harmonica* (B. Wenger,

2008), features no dialogue – potentially assisting with the consumption of the lesson by non-

anglophone viewers.  The remaining 18 videos are presented by middle-aged white men, and of

these, 9 are presented by guitarist Marty Schwartz working under several different presentation

banners.  The average length of each video is 10 minutes 30 seconds.  Each video addresses a

specific playing technique and, with the exception of the two Johnny Cash videos

(DarioCorteseSongs, 2011; JustinGuitarSongs, 2011), does not  focus on any particular song – in most

cases emphasising speedy progress ("you can learn these licks today!") encouraging viewers to

practice scales and timing. Conspicuous by its absence is any focus on formal music theory;

tones/notes are not described by their names; bars time-signatures or other fundamentals of music

theory are left without considered reference. In the main the focus is on mechanical facility.   Notes

on the guitar are referred to by their physical position on the guitar fretboard.  Guitar chords

however are given names, assuming some basic facility with the instrument; and none of the guitar

---

[22] The search term "learn *sing* the blues", filtered by most views returns 112,000,  results (YouTube, 2016a). The first 20 videos are not specifically geared toward blues, despite the specificity of the search term, and feature guidance about general singing technique.  Six of these are presented by African Americans.  Four of these are presented by women.   The first video specifically targeted at singing blues music is *Learn to Sing the Blues* by Gaye Adegbalola (HomespunSamples, 2010).  This video is ranked #21 when filtered by views.  The material was originally recorded in 1997 and released on VHS, and is now being offered on DVD.  The YouTube clip functions as an advertisement for the DVD and so there are no comments in the CoP from Adegbalola addressing the questions from viewers. This video was uploaded 2/11/2010 and has 40,315 views at the time of writing, as opposed to the top ranked result *Phil learns to sing!* which was uploaded 09/12/2012 and has 2,853,899 views (AmazingPhil, 2012).  This latter video features general singing technique guidance, but no material specifically targeted at the blues.

videos are aimed at novices.  By contrast, two of the three harmonica videos assume that students

are complete beginners, offering advice on how to hold the instrument and how to place it in the

mouth (Grainger, 2012; B. Wenger, 2008).

The most viewed video (rockongoodpeople, 2008a) does not discuss tones or notes by name at all,

and, as above, assumes that the student already knows how to hold a guitar, fret notes, and co-

ordinate their hands in order to perform music.  The instructor, Marty Schwartz, talks about "the

land of A7"  whilst playing various diads of the A major scale against the root and flat seventh tones

ringing as drones on the guitar.  Berklee Online is the exception to this tendency, describing root

notes and inversions and discussing concepts using musicological terms (BerkleeOnline, 2006).

Focus is on solo practice or practice to backing tracks rather than community involvement –

potentially contributing to a solitary learning experience.   This is in contrast to the group and/or

community learning indicated by Merriam (1964), Herskovits (1948) and Green (2001) which is

prevalent in oral societies such as those which gave rise to the blues.  For example, none of the

harmonica videos explain that in a blues jam or performance, a diatonic harmonica should be a

perfect 4th above the key of the song being played, in order to access the blues scale for the music.

There is extremely limited mention within the videos of playing with other people, and the majority

do no not mention this at all.  Again, this indicates a solipsism that is at odds with a community of

performance.

B.B. King and Stevie Ray Vaughan are the artists most commonly mentioned in terms of style. There

is an emphasis on the "instinctive" nature of playing.  The videos ranked #1 (rockongoodpeople,

2008a), #4 (rockongoodpeople, 2008c), #8 (rockongoodpeople, 2008e), and #13 (rockongoodpeople,

2008d) appear to have been recorded on the same day, and uploaded roughly fortnightly for 8

weeks during November and December 2008.  17 of the 20 videos are presented from a seated

position; the exceptions being the two harmonica videos (Grainger, 2012; ModernBluesHarmonica,

2007a) and the performance video. 14 of the 19 teaching videos are presented from a prepared

space such as a classroom; the remainder appear to have been filmed in a domestic setting.  In the

case of the guitar, several of the videos feature 'split screen' technology which allows students to

focus on the actions of the hands.

The presenters in the videos – with the exception of the performance video and the Harmonica

video which features no talking – refer to the viewer as "you", adding to the sense of secondary

orality (Ong, 1982); the viewer feels that they are being addressed directly as the visual text unfolds.

Although the relationship is very much teacher/student (with the presenter very clearly being the

teacher), the mode of address is largely informal.  Each video opens with a demonstration of what

the lesson will contain, asserting the right of the tutor to present the lesson.  Particularly with the

guitar, there is a general a focus on how easy and accessible the techniques are, and how quickly the

viewer will be able to reproduce the music which is being demonstrated.  The slide guitar lesson

goes as far as to indicate that the method  "…doesn't require any strength or dexterity"

(rockongoodpeople, 2007 1':50"-1':55").  That particular video is punctuated by silent-movie style

FAQ cards such as "What kind of slide?" and "Where do I get a slide and how much?"  in order to

provide a narrative focus to the lesson beyond the demonstration of playing techniques.

Although the videos are intended to be "one to many" transmissions as opposed to "one to one"

tutorials – another indication of Ong's assertion that secondary orality is intended for far larger

groups than primary orality (1982, p. 136) – the communities of practice (E. Wenger, 1998) come

into being in the comments posted beneath each video.  As (Burgess & Green, 2009) indicate,

YouTube

> …creates spaces for engagement and community-formation. Models of
> participation that function in this way [include] peer-to-peer guitar
> lessons…[v]ideos such as these give material form and visibility to the identities
> of fans as members of a community of fellow enthusiasts. Uploading this
> material serves as a way for the group to talk among themselves, and to the
> broader community, using the same media texts that bring them together. The
> discussions that take place there spill over into other sites of everyday culture,
> meaning, identity, and practice (Burgess & Green, 2009, pp. 79-80)

Chapter 5: **Academy**

Here, users are able to address the content providers and each other directly via text-based interaction.  The video becomes the artefact which facilitates discourse amongst the community.   At the time of writing, the top comment on the most viewed video (rockongoodpeople, 2008a) asks why Schwartz is the presenter, when he has his own channel.  The response diplomatically explains that Schwartz used to work for Next Level Guitar/Rock On Good people "…many years ago, before going out on his own" (rockongoodpeople, 2008b).  Comments in this section often include feedback for the content provider – some positive, some negative, and some with no relevance to the video at all.  Students are able to interact with each other and start conversations concerning the content such as with the Adam Gussow video, where students discuss the best way to clean and tune their harmonicas, before complaining about the quality of instruments which are mass-produced in the orient (ModernBluesHarmonica, 2007a).

As previously mentioned, YouTube is not the only online destination which hosts blues music learning materials.  Music learning site **Sonic Junction** also hosts acoustic guitar lessons by African American blues artist Corey Harris (SonicJunction, 2016).  As demonstrated in Chapter 4, Harris is a vocal advocate for a cultural and racial authenticity and ownership, such as this occurs and is expressed in blues music and blues culture (Harris, 2015a, 2015b).  The 'exposition' section of these lessons – in which Harris demonstrates the material which will be taught – is available to view on YouTube (SonicJunction, 2011, 2012, 2013).   There is no interaction from the content provider in the comments which accompany these videos on YouTube, which seem to function as 'trailers' or advertisements for the actual lessons on the main Sonic Junction hub.  Additionally, **MusicGurus.com** offers specific lessons from blues practitioners in the blues style which, like SonicJunction, promise the facility to "…chat and exchange videos with artists [tutors] to find out exactly what you need to practice next" (MusicGurus, 2015).  Again on this site, the blues tutors are all middle-aged, British, and white.

The significance of YouTube as a Community of Practice is that it allows interested parties to engage with the performance of blues music and blues culture.  As the early generations of performers of the blues style have long since passed away, YouTube represents a platform whereby students may engage with the performances of past masters and embark on a voyage of mediated and remediated discovery (Auslander, 2008), as well as learning from dedicated teachers how to replicate the sounds and styles of these seminal players.  Gussow is explicit in his personal motivations:

> "Any would-be blues harmonica student with internet access would be able to purchase and download my lessons instantly, anywhere in the world, at any hour of the day or night.  The sort of old-school, face-to-face, long-form apprenticeship that I had served with Nat Riddles and Mister Satan was a great thing if you could find it, but most people couldn't find it, and they, too, deserved a chance to play the blues. Whoever they were, wherever they lived, I'd help them achieve their dreams" Gussow (2016, pp. 23-24).

What is critical however is that most of the teachers here are white.  Although many are American, as was discussed in chapter 3, there are still ontological, essentialist and potentially racist themes of discourse concerning whether or not non-African Americans can accurately sing or play the blues in the first instance, let alone teach the style to a new generation of participants and performers.

### 5.3.3 Beyond instrumental learning on YouTube

Learning about blues music and blues culture extends beyond the musical/instrumental techniques of performing in the style.  To take a Marxist and post-structuralist approach, other elements concerning the culture such as socio-political factors might also be explored by students (Grazian, 2003, 2004; Hamilton, 2007; L. R. Jones, 1963; Keil, 1966; Oliver, 1960, 1983; Schroeder, 2004; Wald, 2004).  With this in mind, the study engaged with other teaching and learning sites and content which coincided with YouTube.  Of the top 20 videos, Modern Blues Harmonica was chosen for further investigation.  The rationale for this choice was that (1) the site exists beyond YouTube as a forum for its members, thus extending the Community of Practice (E. Wenger, 1998) beyond this single platform.  Whilst rockongoodpeople/Next Level Guitar and several of the other videos in the top 20 also do this, their focus is not exclusively on blues music.  Whilst this may increase the capacity of blues stylistic elements to be absorbed by and expressed within other styles such as

metal and pop, such an investigation is beyond the qualitative scope of this project; (2) Modern

Blues Harmonica is hosted by one tutor rather than many, thus mirroring the 'mentoring' factor of

the student/teacher relationship expressed by Honeyboy Edwards and others (Edwards & Frank,

1997).  Not only is the music and its attendant performance technique being taught, the ways to

deploy that music and its originating context is being explained by the same tutor; (3) The tutor in

question has been taught and mentored in the style by an African American performer of repute –

Sterling McGee (Gussow, 1998) and is recognised internationally for his proficiency both within the

style and on the instrument of his choice; (4) the tutor, Adam Gussow, has published on the

phenomenon of blues teaching using the internet (Gussow, 2016); (5) the site has been in operation

since 2007, offering a fair and reasonable overview of the development of blues teaching on the

internet since that time and (6) the tutor in question also lectures in literature at University of

Mississippi and so is qualified in traditional terms to deliver a critical overview of the written cultural

materials.  As indicated in Chapter 4, in this way the tutor represents the voice of 'traditional'

academia as well as potentially being an 'organic intellectual' (Gramsci et al., 1971).

### 5.3.4 Modern Blues Harmonica

> "[T]here are a lot of people that love the blues *but know little about its
> origins and have no concept as to how closely it is tied to the black
> experience*...[T]he fact that it has become universal is a wonderful thing,
> because it says how important and influential and powerful this music is.
> But it must be remembered that though you are welcome to the house,
> do not try and take the home. Come on in, visit, enjoy, do your thing. But
> remember whose house you're in."  (Harmonica player Sugar Blue, quoted
> in Gussow, 2016, p. 6).

Sugar Blue's comments above illustrate the tension between the performance of blues music, and

an awareness of the socio-political context(s) from which it arose.  Whilst it is possible to focus

exclusively on musical gestures and content, several online communities exist in order to facilitate

the exploration of this aspect of the culture.   Born in 1959, Professor Adam Gussow's credentials as

a teacher and performer are impressive with regard to blues music and blues culture.  As a white

American and Harmonica player, Gussow was mentored by African American musicians Nat Riddles

and Sterling McGee, Gussow was featured in the 1988 motion picture *Rattle and Hum* as a half of

the musical duo Satan and Adam.  This inter-racial blues duo toured internationally until McGee

(Mr Satan's) health deteriorated to the point where this was no longer practical.  In simple terms –

Gussow, a white, ivy-league university educated musician from North America, received

mentorship and training from African American practitioners in the style.

After uploading more than 500 videos to the YouTube platform, Gussow explains his involvement

with internet-based harmonica teaching:

> "…my YouTube channel has 14 million views and 43,000 subscribers.  If you search
> the phrase "blues harmonica" on Google, you'll find a website that I created back
> in April of 2007, ModernBluesHarmonica.com, right near the top of page 1.
> According to Google Analytics, Modern Blues Harmonica has, in the past 12
> months, had 218,000 discrete users and almost a million and a half pageviews
> from 214 different countries and territories around the world—including, for what
> it's worth, 45 of the 54 countries in Africa.  And, yes, the website does make me a
> little money, every single day.  I sell blues harmonica video lessons for $5 and my
> own hand-drawn tablature sheets—simplified musical notation using up and
> down arrows—for $2" (Gussow, 2016).

Analysis of the Google analytics figures for Modern Blues Harmonica (table below) confirms that

the channel's greatest activity comes from the United States and Western Europe.  The 10 most

active regions are presented below.

| Geography | Watch time (minutes) | Views | Comments | Subscribers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | 7,166,836 | 5,245,319 | 8,324 | 12,805 |
| United Kingdom | 1,613,598 | 1,238,645 | 1,565 | 2,848 |
| Canada | 953,708 | 816,377 | 784 | 1,671 |
| Germany | 836,725 | 794,910 | 521 | 1,141 |
| Unknown Region | 25,502 | 599,834 | 87 | 10,841 |
| France | 611,840 | 595,703 | 338 | 770 |
| Brazil | 768,579 | 591,219 | 404 | 2,300 |
| Netherlands | 354,418 | 404,292 | 322 | 626 |
| Italy | 361,374 | 388,377 | 199 | 845 |
| Australia | 542,062 | 371,675 | 597 | 862 |

*Table 5: Modern Blues Harmonica's top 10 usage data April 2007-August 2016[23]*

---

[23] 'Unknown region' is defined as those users who hide their IP address through various means, and so it is not possible for Google Analytics to pinpoint their exact location.

Whilst these figures make the case for the international development of the blues; it is significant

that 9 of the top 10 named countries in the table above are majority white populations.  What is of

further interest is that these users are all acquiring tutelage from a single source – Adam.  There is a

very strong sense of interaction with the user, exemplified by the 2011 video *Instant Naked Raw*

*Brutal Blues Harmonica – your first lesson*, where Gussow directly addresses the camera in an

almost combative tone, at one point striking the lens to force the viewer to "…pay attention!"

(ModernBluesHarmonica, 2011 4':18") in the mould of the "scolding" behaviour indicated by

(Merriam, 1964, p. 151).  This particular approach draws much positive comment from users

beneath the video, who seem to appreciate being shocked into attentiveness by the breaking of the

fourth wall (Cuddon & Habib, 2013) and who report instant success with the techniques.   Whilst

the tutor in this case encourages students to find their own voice, nonetheless each of the several

million consumers of the lessons are being given direction that is underpinned by the one-to-many

principles that characterise secondary orality and, as McLuhan feared, may lead to standardisation

and homogeneity (McLuhan, 1962, p. 58).

## 5.4 Non-Musical learning: MOOCs and distance learning

As illustrated with reference to YouTube, teaching and learning is no longer restricted to direct

interactions between tutors and students within a localised space and in synchronous time.

YouTube demonstrates the possibilities of the internet to facilitate distance learning amongst

communities of practice.  A further development of this pedagogic potential are Massive Open

Online Courses – also known as a MOOCs.  Since 2008, MOOCs have been provided by a number of

educational institutions in order to facilitate distance learning – whereby students are separated by

distance from materials which are planned and delivered by a centre of learning (Kaplan &

Haenlein, 2016, p. 442).  Generally, a MOOC is an open-access online course that allows for

unlimited and asynchronous participation - hence "massive".  As with YouTube, many MOOCs

encourage students to interact with each other and tutors.  Also similarly to YouTube, students

enrolled on the course may be dispersed in space and time.  Each MOOC will have different

enrolment requirements (if there are any at all) and by extension may have different certifications –

again, if there is any at all.  The modular and dispersed nature of MOOCs offered by groups such as

Coursera (www.coursera.org), a partnership of 62 world class universities headed by Stanford

University in the United States, and edX (www.edx.org) which includes the Massachusetts Institute

of Technology and École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Udacity (www.udacity.com), and

Futurelearn (the Open University's MOOC platform in the UK) makes them a unique and powerful

offering from top-tier Universities for inclusion in corporate training programmes, further

revolutionising the provision of education in the 21$^{st}$ century (Liyanagunawardena, Adams, &

Williams, 2013, p. 204).  As (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2016) indicate "Following through on a

MOOC…requires a relatively high level of intrinsic motivation and self-discipline [for students and

learners]. Successful graduates therefore tend to be older…and already hold a first degree (80%),

which they obtained through more traditional means. For most participants, a MOOC is therefore

primarily a way to build new skills in order to strengthen an existing professional career" (Kaplan &

Haenlein, 2016, p. 444).  This last statement corresponds with the findings of this study in terms of

blues learning communities reported later in the chapter; 65.8% of respondents hold a bachelor's

or postgraduate degree.

### 5.4.1 BluesTalk

Blues Scholar Stephen Calt reminds us that "…the preoccupation with blues as meaning has fatally

obscured its function as entertainment.  To its contemporary [primary] audience of Southern

blacks, country blues served as a passing diversion, a pleasurable escape from the very realities it is

now held to express" (Grossman, Calt, & Grossman, 1973, p. 8) The relevance of this particular

quotation is twofold; (1) to remind us of the contextual realities in which blues was initially

performed.  It is the perceived absence of these realities for what some regard as a privileged group

and (2) to underline that meaning in the blues has been largely ascribed by a secondary audience.

Culture is not created in a vacuum, and music is not the only artistic practice which is produced by a

community.  Whilst there is a large amount of musical tutorial material available on the internet,

socio-political material concerning other elements of blues culture is comparatively lacking.  As

Professor Adman Gussow indicates (with reference to the earlier quotation from Sugar Blue):

> "I created a series of twelve one-hour YouTube lectures entitled "Blues Talk" in which I tried to address that lack, using my training as an African American literature scholar to talk about works by W. C. Handy, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, August Wilson, and the black southern blues worlds they sought to evoke."

Viewing figures for the BluesTalk series are presented below:

| Video title | Watch time (minutes) | Views | Comments | Subscribers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blues Talk 1 - starting the conversation | 104,443 | 9,159 | 53 | 35 |
| Blues Talk 2 - blues conditions | 56,725 | 4,071 | 28 | 8 |
| Blues Talk 3 - "bluesmen," "folkloric melancholy," and blues feelings | 40,788 | 2,995 | 24 | 1 |
| Blues Talk 4 - blues expressiveness and the blues ethos | 31,253 | 2,100 | 12 | 2 |
| Blues Talk 5   W  C  Handy and the "birth" of the blues | 41,680 | 3,083 | 20 | 4 |
| Blues Talk 6 - Langston Hughes and early blues poetry | 27,064 | 2,173 | 20 | 5 |
| Blues Talk 7 - Zora Neale Hurston and southern blues culture | 40,866 | 4,399 | 14 | 7 |
| Blues Talk 8 - the devil and the blues, Part 1 | 32,945 | 2,503 | 13 | 6 |
| Blues Talk 9 - the devil and the blues, Part 2 | 23,846 | 1,996 | 21 | 1 |
| Blues Talk 10 - blues form, portraiture, and power | 17,196 | 1,551 | 10 | 2 |
| Blues Talk 11 - the blues revival and the Black Arts movement | 19,759 | 1,597 | 23 | 2 |
| Blues Talk 12 - blues and the postmodern condition | 23,362 | 2,252 | 24 | 4 |

*Table 6: BluesTalk's viewing figures 2012-2016*

The course content provides a comprehensive overview of blues literature.  Learners are introduced

to writers such as Langston Hughes, Zora Neal Hurston and Ralph Ellison and are exposed to the

blues aesthetic in poetry and other literature.  Additionally, elements of American Social History

such as the Harlem Renaissance are presented for discussion, providing extra dimension to

narratives such as Johnson's 'deal at the crossroads' story.  Alongside a prepared reading list

(ModernBluesHarmonica, 2012a) and the video texts themselves, a forum (ModernBluesHarmonica,

2012b) is in place to allow students to interact around the material.  No formal qualification is gained

from completing the course.  As the above data shows however, as the course progresses there

appears to be dwindling engagement with the materials.  This is mirrored in the forum, with most of

the discussion threads being posted in 2013 – 24 in total.  There is only 1 thread posted for 2014, 1

for 2015 and although there are 6 for 2016 at the time of writing, these threads made in recent

times are not focused on the *Blues Talk* literary content.   The  Sessions #1, #7, #2, #5, #3 and #8

appear to be the most popular in terms of views.  In short, interest in the background of the blues

from a literature perspective – despite the quality of the support materials – seems distinctly limited

online without the direct and sustained encouragement of a tutor.

## 5.4.2 Learning on the internet - MOOCs and SPOCs

A search of the most popular MOOC hubs for "blues music" indicates that there are around 57

courses available which reference blues music and blues culture in some way (Coursera, 2016b).

Many of these however have blues as a *component* rather than a central focus, such as the

University of Rochester's *Music of the Beatles* (Coursera, 2016d) and *The Music of the Rolling Stones,*

*1962-1974* (Coursera, 2016e) courses, or the University of Florida's *Music's Big Bang: The Genesis of*

*Rock 'n' Roll* (Coursera, 2016c)*.*  Whilst University of Rochester offers the course *The Blues:*

*Understanding and Performing an American Art Form* (Coursera, 2016a) , this is a 7-week,

structuralist, musicology-based course, which focuses on the blues as a forerunner of jazz.  The

course is also geared towards performance and improvisation, rather than offering a socio-political

or extended exploration of non-musical blues culture.

The University of Exeter in the UK however offers a 12-week paid course titled *A History of the Blues*

(Exeter, 2014) which was designed and implemented by Dr Christian O'Connell.  This particular

course is a further type of MOOC called a SPOC – a Small Private Online Course.  A SPOC is an online

course that only offers a limited number of places and therefore requires some form of formal

enrolment. SPOCs frequently have a competitive application process and might charge a tuition fee

(Kaplan & Haenlein, 2016, p. 443).  This is exemplified by the Exeter course's reference to late

entrants and required enrolment levels, in addition to the course fee of £185. The Exeter course is

available between specific calendar dates, and uses "…specialist recordings, historical materials,

photography, film and the latest research to provide an overview of the blues from its origins at the

turn of the twentieth century to its spread across the Atlantic during the 1960s" (O'Connell, 2014).

In addition, the course makes plain that it will place the blues within the context of American and

African American history, explaining that:

> "The experience of African Americans in the United States is intrinsic to
> understanding the meaning and reception of the blues, and so we will look at the
> lyrics, style, and popularity of the music in relation to:
>
> - the black experience of racial segregation
> - the Great Depression
> - World War Two
> - and the Great Migrations from the rural South
>
> Importantly, the course will also introduce some of the main cultural and
> historical debates regarding the blues, and encourage critical debate on issues
> such as the contribution of women to the genre" (O'Connell, 2014).

This syllabus statement makes plain that the aim of the course is to place the blues in context as a

cultural practice.  Interviewed for this survey, Dr O'Connell explained that part of the aim of the

course was to invite students to challenge their assumptions concerning blues music and blues

culture by engaging with tasks in groups that encouraged them to undertake research and engage in

critical thinking (O'Connell, 2016).

The course features a high level of group work and is supported by forum activity.  O'Connell shared

that some students are sometimes intimidated by the seeming knowledge of others and so are silent

or have a very limited visible interaction on the forums, giving ground to participants who are more

willing to engage in debate and demonstrate the breadth of their understanding at any given point.

This process is known as "lurking" (Baym, 2002, 2010; Hine, 2000; Kozinets, 2010), and O'Connell has

suggested that he may "…introduce a word-limit,"  for forum responses to prevent other students

from being intimidated by lengthy responses from other members of the cohort.  The average

number of course members is 18 per 12-week session.  O'Connell explained that demographically,

the average age of students is "…over 50," and "two-thirds to three quarters male".  Racially, the

cohorts are almost entirely British, although there have been "…one or two Australian students"

(O'Connell, 2016).  Although the course offers no formal accreditation, O'Connell indicated that

students report high satisfaction with the course as it "challenges their assumptions" about blues music and blues culture.

These statements correspond with the findings of the survey carried out for this study discussed in chapter 7, also presented in part below, and in full as appendices 1 and 2.

## 5.5 Survey of Learning Communities

As part of this study, an online survey was conducted in order to understand engagement with online blues learning communities.  Whilst the survey was publicised in physical performance communities as well as online spaces, since the object of exploration concerned the persistence and proliferation of blues music and blues culture on the internet, respondents  could only engage with the survey through digital means.  Of the 512 respondents who self-identified as blues fans, or as having an interest in blues music and blues culture,  121 respondents  (24% of the sample) further indicated that they were part of a blues learning community.

35.5% of these respondent subset were aged 55-64 years, where 21.5% were aged 45-54 – in other words, 57% of respondents were middle-aged.  91.7% identified as white/Caucasian.  89.1% of respondents were male.  90.8% of respondents were located in North America or Europe, with this being split between 68.3% located in the United States, and 22.5% located in the European Union. This first group of results seems to mirror the tutelage in the YouTube videos – specifically, middle-aged white men are now teaching other middle aged white men how to play a style of music which originates from an African American community from which they are removed by time and/or space – simply, a secondary audience.  In this respect, as Titon (1993) and Evans (2011) indicate – the blues has evolved and continues to expand beyond its original racial and geographic boundaries.

Of the respondents, 65% aimed to learn to play an instrument or acquire a performance technique, although 62.8% of these respondents claimed to have performed blues music publically in the preceding 12 months, with 50.4% having *recorded* music in the blues style or with a blues influence. Additionally, 39.7% reported that they had *composed* music in the blues style or with a blues

influence.  This last statistic indicates some level of ownership, identification with or personification within the blues style – signifying that even though the blues is arguably a music of black American origin, white Americans and Europeans feel some credible affinity with the style, supporting the assertion that there is "No Black.  No White. Just the blues" – emphasising that the music is perhaps external to and independent of the context of its creation (CirlotAgency, 2006).  The survey did not identify whether the recordings in question were intended for commercial release.  This suggests that the respondents for this section were in fact performers who were looking to improve their technique and so by extension were in search of a suitable teacher or mentor.   In terms of interaction, 89.7% of informants interact with their learning community by text/written means such as email, instant relay chat, or SMS.  The next largest group at 40.5% use face to face methods, although it was not indicated whether or not this was achieved via mediated means such as Microsoft Skype or other video-calling services.

Whilst 98.2% of respondents for this section of the survey indicated that their participation in online blues learning would lead to no formal qualification, 37.5% percent were already educated to BA level, and 20.8% were educated to MA level. 54.7% of respondents belonged to 2-3 blues learning communities.  From this, a pattern of educated, middle-class white patrons began to emerge from the survey respondents, which appears to match the gender/racial/age profile of YouTube tutors and similarly supports the alarm of Harris (2015b), Harris (2015a) and L. R. Jones (1963) amongst others that blues music and blues culture is in danger of becoming a set of hyper-realistic gestures in performance that were no longer contextualised by a narrative, socio-political, human experience grounded in objective reality (S. A. King, 2011; Ryan, 2011).  To balance this concern, 70.9% of informants claimed to wish to learn about the history of blues music and blues culture.  Of concern in this scenario however is that when asked to identify performers which they personally considered to be blues artists, 100% identified B.B. King, 99.2 % identified Muddy Waters, 98.3% and 97.5% identified Howlin' Wolf and Robert Johnson respectively – all of whom are deceased.  Living artists such as Vasti Jackson, Marvin Sease, Mrs Jody and O.B. Buchana received less than 10% recognition.

So – problematically – those interested in learning about blues music and blues culture did not recognise artists venerated by the African American community in the present day as blues performers as being credible blues artists. This statistic again highlights issues of power; African Americans in the 21$^{st}$ century do not, it seems, have the power to identify who are blues artists in the face of a majority white audience. This issue is discussed in greater depth in chapters 6 and 7.

## 5.6 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has examined the ways in which the academy is translated into digital spaces via computer-mediated communications (CMC). The chapter has addressed the role played by the internet in perpetuating, developing and disseminating blues music and blues culture with specific regard to enculturation, acculturation, education and schooling for individuals bounded by notions of race, geography, gender, and by extension, perceived authenticity.

Quite apart from demonstrating an equivocal and egalitarian approach to cultural diffusion, the interviews conducted and the data gathered for this chapter revealed that instead, the study is dealing with power, and its deployment within a socio-cultural sphere. This is emphasised by the discourse themes and fragments discussed in chapter 3, and further highlighted by the demographic data presented alongside some of the vocal and written comments, observations and protests of African American artists and performers which will be discussed in greater detail in chapters 6 and 7.

In simple terms, that the blues was a style of music initially marketed to African Americans is not a matter of debate. That there was significant control of this process initially by non-African Americans, and that the role of women in this process was initially marginalised is now being discussed (A. Y. Davis, 1998; Hamilton, 2007). What is significant to this study is that a style of music originally believed to have originated by the African American community was initially taught by African Americans practitioners using oral means, necessarily limiting the volume and spread of its audience. In other words; if you were lucky enough to encounter an African American blues player who was touring in your area, or because you were able to travel to where they lived, then you were

able to learn directly from them in the way that they were likely taught themselves (Edwards &

Frank, 1997; Gussow, 1998, 2007) as well as with reference to media texts such as phonograph

records and in some cases, films.

Generally, the teaching of the blues since the first published pedagogic text on the topic has been

the preserve of non-African Americans such as Mairants (1956), Pearse (1972), Grossman (1968),

Grossman & Block (1971), Silverman (1964a), and Gussow (2016). Whilst this is perhaps unsurprising

in territories such as the US and UK where the population is majority white, it is surprising that

tutors such as Corey Harris – a black American teaching black American cultural styles and

techniques – are an exception, rather than a more firmly-established rule. What is of concern is

that the internet appears to do little to alter the dominance of middle-aged, white men in this field.

Specifically; the most valorised performance masters in the genre – B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Son

House, Bessie Smith (for example) – have all passed from the earth and are no longer able to teach

their lessons using primary oral means; secondary oral means that offer a glimpse of the practice of

these performers are again, interpreted first and foremost by a secondary audience who were

themselves removed from the creation and performance of the music; in other words – there is a

suggestion that *the blues is being re-created in the image of the dominant culture whose treatment*

*of African Americans brought it into existence in the first place.*

Chapter 6 now examines in more depth the constitution of this secondary audience for blues music

and blues culture in the internet age – mindful of the indication in this chapter that there is a distinct

uncoupling of the real circumstances which gave rise to blues music in favour of a hyper-realistic

(Baudrillard, 1994) representation of the context from which this cultural practice emerged (Grazian,

2004; S. A. King, 2011; Ryan, 2011).

> We relate to each other…as collaborators in the course of a musical performance, in the imagined communities that are animated by these performances, in the identity categories and hierarchies enacted in sonic practices, and in the social modes of its production and distribution (Born, 2010 cited in Piekut, 2014).

# Chapter 6: Online Audience

How is the online audience for blues music and blues culture constituted in the 21st century, and how do its members use the internet to interact with each other and the texts?  This chapter presents and discusses the results of the qualitative data gathered by the online ethnography for the Real Blues Forum. The chapter asks four key questions: (1) what is an online community? (2) What are its rules? (3) How does the community understand and interact with blues music and blues culture?  (4) What does this tell us about power structures within this section of the online audience for the blues?

This chapter presents an examination of a specific online blues community, the Real Blues Forum, which is part of the social networking site (SNS) Facebook.  The chapter interprets qualitative data and performs critical discourse analysis (CDA) on interactions between members of the community, in order to reach conclusions about those who identify as fans of blues music and who use the internet to engage with blues culture.  The findings from the analysis of the  qualitative data gathered concern the way that the discourse on blues is being shaped online, by whom, and the influence that computer-mediated communications (CMC) have on this, in other words – the way that the story of the blues is being told, who is telling it, and how digital media in general and the internet in particular enable or constrain individuals, discourse themes, and ideas.  The chapter presents evidence of problematic themes within the online discourse on blues which are in part essentialist, and in the most extreme cases potentially racist in their characterisation and projection of blues practitioners.

An online survey and an online ethnography were conducted for the study, in order to characterise individuals who engage with blues music and blues culture through online means, principally social

networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook.  The survey data is presented and discussed in chapter 7.

The aim here is to gather qualitative and quantitative data concerning what type of individual routinely interacts and participates with the blues via the internet, and to build a limited picture of their motivations, preconceptions, and the influence that computer-mediated communications (CMC) have on their experience of the blues as a contemporary and historical practice.  The rationale for this is threefold.   Firstly, that social media and the internet are, at the time of writing, the dominant media through which recorded music is shared, experienced and discussed (Harcourt et al., 2015).  Secondly, the generations of blues players who were active through the early to middle part of the twentieth century are now largely dead, and the most direct contact with their work is via technologically mediated sources.  Thirdly, music fandoms and communities which form and function primarily via the internet have been a topic of increasing interest over the last 25 years (Baym, 2010, 2012; Baym & Ledbetter, 2009; Clerc, 1996; Rheingold, 1993), and whilst there have been sociological studies of blues performers, cultural workers, and fans of blues music in the physical world (Grazian, 2003, 2004; S. A. King, 2004, 2011; Ryan, 2011), to date there has been no significant study of blues music or blues fandom on the internet.

The Real Blues Forum (RBF) was chosen for this study for several reasons.  Firstly, the forum has (at the time of writing 13,116 members, which constitutes a large community of users for study. Secondly, these users engage in text-based synchronous and asynchronous discussion on a regular basis, which allows for both observation of relationships, and the analysis of text and talk generated by these interactions.  Thirdly, the membership of the community includes many performers and scholars who have been instrumental in the shaping of the blues discourse over the last 60 years, which allows for consideration of how their roles have adapted and/or persisted relative to the remediation of the discourse.  Fourthly, the RBF has several discrete sub-forums (as mentioned in chapter 3) which allow for the observation of hierarchical relationships, in the form of distribution of objectified cultural capital and social  capital amongst the group (Bourdieu, 1986, 2010; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007) .

There are other communities within the SNS which also refer to blues music and blues culture, as well as having sizeable communities. *The Chicago Blues Society* (Facebook, 2016b) is a public group with 18,946 members. These members however rarely interact in conversation, and the content of the forum is largely postings of video material from YouTube, and advertisements for upcoming shows, festivals, and semi-professional musicians' commercial releases. *Blues but rock, rock, but blues!* (Facebook, 2016a) has a community of 40,823 members but once again, the primary activity here is the posting of YouTube clips, and the advertisement of performances. The membership appears to be largely music-consumers and amateur to semi-professional musicians, and there is almost no discussion between members. This may be a result of non-Anglophone members of the community being unable or unwilling to engage in conversation. Additionally, the broadened focus to include other styles and genres of music means that community members present material by heavy metal bands such as Metallica (Spieker, 2016), soul and disco material from Kool & The Gang (Downs, 2016) and classical orchestral music from composers such as Johannes Brahms (Kraus, 2016). This diversity of styles extends far beyond blues and so makes this an unsuitable site for this study. *The Real Caucasian Blues Forum* (Wirz, 2012a) has 1,542 members but again, activity is largely restricted to the posting of YouTube videos, with almost no discussion taking place. Of note however is that this last community was set up by German RBF member Stefan Wirz in March 2012, as a protest against not being able to discuss white blues performers in the RBF, and on the occasion of his temporary banning from the RBF for persisting in doing so. On the same date, Wirz also set up *The Real Miscellaneous Music Forum* - 1,023 members - (Wirz, 2012b) and *The Real Traditional Ethnic & Vernacular Music Forum* - 458 members - (Wirz, 2012c), but the lack of blues-focused activity or discussion in these spaces make them unsuitable research sites. Additionally, Wirz's behaviour highlights the existence of and resistance to a hierarchical power-structure within the online community in question, and the "…ongoing struggle between centripetal and centrifugal forces, i.e. forces that seek some unified central 'command' versus those seeking to contest such unification from the margins" (Stivale, 1997, p. 139). Finally, text-based discussion forums were

considered as ethnography sites, such as the *BluesTalk* forum (www.BluesTalk.com, 2016), the

*Blindman's Blues Forum* (www.blindman.fr.yuku.com, 2016), Weenie Campbell.com

(weeniecampbell.com, 2015), *earlyblues.com* (www.earlyblues.com, 2016) and the Yahoo *Pre-war*

*blues* (www.groups.yahoo.com, 2016b) and *post-war blues* (www.groups.yahoo.com, 2016a) forums.

In each case, however, activity and interactivity was particularly slow and unfocused – except in the

case of *earlyblues.com* which appears to be run by a single individual as an extended blog.  In other

words, these sites to not provide the volume and velocity of interaction required to form a coherent

picture of the relationships engendered by the internet within a given community.  Further, the

quality of online digital utterances – posts – on these sites is homogenised and so a discursive event

such as the passing of B.B. King in May 2015 generates multiple posts such as "R.I.P GOD BLESS YOU

!!" (Böttcher, 2015) and "R.I.P B.B KING" (Dalançon, 2015) along with a link to a newspaper story or a

YouTube video, rather than any sustained conversation, interpretation or interaction.

With the preceding in mind, the *Real Blues Forum* offered an active site of seemingly diverse and

engaged individuals who participated in focused discussions on a daily basis, and who provided a

dynamic online community of musicians, cultural workers, and scholars in which I was able to play a

part and make ethnographic observations.

## 6.1 Online Ethnography

Like "Blues", "Community" is a contested term in sociology and ethnography, particularly when

applied to online interactions and virtual spaces.  As Chayko writes, "…[e]ver since sociological

theorist Ferdinand Tönnies declared community to be an essential condition for the development of

close, primary social bonds sociologists have not been able to agree on how, or whether definitions

of community should be updated" (2008, p. 6).  Notions of home and society have been evident in

the earliest online groups and the literature which addresses these.   Having existed since 1985, The

WELL[24]  is the oldest virtual community in continuous operation and describes itself as "…a cherished

---

[24] The Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link

watering hole for articulate and playful thinkers" (www.well.com, 1985).  Of significance is not only

the group's persistence through the digital age, but also that its acronymic title carries connotations

of "…a plentiful source or  supply" ('Well' as a noun) in addition to "…good, satisfactory or in a

condition of prosperity or comfort" ('Well' as an adverb) or simply "…in good health" as an adjective

(Stevenson & Waite, 2011, p. 1639).  In other words, the group's title alludes to a plentiful supply of

a life-giving resource, such as is typically found as a central focus for a social group or community.

Additionally, the first book-length study of online social activity and grouping focused on the WELL

and its title *'The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier'* further emphasised

the analogous links between online social groups and physical communities (Rheingold, 1993),

synchronising with McLuhan's conception of an electronically connected "global village" (1962, p.

21).  Whilst there are arguments that an essential element of a community is geography, this is to

dismiss Oldenburg's notion of a "third space" – a place which is neither home nor a designated

workspace and which forms a vital ingredient in identity formation and social practices for

individuals (Oldenburg, 1989).   This is also to ignore the extent to which individuals present images

of self and interact with others through digital media and virtual spaces in the present day (Baym,

2002; Baym & Ledbetter, 2009; Boyd, 2006; Hine, 2000; Kozinets, 2010), this last notion derived

from Goffman (1956).  In other words, one of the most visible social transformations of the late 20th

and early 21st centuries is a shift away from geographically-bounded physical social groups toward

asynchronous, ideologically bounded online communities (Kotarba, Merrill, Williams, & Vannini,

2013; Wellman & Gulia, 1999).

## 6.1.1 Online Communities and the *Real Blues Forum*

Nancy Baym identifies five qualities found in both online groups and many definitions of community

which make the term resonate for online contexts.  She highlights (1) the sense of space, (2) shared

practice, (3) shared resources and support, (4) shared identities, and (5) interpersonal relationships

(Baym, 2010, p. 75).  Whilst the RBF is a purely online community, its **sense of space** is derived from

its focus on cultural materials tied to specific geographic regions – namely, "…blues music as played and sung by African Americans" (Vernon, 2011b).  This focus on these materials means that the practices of a specific group over a specific period in a specific place lends certainty to the group's coherence.  As will be illustrated later in this chapter through the analysis of the group's Mission Statement (fig. 21), this bounded certainty is paradoxical and problematic, and is a regular source of contention amongst members. Certainly, members have been removed from the community and posts which seem to discuss blues from non-African American sources are quickly shouted down or removed altogether, with emphatic reference to the Mission Statement presented in fig. 21 below and as illustrated in (fig. 20, below). ***Shared practice*** can be identified by the routine behaviours shared amongst group participants.  In other words, the ways of acting, speaking and communicating highlight the organising logic, common sensibilities, and assumptions of the group (Barker, 2008; Baym, 2010; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).  In addition to highlighting core values and ideas, text and talk indicates hierarchy within the group in terms of who has authority, and who has 'insider' and 'outsider' status.  For example in figure 10, an 'insider' figure posts an article from *Rolling Stone* magazine which discusses white blues-rock musician Dan Auerbach being sued after leaving a biographical film project about blues artist Howlin' Wolf (1910-1976) in debt (Leight, 2016). Auerbach's band, The Black Keys, are an internationally-recognised, award-winning blues-rock duo who have widely had the blues influence in their sound discussed (Bychawski, 2010; Leahey, 2011; McGee, 2009).  Community members immediately post ad hominem comments about Auerbach and his music, emphasising a general antipathy towards young, white musicians who are linked to blues music and blues culture.  Quickly, a moderator steps in to halt the conversation.

*Figure 12: conversation between RBF members concerning Dan Auerbach*

The original poster - a blues cultural worker, author and teacher of some 50 years standing

(Kornfeld, 2011) - then apologises, and the tone of the moderator becomes softer and deferential,

using the phrase "No worries," and invoking "we" as a first-person plural indication of an existing

power-knowledge group.  One of the 'outsider' commentators who had been castigated then sides

with the moderator in agreeing that the conversation should not have taken place.  The brief

exchange illustrates several normative elements within the group; hierarchy and seniority; a disdain

for young white blues-rock musicians; valorisation of older performers; pre-eminence given to those

who might have a more direct and 'authentic' link to blues music and blues culture; the dynamic

flow of interaction and conversation; the strictness in the policing of these boundaries. In simple

terms, an emphasis on behavioural norms such as those explored by this chapter implicates

underlying power structures (Foucault, 1977).  Shared practices also illustrate behavioural and

communicative norms, and participants who violate these draw critical and castigating responses

from other members of the community.  The Auerbach interaction above also highlights an empirical

split in opinion between RBF members and a wider audience; whilst the members of the RBF may

have little regard for the music of the Black Keys and other perceived blues-rockers such as Eric

Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and the specific RBF opprobrium reserved for guitarist and singer Joe

Bonamassa, this does not diminish their popularity with audiences who valorise these musicians and

reward them with recording sales and concert attendance.   The significance here is that whilst RBF

members – some of whom were critical to establishing the discourse on blues in academic and

popular circles – are specific and exclusive about what they consider to be 'real' blues, these

constraints are not immediately passed on to a wider listening and concert-going public.  Of concern

however is the longer-term cultural gatekeeping and discourse-shaping role occupied by some RBF

members which have specific real-world consequences (Lysloff, 2003). The effects of this are

discussed in greater depth in chapters 8 and 9.

As implied by the mention of the WELL above, online communities often cohere around ***shared***

***resources and support***.  As indicated in chapter 3 and above, RBF members include published

writers, musicians, cultural workers and academics who possess what Bourdieu would identify as

*embodied cultural capital*; those skills and experiences which confer legitimacy and status on the

groups to which they belong (Bourdieu, 1986).  These individuals further contribute and share

materials which might be considered *objectified cultural capital* in the form of pictures, books,

essays and sound recordings which not only strengthen the group as a repository for such materials

as described in chapter 3, but also assist with the coherence and persistence of the group in terms of

what Bourdieu terms *social capital* – the resources people have access to and attain as a direct result

of their network of relationships (1986, p. 242).  Again, power structures and hierarchy are evident

in the distribution of these resources.  As indicated in chapter 3, not all RBF group members have

access to these resources and not all members are aware that the materials exist.  Access to the

discographical detail and discussion sub forum is restricted to 1.66% of the total forum membership.

Access to the original and in most cases unpublished blues photographs of Tano Ro was limited to

2.89% of the forum.  Critically, access to the *RBF Exchange*[25] where members can trade items –

records, books, photographs, audio-visual media – is restricted to just 487 members, approximately

3.84% of the total RBF membership.  Since these areas are invisible to the majority of the group

population, access to these areas is by invitation only.  In other words, the capacity to trade and

accrue objective cultural capital is restricted, and this in itself reiterates and reinforces the existence

of a power structure within the group. Even given the exclusive access to these areas, there have

been problems.  For example, the RBF Photograph Archive was set up on 8th October, 2013.  By 27th

October, the foundational member Tano Ro had removed 600 of his unpublished journalistic images

of blues artists, as even the limited membership were violating the conditions of inclusion to the

secret sub-forum by sharing the material beyond its boundaries as shown in in figure 13:

---

[25] From the RBF Exchange description: "The RBF Exchange is a group dedicated to the sale and trade of Blues-related items including records, CD's, books, magazines, DVD's, ephemera and anything else that we lust after. Don't post rockabilly, hillbilly, jazz, rock or any genre other than Blues and Gospel (extended to include Soul-Blues, R&B and other sub-genres that we all understand)
The group is "Secret", which means only members can see and participate in it. Further, only members of the RBF can be members of the Exchange; if you wish to invite a friend into the Exchange, that person must first be an RBF member. You may offer items for either a set-sale price or for trade for items you need. We will not accept auction-style postings. You may therefore post items for sale, wants lists, comments salient to the items and any exchanges of comments between yourself and the member(s) you are negotiating with. Nothing else. When a trade or sale has been completed, the initiator of the transaction must delete the entire post.
 There are NO FEES WHATSOEVER for participation in this forum, and no-one should attempt to abuse the privileges based upon trust between members; If, for any reason whatsoever, a dispute arises, it must be settled by the people involved. There will be no admin interference, beyond the final solution of deleting an entire thread should it turn insolvably nasty; the Admin also reserves the final right to toss offending members out, not only of the Exchange, but also of the main RBF forum- so be warned!.
 All financial arrangements are the responsibility of the parties involved. Admin will not interfere in any way with financial arrangements. In other words, IF it goes belly up, that's your problem. All those caveats being said, feel free to get started right now, because it's sitting there waiting for you – just search for "RBF Exchange" and request membership in the usual way." (Vernon, 2011a)

*Figure 13 Tano Ro removes photographs as objectified cultural capital from circulation on the RBF in 2013*

Despite this seeming focus on permission and legitimacy, I have found that some of my own

academic writing (Attah, 2013) has been made available to members, without my permission or that

of a publisher being sought.  Paradoxically, these writings are made available to members in the RBF

Book Room with the same conditional advice applied to the photograph archive - that items should

not be shared outside the forum.  At the very least this is a potential double-standard; materials may

be *sourced* indiscriminately, but not shared in the same way.  Here we see in action what Pierre

Bourdieu calls *distinction* (2010); within a group which coheres around a common interest, in this

case a chosen and contested definition of blues music, there are further power relations reified by

social judgements which are exclusionary, exemplified by the limited membership of the sub-forums,

and these are the basis for social judgement - "…too many idiots around…pearls for pigs" (Ro, 2013).

These ideas of shared space, shared normative practices and shared resources further contribute to

a sense of ***shared identity*** in terms of the roles played by individuals, which is itself indicative of

underlying power structures which contribute to a sense of a shared group identity.  In the case of

the RBF, whilst all members are presumably blues fans, they are fans of a certain type of blues –

specifically "…blues music as played and sung by African Americans" (Vernon, 2011b).  Within this, as

in any social group,  there are roles enacted by individuals (Goffman, 1956; Parsons, 1951).  Welser

and Gleave further identify several important roles in online communities: local experts; answer

people; conversationalists; lurkers; fans; discussion artists; flame warriors; trolls; question person;

discussion person (Welser, Gleave, Fisher, & Smith, 2007).   In any online discussion, 'answer people'

are particularly important.  These individuals offer prompt and accurate information in response to

queries, with no expectation of recompense except perhaps in the form of accrued embodied

cultural capital which either confirms their existing status or elevates their standing within the

group.  Within the RBF, it also appears possible to accrue embodied cultural capital as a "question

person", by posing queries which draw on the lived experience of the group members, tacitly inviting

them to share this with the wider membership.  For example, mindful of the racial discussion

restrictions placed on participants of the RBF, I noted that a new member had received the following

admonition as part of the previously mentioned interaction concerning Dan Auerbach (figure 12).

Figure 14 below indicates the continuation of this interaction.



Jim Basnight "White rockers should leave the blues alone" Impossible. That's like saying that burgers should leave beef alone. Rock and Roll is derived cleanly from Electric Blues, pure and simple. The introduction of race into it is also disappointing, on an intelligent site like this.
Like · Reply · 24 August at 17:41 · Edited

Scott Dirks "The introduction of race into it"? It's disappointing that anyone thinks there was some point where race could somehow be removed from blues history.

Jim, please re-read (or read) the Blues Forum Mission Statement in the upper right hand corner of this page before posting again.
Like · Reply · 🖒 7 · 24 August at 18:08

Jim Basnight Will do
Like · Reply · 24 August at 18:09

*Figure 14 User castigated for mention of race and referred to normative Mission Statement*

Here, Basnight (2016) makes a fair, musicologically and ontologically sound statement regarding the

relationship between electric blues and rock & roll.  However, the forum administrator censures this,

referring Basnight back to the forum's Mission Statement which excludes discussion of non-African

Americans.  At the time of posting, Basnight was a new member to the group, and as mentioned

previously in the chapter, Dirks is a moderator of several years standing.  As a longer-standing

member of the group, I decided to post the following question (figure 15):

*Figure 15 Example of being a "question person" on the RBF*

The significance of the open question lies in the content and production context of the album being

referenced for opinion.  The *Hard Again* album was released in 1977, when Waters (1913-1983) was

64 years old.  The album marked the mid-point of Waters' 'comeback' period, and is described as

"…the culmination of Muddy's career, a modern and lasting interpretation of his achievement"

(Gordon, 2003, p. 251).  Certainly, Waters' barrel-chested roar was never better captured by modern

recording equipment, and the palpable excitement of the band transcends the RIAA curve to deliver

a tangible tenderness, confidence and undeniable strength and power in the performances of

material first recorded for the Chess and Aristocrat labels over 30 years previously.  The music

displays primal sexuality and groove in the same bars as complex, polyrhythmic good-time stomps.

Critically for the RBF, the band at this time was multi-racial.  Whilst Waters was clearly an African

American with roots in the deep south and its privations before moving to Chicago in the late 1940s,

his lead guitarist for this recording was Bob Margolin (1949-) a young white man who had been a

part of the psychedelic scene of the late 1960s (Gordon, 2003, p. 239).  In addition, the producer,

contributing guitarist (alongside John Primer), and prime mover for the album was Johnny Winter

(1944-2014), who was not only a white American blues-rock performer but also an albino.  In simple

terms, Winter's medical condition meant that he could not have been more physically antithetical to

an African American in terms of race – a problematic social concept which has been increasingly

challenged by anthropologists, sociologists and ethnographers (Boas, 1966; Gilroy, 2002; Pieterse,

1992; Searle, 1995; Smedley, 2007).

Within an hour, the first two replies below had been received.  Within 24 hours, the third response

below had been added:



**Quon Willis** This was the album that turned me on to the blues.
Unlike · Reply ·    10 · 1 September at 14:01

**Paul Vernon** Quon - what a damn good way to start! - It was his renaissance.
Following Electric Mud, of which the least said the better, and the patchy "After
The Rain", this album essentially launched the last tranche of his career, and
what a great period that was. The other two Blue Sky albums are really just as
good as HA, and as Muddy himself said in an interview (Rolling Stone?) "It
made my peepee hard again", hence the title. I'm so glad that this all happened
ffor him, for he surely deserved it, and as a result of those three albums, his
carer is remembered as being a success all the way through with only a very
few bad moments. Imagine how we would have viewed his career had the Blue
Sky albums NOT happened
Like · Reply ·    20 · 1 September at 14:23

**Paul Oscher** actually Live ar Mr Kellys was the album and the gig that
turned muddys career around it followed electric mud and after the rain
which were marshal chess idea and did not reflect the way muddy
played live ,both albums had most chess studio players and of course
with a psychedelic un muddy waters sound . Muddy didnt like the
albums Live at Mr kellys was back to the muddy waters sound and
actually has some of the best harp work that cotton has recorded he
recorded under the name joe denim and I t was at the mister kellys gig
21 days strait where muddy met willard alexander the agent that led him
to william morris agency and scott cameron and when chess was
disolving following the live at mr kellys release it was then that Johnny
winter supported muddy with the blues sky label but none of those
records in my opinion come even close to the work muddy did prior to
1968 on chess they are not a great place to start listening to muddy
waters but as long as you eventually wind up with the best of muddy
waters and the muddy real folk blues albums and newport and they call
me muddy waters and stovall recordings you will be ok because that
stuff is his best.
Unlike · Reply ·    19 · 2 September at 13:16 · Edited

*Figure 16: opening statements from the RBF in a discussion  regarding Muddy Waters' 1977 album 'Hard Again'*

These opening statements are significant for several reasons.  Firstly, the album itself clearly

transgresses the RBF restriction on discussing blues music recorded by non-African Americans by

virtue of a) Margolin's presence in the recording band as guitarist and b) Winter's presence as

participant and producer – facts that would certainly be known to the cognoscenti on the forum,

particularly the chief administrator, moderators, and many of the discussion contributors.  My own

status as a black performer in a 'traditional' style and as an early-career academic within the group

appears to circumvent this limitation, indicating exceptions to the normative rules being applied to

certain members of the forum such as Basnight (2016).  Secondly, Jontavious "Quon" Willis is a

young (22 years old at the time of writing) African American blues performer in the guitar-and-vocal

traditional style who has been valorised by the members of the RBF as well as the wider US blues

community and established players such as Taj Mahal for his authenticity, and for '…keeping the

blues alive' (Limnios, 2016; Matheis, 2016).  Here, he confirms that this multi-racial album from

Waters' latter years is the recording that "…turned me on to the blues" (Willis, 2016).  Clearly, in this

instance, that Willis is a black blues artist appreciating the work of white blues artists under the aegis

of a black performer is not problematic to the forum's chief administrator, highlighting one of

several paradoxical applications of the RBF's Mission Statement.  Thirdly, the forum's Chief

Administrator joins the conversation in response to Quon's post, emphasising the value of the *Hard*

*Again* album in the context of what he regards as the inferior work of *Electric Mud* (CRLS 4542, 1968)

and *After The Rain* (CRLS 4553, 1969) asserting that the return to the 'traditional' sound of the band

was what rescued Waters' legacy for posterity.  This positive and welcoming response from the most

senior member of the forum serves the purpose of legitimising the conversation for other users, 59

of whom 'like' the post, and 9 of whom 'love' it.   Fourthly, a comment is then posted by Paul

Oscher, himself a white American who played harmonica in Waters' band – initially on the *After the*

*Rain* album and as part of the touring and studio ensemble between 1967 and 1972 (Gordon, 2003,

p. 199).  Here, Oscher combines the roles of 'insider', 'local expert', 'answer person', and borderline

combative 'flame warrior' as a user who clearly has extensive embodied cultural capital by virtue of

being a person who has had direct contact and publically credited involvement with the artist under

discussion.  In short, whilst the Mission Statement is regularly invoked to silence discussion of mixed-

race or white blues artists (fig. 21), this deliberate testing of the boundaries on my part uncovered a

sliding scale of tolerance and even brought a recognised white blues player into the discussion who

further discusses the cultural capital and relative value of the Waters album in negative terms –

pointing backward to "…his best," material.  Of further interest is that as an "answer person" in this post (Welser et al., 2007), Oscher offers primary contextual detail from personal experience and understanding from direct interaction with Waters, which underlines his embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986).  That the 220 words of Oscher's response flow with almost zero punctuation and is dense with objective fact, primary data and subjective opinion makes his response potentially intimidating and confrontational (Oscher, 2016), but sets up the conversation for over 60 responses over the next 5 days.

Exchanges such as those described above in some cases lead to ***interpersonal relationships*** in the context of SNS, in that interactions which start in the relatively public space of a group discussion forum may be extended to the more private spheres of the individuals' personal profiles, and from there to the physical world.  The transformative element of technologically mediated communication means that individuals need not occupy the same physical space to communicate, resulting in what some analysts regard as *networked individualism* - a state where a person is the central feature of the various virtual communities in which they participate (Wellman et al., 2003).  Research also suggests that a proliferation of digital communication devices leads to networked collectivism, "…meaning that groups of people now network throughout the internet and related mobile media, creating a shared but distributed group identity" (Baym, 2010, p. 91).  Certainly, SNS have defined a middle ground between private interpersonal communications and more public exchanges within online communities.  These interactions transcend fears that computer-mediated communications (CMC) would collapse racial and social barriers alongside those of time and space at the expense of real-world interactions; fears which were raised a century ago with the proliferation of the telephone (Marvin, 1988).  Certainly, it would be difficult to encounter the range of participants in the RBF on a regular basis in real-space and real time with the regularity offered by the internet.

The absence of non-verbal signals in text-based computer-mediated communications also provides challenges in online interpersonal relationship building. As part of an online interaction, Joseph Walther indicates that participants "…adapt their linguistic and textual behaviours to the solicitation and presentation of socially revealing, relational behavior" (Walther, 1994, p. 465). In other words, individuals are apt to make larger or more controlled gestures as part of their online presentation of self. This is clearly illustrated by the conversation between Paul Oscher and myself which is evidenced in figure 17. As previously indicated, the group allowed me to make a contentious post concerning the *Hard Again* album, despite the multi-racial nature of the band. Oscher points to *Live at Mr Kelly's* being the turning point for Waters' blues career, omitting to mention that he is the featured harmonica player on this release. Several participants re-iterate their antipathy for the later recordings, however, and also their lack of tolerance for white blues-rockers, particularly Johnny Winter. With the specific intention of pushing the boundaries of the conversation, I suggest that should Waters have lived, he might produce material akin to that found on the *Muddy Waters 100* album. Briefly, this is an authorised tribute album which features new arrangements of material originally recorded by Waters during the 1940s and 1950s. The material is performed by a mixture of his old bands' alumni and "…pre-eminent [blues] contemporary artists who have embraced this music and given it its future" (muddywaters100.com, 2015). In the main, the material is re-arranged to feature new instruments including synthesisers and drum loops, as well as (clearly) new vocalists, both male and female. The album received generally favourable reviews with most critics noting the skill of vocalist and guitar player John Primer who had played on Waters' last recordings including *Hard Again*, and celebrating technical experimentation which echoed Waters' own transformative influence on blues music and blues culture (Farber, 2015; Hermes, 2015; Horowitz, 2015).

The suggestion that Waters would be making music that sounds other than what he was doing in the 1940s and 1950s was immediately polarising. As a member of the group, well-versed in the subject matter and with the distancing of CMC, I was not inhibited or intimidated by a group-member with arguably higher embodied cultural capital such as Oscher (Walther, 1996, p. 6), and so argued the

position, in opposition to the norms of the group, that Waters was a technologically and

sociologically progressive rather than traditional blues artist.   To demonstrate and activate his

cultural capital, Oscher drew on his first-hand experience of the artist – enriching the conversation

with biographical data.  The exchange was from a certain perspective an older, more experienced

hand attempting to subdue a younger commentator, but careful, respectful and persistent focus on

the point being made appeared to win the older musician around to the point being made (fig. 17)

> **Paul Oscher** Paul Oscher Tom Attah thank you i think youve now got a
> better understanding of what was happening with this great man and
> his music you can quote me on some of these facts ive added to your
> knowledge I believe you have a sincere love for the blues and its a
> pleasure making your aquaintance If you see im playing somewhere in
> th Uk please introduce yourself to me. by the way i lived in muddys
> house on the southside and shared the basement with otis Spann and i
> am now in the process of writing a book.
> Unlike · Reply ·     4 · 4 September at 21:04 · Edited

*Figure 17 Senior member of the group graciously accepts the point being made to him*

In this statement, Oscher emphasises his association with Waters by underlining his physical

proximity to the artist and further indicating his seniority and embodied cultural capital within the

group.  Also of interest is the lack of punctuation in Oscher's post, perhaps highlighting his focus on

substance and content in the writing over technical style.  I had been careful in the exchange not to

offer a stylistic *ad hominem* argument on this particular point, mindful that Oscher is a musician

rather than a grammar-focused academic.  This tacit, simple courtesy in the exchange was met with

appreciation by the Chief Administrator (fig. 18).

> **Paul Vernon** Thank you, one and all, for an intelligent, informed and well-
> tempered discussion..
> Like · Reply ·     5 ·
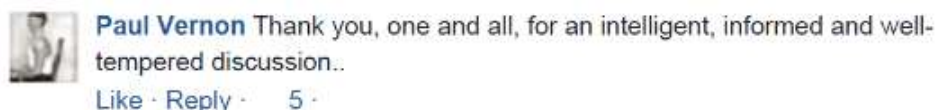
*Figure 18 Chief Forum Administrator thanks participants for a well-mannered discussion*

The significance here is that individuals who are geographically dispersed are able to engage in  a

discussion which concerns materials with significant cultural capital within the group – the Muddy

Waters *Hard Again* album.  A participant with considerable embodied cultural capital (Oscher) was

able to engage with an individual in another country (me) and to discuss clear ontological, objective

and subjective points concerning the constitution of the blues, and through a fair exchange, reach

the point where interpersonal interaction away from the main group is invited; Oscher subsequently

'friended' me personally and made the offer to interact in real space the next time that he is in the

UK - in every real sense initiating an interpersonal relationship via CMC.   In this way, the internet

and CMC facilitate discourse between two diverse members of the community, leading to (1) better

interpersonal understanding (2) a sharing of information concerning cultural materials within the

group and (3) publicity for a text which will further enhance the understanding of a major artist and

(4) facilitating a discussion about the persistence of the blues as a musical style and cultural practice

in the modern day.  Oscher also offered more enriching information to the conversation at this point

(fig. 19).



Paul Oscher here is another little fact I will contribute to this conversation .I was with Muddy when he met Johnny Winter JW opened up for us at the vulcan gas co in austin texas in 1968 johnny could play muddys open tuning stuff very well which was very rare at the time. When they told muddy johnny was white muddy qualified that and said no hes an albino Muddy thought Jw was a black albino because muddy didnt know white folks had albinos later he learned the truth this is the last fact I am contributing to this thread because i have to save stuff for my book but i had a good time here thank y'all for lettin me add my two cents.

Unlike · Reply ·     14 · 4 September at 22:00

*Figure 19: Paul Oscher offers more evidence of embodied cultural capital*

The above statement drew the main interaction on the conversation to a close.  What is particularly

significant is that the comment here from a white blues performer and alumnus of Waters' band

returned to my initial point; the discourse theme of race.   Whilst this was discussed in chapter 4, the

racial theme in blues music and blues culture is central to the coherence of the Real Blues Forum's

normative practices.  With this in mind, this chapter now turns to analysis of the RBF's often referred

to code of conduct, the forum's Mission Statement.

6.1.2 The *Real Blues Forum* main discussion area and Mission Statement

Chapter 6: **Online audience** – *The Real Blues Forum*

As indicated in chapter 5, the RBF has a main discussion area to which all members have access, and a set of sub forums to which access is limited to a subset of the membership. These are not unique members – in other words, the membership of one sub-forum is often duplicated in another. For example, I am a member of all 12 sub-forums. The average percentage of the RBF who have access is 3.63%. These sub-forums and their membership are illustrated in table 1 below.

| Real Blues Forum (total membership 12,682) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sub forum name | Forum type | membership | % of total RBF |
| UK Blues 78s | CLOSED | 578 | 4.56% |
| The RBF Book Room | CLOSED | 621 | 4.90% |
| The RBF Paul Oliver Library | CLOSED | 320 | 2.52% |
| RBF Discographical Research | SECRET | 211 | 1.66% |
| RBF – the AFBF Files | CLOSED | 642 | 5.06% |
| RBF Flicks | CLOSED | 505 | 3.98% |
| RBF Documents | CLOSED | 390 | 3.08% |
| RBF – Max Hoffner's Art | CLOSED | 429 | 3.38% |
| RBF – Tano Ro's photo archive | SECRET | 367 | 2.89% |
| RBF Reference | CLOSED | 314 | 2.48% |
| RBF Exchange | SECRET | 487 | 3.84% |
| RBF Magazine Archive | CLOSED | 658 | 5.19% |

*Table 7: RBF Sub-forums and membership*

The RBF Mission Statement is the set of rules which codifies the shared practices of the online community (Baym, 2010, p. 75). Whilst the Mission Statement governs all activity on the RBF, its most visible and consistent work is to regulate the activity in the main discussion area, since this is where the majority of exchanges take place. As mentioned above, this is the statement which sets the boundaries for what may or may not be discussed on the forum, how this is policed, and by whom. Disagreements about topic, tone and behaviour are most often settled by direct reference to the Mission Statement, as below.

*Figure 20: A "rogue" post is identified as breaching the forum's terms before being removed from the forum*

The article concerns the recording sessions for the Seagal's album, *Mojo Priest* (Steamroller/Ark21

186-810-096-2) on which the four elder blues performers performed 30-second cameo bonus-tracks.

Seagal's primary career was as a martial artist and action-film actor, and his involvement with blues

music and blues culture was met in many circles with incredulity and derision, as above.  Press

releases for the album emphasised Seagal's reverence for the blues and his desire to unite the remaining elder statesmen of the genre on record before their passing (Mitch Schneider & Nelson, 2005).    It is possible to view this altruistically and without cynicism; it is also possible to observe this as an attempt to acquire embodied cultural capital in the same way that the original poster indicates.  The significance, however, for this project is to note both (a) that Seagal's race is called to attention, and (b) that the third post  makes almost hysterical reference to the Mission Statement. The post was removed from the forum within 20 minutes of being uploaded.

In the analysis of the RBF Mission Statement (fig. 21) and text and talk interactions on the SNS site, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used (Barker, 2008; Fairclough, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Two particular perspectives were employed; the Foucauldian, which posits that language is related to thought through regimes of truth, and that power is conceptualised in language as a function of these regimes.  This approach suggests that discourse analysis can reveal institutions and their attendant power structures at work as they constitute the reader and speaker textually (Barker, 2008, p. 154). Additionally, the Lacanian post-structuralist perspective is adopted, which indicates that language is a function of desire, which powerfully constructs the world and identities (ibid).

This post, permanently pinned to the top of the forum represents the code of conduct for the group, and is the FAQ which is offered as a response to members who appear to be intentionally or unintentionally violating or threatening to violate the fundamental terms of group membership.

---

***THE MISSION STATEMENT:***

*The Real Blues Forum is a private forum dedicated exclusively to the appreciation of blues music as played and sung by African Americans. Many of us listen to, study, discuss, and appreciate later off-shoots of the African-American blues tradition, and we share those enthusiasms elsewhere, where they will be appreciated. We ask that you do as well. Posts that are outside the Real Blues Forum parameters will be deleted without notice. Posters who ignore the guidelines will be banned.*

*Other things that are not permitted on the RBF:*

- *Political discussions*
- *Religious discussions*
- *Discussions of the RBF policies*
- *Personal insults and/or general bad behavior*
- *Discussions of 'newly discovered photos of Robert Johnson' (unless prior approval is obtained from RBF admins*
- *Anything else deemed disruptive or inappropriate by the RBF admin team*

*Posts that violate these rules will be removed, and repeat offenders will be banned.*
*We use the standard blues discographies as the parameters for posts in the RBF (see Note 1 below). If still in doubt, please ask BEFORE posting.*

***Note 1:*** *The discographies referred to above are: 'Blues & Gospel Records 1890-1943', by Robert M.W. Dixon, John Godrich and Howard Rye; 'The Blues Discography, 1943-1970', by Les Fancourt and Bob McGrath; and 'The Blues Discography, 1971-2000', by Robert Ford and Bob McGrath. African American blues artists who have recorded since 2000 are also included.*

***Note 2:*** *We don't waste time and space here debating what is or isn't 'real' or appropriate for the RBF. (see Note 1). Such threads will be deleted.*

***Note 3:*** *Members of this group are very generous with photos, scanned documents, unissued recordings etc. Please don't abuse this generosity by sharing such things outside of the Forum without asking permission.*

***Note 4:*** *When posting photos in this group, please observe the basic courtesy of stating the photographer's name, and the date and place of the photo, or say specifically if these are not known.*

***Note 5:*** *We have sub-groups dedicated to particular aspects of this Forum's interests, and also related subjects that may be outside of the RBF parameters. If interested, or if you have any other questions about the RBF, please ask a forum administrator:*

- *Paul Vernon (RBF Majordomo)*
- *Scott Dirks [names of other admins redacted]*

*"The Blues is waaay more than music. It is history. The true musical history of a powerful people who suffered extensive and profound, oppression and indignation...and still came up singing. I still find that amazing!" (see the thread about Muddy with Joe Turner, George Smith, Big Mama).*
*A wonderful quote from Geneva Norman.*

*now, WATCH THIS; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EI3QE2E0vjE*

---

*Figure 21: The Real Blues Forum Mission Statement*

As explained in Chapter 2, in the analysis of discourse fragments, ***transitivity*** deals with what is

being said and the way that these words present a version of reality, whilst ***modality*** concerns how

the statements represent social relations – typically, between the 'speaker' and the addressee (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 27-28). In other words – what is being said, who is saying it, and how. Considerations of these two aspects of text and computer-mediated talk allows analysts to infer the contribution of a specific textual fragment to the discursive flow, in order to capture the qualitative range of what can be said and how it is said in one or more discourse strands (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 51).

In transitive terms, the Mission Statement makes powerful indications of what it considers to be "real" blues; in this case, '…blues music as played and sung by African Americans'. There is no indication given as to why this might differ in content from blues music as played and sung by the non-African Americans from the same demographic profile who sang in the same temporal moment and whose work was separated by marketing rather than content (Abbott & Seroff, 2007; Miller, 2010). Immediately, this refers to the issues described by the discourse fragments in chapter 4 which seem to exclude white people from singing and/or playing blues music of any value. The erection of this ontological barrier predicated on race immediately makes for an incomplete view of blues musical and blues cultural history, which can be viewed at very least as segregationist (Miller, 2010). The conflation of "real" in the sense of "genuine" with race, specifically blackness, plays into an already problematic discourse theme of authenticity in blues music and blues culture which limits the ability for the music to develop diachronically (for this audience) and also places real restrictions on performers operating in the present day (S. A. King, 2011; Ryan, 2011). 'Authenticity' in popular music, as described in chapter 2, is a problematic and contentious notion, largely based around constructions and contingent notions of reality, truth and power-knowledge (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008; Potter, 1999). For this project, however, such contingent notions and conceptions are of central importance. Specifically, who is empowered – or believes that they are empowered - to define blues music and blues culture in the digital sphere, and by what means do they do so?

From the Mission Statement alone, it seems that rather than being a living tradition, blues music for certain of the more vocal members of the RBF becomes an exercise in conformity based on the subjective taxonomy of a secondary audience.   This is further evidenced by an exceptionally limited discussion of female blues performers on the forum during the period of study.  The effects of this on current practitioners in the style are discussed in greater detail in chapter 8.

As illustrated above, these rules are fairly rigidly policed in terms of the removal of posts and posters.  This is the first of several contradictory elements to the Mission Statement. Whilst seeming to invite discussion, the parameters of discourse amongst members are extremely rigid.  A brief list of outlawed topics and themes then follows which are, again, problematic.  Contextual, sociological links between blues music and politics are consistent throughout the history of the music; WC Handy's *Memphis Blues* – one of the first published pieces of music to be called blues - was originally subtitled "Mr Crump" as part of an eponymous Mayoral campaign tune in 1912 (Muir, 2010, p. 109). Following this, the blues regularly produced explicit political statements, such as Big Bill Broonzy's 1951 commentary on lingering Jim Crow mentality in *Get Back; "If you're white, that's alright/if you're brown, stick around/ But if you're Black, Oh Brother – get back, get back , get back"* (NOT2CD401, 2011). Similarly, during the 1930s, the blues were the content of published material contained in the *Negro Songs of Protest* collection, presented as the cultural response of an aggrieved and anxious negro proletariat  (Gellert & Siegmeister, 1936).  This is before considering other material such as Howlin Wolf's *Coon on the Moon* which sets out a history of repression and slavery before closing with the prophetic verse *"You know they call us, 'coon'/Say we didn't have no sense/ You gon' wake up one mornin' An the ol' 'coon' will be your president,"* (Wolf, 50045, 1973) – which might be considered in 2016 as a reference to President Barack Obama.

The links between blues music and religion are widely known and discussed; the easiest reference here is to the number of blues performers who either began or ended their careers as men of the church such as Son House or Ishman Bracey. This precludes consideration of the sheer weight of

material which doubled as bawdy house music on Saturday night before being transfigured into worship music on Sunday morning, or the number of musicians such as Blind Lemon Jefferson, Willie Johnson and Willie McTell who mixed sacred and secular themes in blues music over the course of their careers (Oakley, 1983).  The Mission Statement's list of transgressive behaviour then becomes more general to include a ban on discussing the Mission Statement itself, before extending to "…anything else deemed disruptive by the admin team".

The modality of the early part of the statement is clearly designed to underline the authority of the RBF team and to constitute the reader as a subject.  The persistent use of "will" as a compelling verb alongside repeated reminders of sanctions of exclusion underlines the speaker's power over the reader.  The RBF is positioned as an authoritative group, and inclusion in this is presented as being desirable.  In other words, the RBF is presented as a knowledgeable gathering, despite the paradoxical and contradictory nature of its rules.  The forum is also presented as a group of influential 'insiders' within blues circles.

Although it is not clear from this statement, the suggestion that posters should consult an admin member is also problematic, since there is no procedure provided either in the statement or anywhere else on the forum for actually completing this action.

The statement then sets out what is considered to be "real" blues, by referencing the "standard blues discographies" – "'Blues & Gospel Records 1890-1943', by Robert M.W. Dixon, John Godrich and Howard Rye; 'The Blues Discography, 1943-1970', by Les Fancourt and Bob McGrath; and 'The Blues Discography, 1971-2000', by Robert Ford and Bob McGrath. African American blues artists who have recorded since 2000 are also included."  With this, the statement becomes extremely problematic.  As demonstrated by the survey data collected for this project, the membership of the RBF is overwhelmingly white and male.  With a few exceptions - and the number is decreasing constantly through the ageing and passing of members who participated in the 1960s blues revival as either performers, audience members or cultural workers – most of the RBF members have a

wholly mediated experience of blues music and blues culture.  The purpose of the RBF is to discuss

the cultural output of black people.  The parameters for inclusion in that discussion are set by three

books written by white people.  Further, the introduction of one of the foundational texts makes the

following admission:

> "What is a 'blues' or a 'gospel' record? How have we decided what to include and what to leave out? … The dividing line has been hard to draw, and around this line ***decisions have had to be somewhat arbitrary***, particularly so since we have not of course been able to hear every single record concerned.

> In previous editions, choirs such as the Fisk Jubilee Singers were generally excluded since although they employed African American materials and musical devices, these were arranged to appeal to a predominantly white audience. For this fourth edition the scope has been considerably widened, adding about 150 new artists. These include the Fisk Jubilee Singers and similar groups, a number of artists who fall on the borderline between blues and popular music."

> (Robert M. W. Dixon et al., 1997, p. 4), italics and emphasis mine.

Here, Dixon, Godrich and Rye admit to the arbitrary nature of their decisions for inclusion and

illustrate this by the inclusion of the Fisk Jubilee singers for this particular volume.  This further

exacerbates the paradox at the heart of the RBF's Mission Statement in that the foundational text

admits its own fallibility.

Finally, the statement above attempts to distinguish between "…blues and popular music."  The

definition of popular music is, like blues, contested.  Writer Chris Cutler for instance problematises

the term as being (1) popular by numbers, (2) popular *by* the people or (3) popular as designed *for*

the people (Cutler, 1989).  In any of these cases, blues was clearly popular music amongst its primary

audience at the beginning of the 20th century – so much so that it needed to be marketed as a

specific category in order that its fans could identify and purchase it as 'race records'.  Similarly,

Mamie Smith's breakthrough success in 1920 with *Crazy Blues* (Okeh 4169, 1920) was based on the

song's popularity as measured by sales, and the rush to sign similar blues performers was based on

audience demand for the style.

Building on this troublesome and potentially fallacious distinction, the Mission Statement makes

reference to "…the African American blues tradition," which was itself (a) in part, a stylised

performance in pursuit of entertainment, and (b) a diachronic developmental process rather than a

single synchronic product.  For example; foundational Blues Mafioso and taste-setter James McKune

(1910-1971) derided Muddy Waters and Louis Jordan as "ersatz pop" during the 1950s (Hamilton,

2007, pp. 184-185) as part of his crusade to establish an appreciation amongst a larger audience for

what he called blues with "greatness" (ibid.).  This particular crusade was initiated by Sam Charters'

book "The Country Blues" which set the scene for the blues revival of the 1960s (Charters, 1959).

For McKune, however, Charters had only dealt with artists who were commercially popular, rather

than those McKune considered to be aesthetically pleasing (Hamilton, 2007, p. 183).  As a result,

McKune contributed a set of newspaper columns and liner notes as well as overseeing the creation

of a group of enthusiasts described in Chapter 1 who were extremely influential in blues music and

blues culture through the 1960s blues revival.   In so doing, McKune emphasised a conflict between

ontology and aesthetic value that resonates within the discourse, and that can be easily identified in

the internet spaces of the RBF.  For example:



**Paul Oscher**
20 September at 22:24

Hey got an idea most of us will acknoledge that the blues as we know it ,is
having a hardway to go as far the audiences seems to be constantly getting
older and not going out or buying cds people have suggested that the blues
needs to be rebranded because of all the crap out there that use blues to
describe their genre .i thing the rebranding needs to be for the crap ie hybrid
blues or indie blues , rock blues, hendrix blues Srv blues ,the only way the
blues will stay alive as i know it to be is through young musicians like quon
willis who actually plays good enough for me to pay to see him and i havent
felt that way in over 30 years how about a litlle discusion and if possible
despite the guide lines to this site stay away from crow jim
po

*Figure 22: A statement at the beginning of a discussion on the RBF*

Here, a blues musician and former member of Muddy Waters' band appears to confuse ontology

(what the blues objectively is) with aesthetics (what he finds subjectively attractive), by being very

critical of what the Mission Statement calls "…later offshoots of the blues."  Oscher is clear that, for

him, other types of blues beyond his preferred style are "crap", and that these are "hybrid blues".

This is to potentially misunderstand the developmental nature of what he appears to regard as

"pure" blues – specifically, that the electric blues was a development in style that made specific use

of recording and performance technology in the form of: electrified instruments such as the Fender

telecaster guitar and Gibson valve amplifier; PA technology for the specific sound of vocals and more

fundamentally for the blues, the sound of Little Walter's harmonica; the electric bass; of course, the

microphone.  The discussion which followed contained other (apparently) older, white males

agreeing that "…real blues was dead", and deriding current practitioners;

> **Dylan Jones** Very few blues artists today are blues ; period . They market "
> blues-rock " as blues , but most of it really stinks . Not much originality or
> innovation . Sad , but the public eats it up . i. e. Bonamassa and Tedesci
> Trucks . These are shitty rock bands .
> Like · Reply ·    2 · Yesterday at 01:09
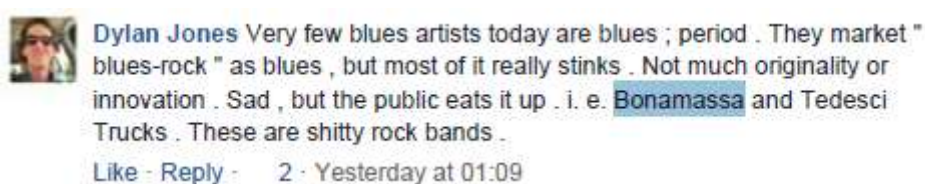
*Figure 23 A negative comment from an RBF member*

In keeping with the tradition of dismissal of blues-rock players, special criticism was reserved for Joe

Bonamassa and Eric Clapton.

> **Rick D Leonard** I shake my head when i see festivals headlining aging melanin
> deficient Rockers trying to follow the Bonamassarati down the paved 'Blue"
> highway. I bang my head on the nearest concrete when I see James Cotton's
> guitarist down billed from a band advertising itself as 'country rock and blues'.
>
> I understand festivals are trying to fill seats, but they really should drop the
> Blues moniker and rebrand themselves as 'music' festivals.
> Like · Reply ·    7 · 21 September at 16:30 · Edited

*Figure 24: Another negative comment from an RBF member*

The paradox here is that individuals who were witnesses to the blues revival appear not to see the

irony in their rejection of the development of blues music and blues culture into the present day.

Whilst B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters were all vocal in their support for young, white

players, RBF members appear not to recognise the critical role that these performers played in the

perpetuation, dissemination and development of the style.   This longing for the 'authentic essence'

of blues, whereby the music is in some way unmediated wilfully overlooks the clear incursion of

technology in the production, capture and distribution of the music as a commodity (Moore, 2001,

pp. 74-75).  Not all participants were convinced by what might reasonably be regarded as a

conservative view, however.



Jim Basnight What I get from conversations like this is that the folks being referred to took huge risks, often facing death to advance a musical language and idiom which has grown from an illegal activity in the "Delta" to the dominant trait of our species' precious gift of music in less than 100 years. This while we sit at our phones and keyboards pissing about what musical square in a constantly advancing and expanding road is the place we all should congregate, if we are to be anointed as reverent to the "Blues" god.
Unlike · Reply ·     2 · 21 September at 22:35 · Edited

*Figure 25: A frustrated comment from an RBF member*

This post highlights that the blues that the RBF venerates was itself a music of transition, innovation

and inclusion.  Oscher was himself part of Waters' band – a white man playing "black" blues – who

appears not to see the irony in rejecting other white players' developments in the field since 1970.

Generally, however, it seems that established writers and thinkers on the blues do not become

involved in such clearly divisive discussions.  Writers such as David Evans, Elijah Wald, Bob Hall and

Bruce Conforth are conspicuous by their absence in this type of polarising and potentially polemic

exchange.  This may, in part explain why the restricted sub-forums have relatively low populations;

those who have access to these areas are more obviously considered 'insiders' and tend not to pose

questions such as Oscher's which confuse aesthetics with an essentialist ontology.

The centrality of race to the RBF's project is highlighted by another regular discussion on the forum,

which concerns racial ownership of blues.  Usually the discussion features a reference to the work of

Corey Harris discussed more fully in chapter 3, as below in figure 28:

**Paul Vernon**
25 August at 14:11

Why is it that a Mexican can proudly proclaim Nortena as Mexican music without any objection or accusations of racism from white people, but a Black man in America is called a racist for simply claiming his own cultural heritage, the blues? When an eastern European jew asserts that klezmer is his music, there is no outcry from other whites and when a Polish man claims that polka is his heritage it is taken as a matter of fact. To take it further, none of these groups are pressured to accept and validate outsiders. Yet, when Black people have the audacity to proclaim their own history and culture, it is seen as being 'divisive' and 'racist.' Why is that?
#bluesisBlackmusic

Like          Comment

Paul Vernon, Larry Hoffman and 92 others

Paul Vernon Corey Harris posted this earlier today, and of course, I agree with both his views and the validity of his question Discuss, if you wish, BUT be pre-warned that shouting matches will be deleted without warning. Keep those pistols holstered, we are all adults here

*Figure 26: The RBF Chief Administrator launches a discussion on the forum*

The following discussion features members making one of several claims, as mentioned in Chapter 4.

(1) Blues can only truly be played by black people (2) blues is now universal and no longer the property of African Americans (3) claims for universalism deny the political history of the music (4) there are many fine blues musicians who are neither black nor American.  Persistent and visible was an essentialist perspective which is illustrated by the below – which, again, features a denial of the validity of what the poster – in this case, the Chief Administrator - calls blues-rock:

> **Paul Vernon** The plain fact is that current Blues-Rock, with tis roots in the early 1960s is and always has been a very reliable money machine, and therefore those Caucasions who perform within that arena are defensive of their livelyhood. So,, in the final analisys, it comes down to defending income and fame - hence the racism. Now, this is NOT, by any means true of all white performers working this area. I would site Charlie Musselwhite, for instance, as one who is their for the music. There are many more, with thise credentials, and you know who they are. In this country, my adopted home, but not my spiritual one, (North London still has my heart in its safekeeping), the recent political events surrounding the rise of Donald T. Rump have exposrted a pretty nasty underbelly in American society, indicating that the struggle for equality is not, by any means, over, nor is it likely to be in my lifteime. So perhaps we ought not to be surprised that racism-within-music exists, but that does not stop us from fighting it. You all know well enough where the RBF stands in all this, and it will not shift its position.
>
> Like · Reply ·   4 · 25 August at 15:19
>
> **Greg Bode** Been going to Blues shows for more than 30 years.The audience is always mostly white.Where is this racism towards black music you speak of?

*Figure 27: The Chief Administrator explains his antipathy towards Blues Rock*

Here, the poster makes a confusing and contradictory set of claims around the nature of blues rock and its motivations.  Although not mentioned by name, most often these claims are made against Eric Clapton, forgetting that it is the \*audience\* who pays the musician, rather than the musicians wilfully stealing from performers with less visibility.  As has been evidenced many times, performers such as Clapton, Peter Green, The Beatles and the Rolling Stones were instrumental in the publicising of the music beyond a very limited audience; it was these musicians who sought out African American performers to guarantee that they were financially recognised and compensated, and it was the white blues-rockers who paid respect to their influences whilst majority white audiences were largely oblivious to the style during the 1960s.  Also missing from any discussion of this type is any sense of agency on the part of the African Americans under discussion.  In other words, that the musicians in question chose to venerate their white protégés seems unimportant to the forum members.  That Eric Clapton was singled out for praise by Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Buddy Guy and Freddie King appears to be unimportant; that Joe Bonamassa pays frequent visual and musical tribute to Howlin Wolf, Muddy Waters, Albert King and was specifically valorised by B.B. King again, seems too problematic for discussion or consideration.  Absent from consideration is the role that Willie Dixon played in actively seeking out musicians in London during the American Folk

and Blues Festival tours of the 1960s to sell them his songs and encourage them to cover the

material (W. Dixon & Snowden, 1989; Schwartz, 2007).  The most consistent image of black people in

general and blues players in particular is one of embattled dignity, a people unable to speak except

through their music and with the help of a sympathetic white cognoscenti.  The contempt for

"outsider" blues fans is rarely concealed, and members often seem to engage in further rounds of

distinction in attempting to confirm their own importance and embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu,

1986, 2010).  This is illustrated by the excerpt below:



*Figure 28: RBF poster emphasises his "insider" status and levels of embodied cultural capital*

Rarely is there any indication of the complexities of cultural appropriation, or acknowledgement of

the processes of enculturation that might legitimately explain the inclusion of non-black or non-

American performers to the style.  As will be illustrated in chapter 8, this essentialist attitude in

some cases confuses performers who are valorised by the RBF, and in other cases has limiting effects

on performers who are attempting to work within the style.

## 6.2 The theme of Authenticity

The "real" in the title of the *Real Blues Forum* provides a problematic ontological statement.

Contextually, "real" in this scenario connotes "genuine", "authentic", and "true".  In other words,

the RBF is setting up a taxonomy of blues music and blues culture whereby its chosen definitions of

the cultural practice and its attendant products and media is correct, and other definitions are by

binary opposition, mistaken.  Baldly, the members of the RBF know what real blues is – and their

definition excludes "…later offshoots of the blues". The problem here comes with a definition of

blues which is based entirely on a racial qualification, but does not offer any musicological

parameters of definition.  Nor does this extremely restrictive RBF definition accept that the blues of

the 20th century was  a developmental style which was in part mediated by technology.  The vocal

and acoustic guitar blues of Son House or Charley Patton were not the same as the electrified

ensembles fronted by Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf at Chess in the 1950s.  The gospel-derived

and inflected recordings of Blind Lemon Jefferson in the 1920s were not the same as the sexually

charged odes to masculinity of Lightnin' Hopkins during the 1960s.  Bessie Smith's transformational

work as a performer in the 1930s was not the same as Etta James' feminism-inflected work in the

1960s.  This rejection of technological mediation or musicology prevents the RBF from conceiving

that more people in more places heard more music from more diverse sources and legitimately took

these up as an influence in the perpetuation and development of new forms.  In short, the vocal

members of the RBF who are present in the main discussion areas do not seem to accept any

theories of diachronism, development, acculturation, or musical diaspora.  By valorising race over

musicology and willingly separating both from a historical and sociological context, the RBF Mission

Statement falls into a trap which is best described as "…the creation of the *effect* of

authenticity…[as] a matter of culturally determined convention, not an expression of essence"

(Auslander, 1998, pp. 6, italics mine).  As Allan F. Moore indicates "'…[a]uthenticity' is a matter of

interpretation which is made and fought for from within a cultural, and thus, historicised position.  It

is ascribed, not inscribed" (Moore, 2002, p. 210).  In this way, the 22-year old Jontavious "Quon"

Willis who has not released any commercial material is a "real" blues artist within the RBF ideology,

and Johnny Winter, who produced Muddy Waters' final albums and enjoyed a decades-long career

as a performer is a blues-rock interloper.  The living O.B. Buchana, an artist who headlined the 2015

Mississippi Blues Fest – a festival organised in the traditional homelands of the blues *by* black

Americans *for* black Americans – is less of a blues player than the deceased B.B. King. Joe

Bonamassa, an award-winning artist valorised by Buddy Guy and B.B. King, two performers fairly

regarded as the longest-lived examples of the electric blues tradition, is continually and

unrelentingly vilified as a fake and a trespasser in the tradition, despite his continual and vocal

tribute to the past masters of the form. In short, for the RBF Mission Statement and some of its

more vocal members, the blues is a purely racial project. To invert and paraphrase Big Bill Broonzy –

"…if you ain't black, get back".

Philosopher Michel Foucault defines this contingent and self-perpetuating certainty as a "régime of

truth", an ideological system in which "[t]ruth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power

which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it"

(Foucault, Fontana, & Pasqiuno, 1980). In this way Foucault describes truth – such as it is deployed

by the RBF – as something which is produced as a result of relations of power. Further, these

relations are policed by rules and constraints such as those set out in the Mission Statement which

govern what is true or "real", and maintained by institutions and individuals who work to support

this contingent truth. In this reading, knowledge is placed in service of power and so becomes

ideology, but the incomplete worldview of the RBF leads to an unstable knowledge-base such as is

expressed by the mission statement - which in turn, leads to a fallacious and contradictory ideology.

In line with Foucault's suggestion of contingent truth (Foucault et al., 1972; Foucault et al., 1980), a

postmodernist perspective suggests that there is no fixed or true objective reality beyond that which

is constructed as an invention of tradition (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983), and blues researchers in the

course of their work have admitted that "…my very definition of authenticity was, like all definitions

of authenticity, based on a mix of prevailing myths and prejudices invented in the absence of actual

experience" (Grazian, 2003, p. 12). Further, the Mission Statement of the RBF confirms the

suggestion in the literature that "[authenticity] can be the projection of one's dreams, stereotyped

images and expectations" (Wang, 1999, p. 351).

## 6.3 Summarising the general discussion area of the RBF

In summarising the above, a close reading of the Mission Statement and several lengthy discussions conducted in the main area of the RBF revealed the following dominant and persistent textual themes for coding: (1) race (2) authority (3) authenticity.  Whilst increasingly scholars view race as a social construction with no basis in biology (Boas, 1966; Pieterse, 1992; Searle, 1995; Smedley, 2007), that construction continues to have real effects in terms of essentialised representation and racism (Fanon, 2008; Gilroy, 2002). Race is also remarkably central to the RBF project, and is very closely tied to notions of authenticity.  Implicit in the textual coding indicated here as well as in the topics of discussion are the nature of power relations.  Vocal RBF members who subscribe to the ideology that only a certain type of blues is "real" similarly display antipathy toward any contradictory voices or institutions; as demonstrated by the survey, the membership of the forum is overwhelmingly white.  Certified education in terms of ethnomusicology, history, or sociology is generally frowned upon with a distinct air of anti-intellectualism where it does not support the views of the forum in the main discussion area, and institutions such as the Grammy awards or International Blues Foundation Awards are dismissed when they do not fall in line with the tastes of these RBF members.  Certainly, the recipients of awards who are non-black are dismissed as 'inauthentic'.

Although geographically and temporally dispersed, the internet allows the membership to cohere ideologically and congregate at the forum.  This facilitates a gathering of academic talent and experience whose advantage is that there is a potentially rich source of expertise and perspective on offer to polite enquirers, each other,  or other researchers.  Some of the members of the forum have international reputations and are extremely gracious.  Several of these members are of extended years and so have a limited ability to travel, but seem to make use of the forum to converse, particularly in the sub-forums which exclude the noisier and more polemic members of the group.

Generally, these members appear to adopt a "lurker" personality on the forum in that they only very occasionally make posts or participate in discussions – and certainly never seem to become embroiled in the simplistic denigration of blues-rock which characterises the more lengthy discussions in the main forum area.

In short; one of the most populous and active blues forum in SNS has a flawed central ideology which appears to conflate race with authenticity in a way that is problematic to many users. However, this does not override the facility for discussion, engagement and exchange that is potentially provided digitally by the forum away from the main area.  The way that the members make use of the facility seems to confirm that the internet, CMC and SNS do not necessarily change the nature of the discussion themes, but does allow a greater number of people to participate in or observe more closely the discussion taking place.

When considering the sub-forums, as mentioned in chapter 3, the tone and behaviour of members is far more considered, erudite and polite.  Without access to specific membership data, the best estimate is that only 4-6% of RBF members have access to these areas. It is here that useful research materials such as academic papers, sound recordings and video recordings are stored and shared, with personally collected documents often offered freely.  Complete runs of long out-of-print magazines and fanzines such as *Blues Unlimited* are made available, and the centralisation of these materials assists blues scholars and researchers in their practice, as noted in chapter 3.  Posts in these areas are less frequent but of greater length, and topics of discussion are more tightly focused on discographical matters, identifying photographic images, historical concerns, and generally focussing on the media and materials rather than on the less focused ontological ideas which dominate the main discussion area.

## 6.4 Summary and Conclusion

Despite the paradoxical and contradictory nature of several parts if the Mission Statement, the power relations within the RBF are remarkably clear.  There is power of "insider" forum members

over "outsiders", demonstrated by the limited membership of the sub-forums which contain

objectified cultural capital; there is power exercised by the forum administrators, brought to bear

when ideological lines are transgressed by forum members; there is power wielded by those with

embodied cultural capital over those less visible on the forum; by weight of numbers there is power

of men over women on the RBF; and finally – and most obviously – there is power exercised by

white people over black.  Whilst on the one hand, members of the RBF valorise "…blues music as

played and sung by African Americans" (Vernon, 2011b), this does not extend to crediting the

performers with agency, nor to perceiving the blues as a process connected to its environment or

primary audience, rather than an abstracted product produced by essentialised performers.

Conservative, reductionist and romanticised views of blues music and blues culture have a number

of effects on contemporary practitioners in the field, and these are discussed in greater depth in

chapter 8.

The following chapter presents a summary analysis of the survey data gathered by the project.  This

quantitative data aims to complement the qualitative data and analysis of this chapter, as part of a

mixed-methods research project.

## Chapter 7: Survey data

Internet ethnographer Nancy Baym indicates pertinent issues with gathering data concerning the impact of digital media on people's lives; chiefly, that many surveys "…divide users into categories based on whether or not they use the internet or how much they use it in comparison to one another" (Baym, 2010, p. 92).  For this reason, and mindful of the belief that online activity has a direct impact on real-world occurrences (Lysloff, 2003), I included questions concerning how respondents attitudes' to performers and willingness to attend live blues music shows had been influenced positively or negatively by on-line interactions.  The impact on performers in terms of valorisation and canonisation is discussed in greater detail in chapter 8.

The survey was publicised (1) online, on the Real Blues Forum (RBF), which at that time had a total of 12,712 members; I was assisted in this by the forum's Chief Administrator (CA) encouraging members to participate (2) online, on my own Facebook artist page which has 1,757 followers (3) online, on my own artist Twitter feed which has 619 followers (4) in physical blues communities as part of my performance practice between June and September 2015, a total of 21 concerts in the UK and mainland Europe. In addition to the RBF CA, online users who are podcasters, bloggers and radio show hosts also publicised the link to the survey in their own online spaces.  Since the object of exploration concerned the persistence and proliferation of blues music and blues culture on the internet, respondents  could only engage with the survey through digital means.

There were a total of 512 responses.  The survey was open between 28th May and 30th September 2015, a total of 4 months and 3 days.  This period coincided with the summer blues festival season, and so was a good opportunity to publicise the survey as part of my performance practice.  This meant that I could directly address audiences with the intention of widening the spread of respondents.  There was positive engagement from the Real Blues Forum, with several members reporting that they had publicised the survey beyond the forum's boundaries.  The main spike of responses came through the month of June, with 400 of the total responses received over the

opening three weeks of the survey.  Response activity declined through July and August, with the final 16 responses received in September.  The challenge here was that those invited to participate at concerts or conference then needed to remember to complete the survey online.  Although some individuals did follow up on the invitation via email or through social media, these numbers were very low.  I was able to distinguish the online invitees from the real-world invitees by using two different collector URLs.

It is not possible to accurately gauge the total size of the blues community's population.  Not all blues fans attend concerts, and not all blues fans are necessarily online.  Of those who do engage with blues music and blues culture online, not all do so visibly or vocally – known as "lurking" behaviour (Baym, 2010, pp. 87-88). In order to decide whether 512 responses is a representative sample, I have used the size of the RBF membership for guidance since (a) that is the primary online ethnographic site for the study (b) there is a clear indication of the community's population (c) the members of the forum self-identify as fans of blues music and blues culture, and (d) the members there were very responsive to the call to participate, with many signalling that they had completed the survey within the first few days of invitation.  With this in mind, 512 responses in a population of 12,712 generates a 95% confidence level with a 4.2% margin of error, which is within the acceptable limits (3-5%) for a research project of this nature (Denscombe, 2010, pp. 47-48).

The 32 questions in the survey focused on how blues fans use the internet to experience and discover blues music and blues culture, with specific reference to live performances and blues-related events.  These questions were grouped into 11 distinct areas such as "About You", "Online Blues Communities" and "Before the Internet". Questions also sought to ascertain how blues fans participated in the blues community before they had access to the internet.  The third and final area of interest concerned whether blues fans actively used the internet to further their knowledge of blues music and blues culture by participating in online learning communities, as discussed in

chapter 5.  Differing graph formats have been used in order to clearly illustrate the data being

presented.  The full survey results are presented in appendix 1.

## 7.1 Section 1: About You

Section 1 (questions 1-6) focused on age, gender and location.  62.9% of respondents were aged

between 45 and 64, with a further 13.5% of respondents aged 65 and older.  Of the remaining

23.7%, the largest group were aged 35-44.  This indicates that respondents are in the majority,

middle-aged (Stevenson & Waite, 2011, p. 908).
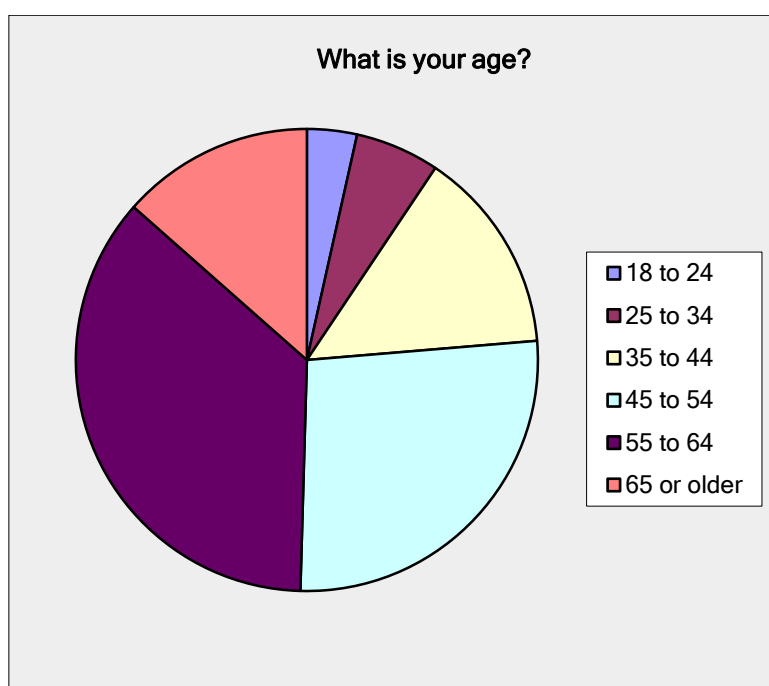


*Figure 29: Q1 - age of survey respondents*

This may reflect that people in the younger demographic are more likely to interact with blues music

as one of many diverse scenes as part of a postmodern, dynamic web of subcultures - as opposed to

a monolithic tribal experience (Huq, 2006, p. 28).  50.2% of respondents were located in Europe, and

44.9% were in North America – a total of 95.1%.  The next largest group at 3.7% were located in

Australia, and there were no respondents from Africa.  94.1% of respondents identified as

white/Caucasian, with a further 2.5% identifying as mixed race.  The largest group after this (1.2%)

were Hispanic or Latino.  80.4% of the survey were male, and 19.6% female.  These results agree

with Evans (2011), Titon (1993) and Adelt (2010) in confirming that the real-world audience for blues

music and blues culture is, in the majority, older white men - and so as Dougan suggests, these are

members of a "secondary public" (2001, p. 6).    What the survey indicates is that this is true online

as well as in physical communities.  This can perhaps be ameliorated by census data that indicates

that North America is 77% Caucasian/white, and 13.3% is black (US_Census_Bureau, 2015) where

the UK is 79.8% white and 3.3% black[26] (ONS, 2015).   However this would still indicate that older

white males are over-represented in the survey, where Black or African American respondents were

only 0.8% of the sample and so are under-represented.  In the penultimate question for this section,

88.3% of the survey indicated that they use the internet most often from home, with others stating

that they have constant access via their smartphones; the next largest category was "Work" at 7.8%.

Finally, 95.9% of the survey indicated that they had an account on a social networking site such as

Facebook or Twitter, with the remaining 4.1% indicating that they did not.  This is potentially

confusing as this 4% of respondents indicated that they received most of their information about

blues music from the internet, with 89% of this subset having used YouTube in the 3 weeks prior to

the survey to experience blues music and blues culture.  A further 80% of the subset indicated that

they participated in online blues communities, discussion groups and forums.  From this, it is likely

that these 21 users misinterpreted the question as being specific to Twitter and Facebook, rather

than general.  The significance of this opening section of the survey is that the majority of the online

audience for blues music and blues culture is largely middle-aged and older white men.  The majority

of these lived through the blues revival of the 1960s and so it is their perspectives on the music, as

illustrated in the earlier sections of this chapter, which appear to dominate in the online space.

## 7.2 Section 2: Discovery

Section 2 (questions 7-10) concerned the ways that respondents interact with the blues.  Asked to

choose the top three ways that they receive information concerning blues music and blues culture,

95.1% of respondents indicated that the internet was their top choice. With word of mouth (39.6%)

---

[26] This definition of "black" includes the various permutations of Black British, Black European, Cuban, and the other taxonomic identifiers offered by the Office for National Statistics.

and print media such as magazines coming second and third. Radio drew 28.4% of the votes.  There

was a significant drop for television, which only 6.1% of the group used.  This is perhaps unsurprising

since the internet, word of mouth and to a certain extent print media are "pull" technologies; a

consumer can take what they want, rather than consuming what is being offered in a "push"

environment.  In other words, in a "pull" environment, users have a certain degree of autonomy

concerning the content they access.  In the free text "other" space in the question, 34 respondents

broadly indicated that they interacted with other people at blues shows, with musician friends, and

with books, emphasising that there are still real-word and social exchanges that take place with

some regularity in the community.  In this way, we can see that although the internet is a primary

source of information for the majority of respondents, this has not completely replaced the need to

seek out and interact with other human beings, musicians and books.  The supremacy of the internet

as a news source for blues music is corroborated by figures which indicate that since 2008, the

internet has overtaken both radio and newspapers as the primary new source across US society

(Pew Research Center, 2010) (fig. 32) below:
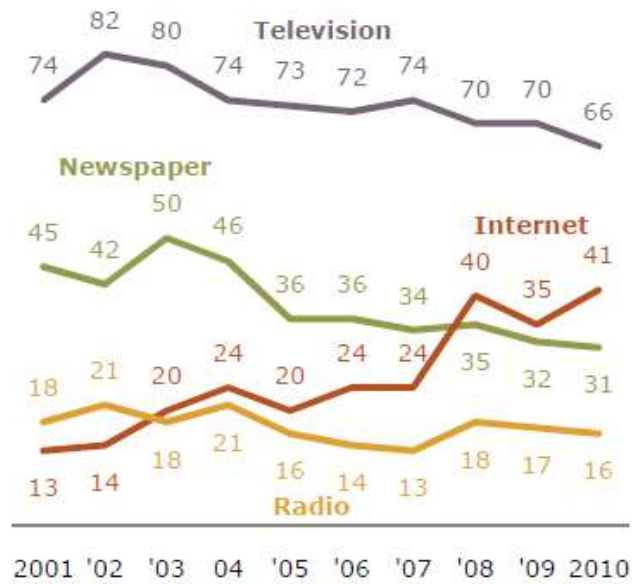
*Figure 30: Popularity of primary news sources (Pew Research Centre, 2010)*

Leading on from this, 90.4% of users indicated that they accessed blues music or blues culture

regularly through the week, with 51.6% of respondents reporting that they accessed content several

times a day.  Users were then asked where on the internet to experience blues.  As shown in fig. 33,

the vast majority made use of YouTube and Facebook.

*In the last three months (12 weeks) which of the below have you used to experience blues music or blues culture? (Tick all that apply).*
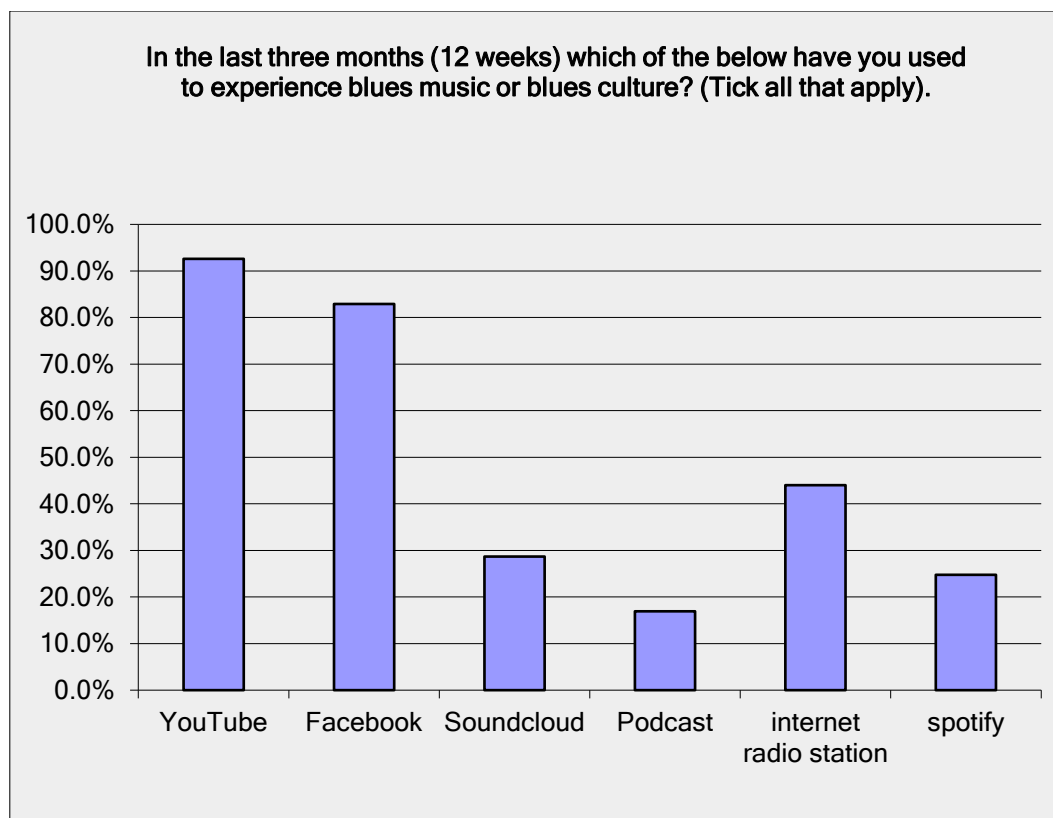
*Figure 31: Q9 - internet access sites for blues music amongst respondents*

As presented in chapter 5, YouTube is the most popular site accessed from desktop computers for streaming video content (McCoogan, 2016), whilst Facebook is currently the most popular Social Networking Site (SNS) worldwide with over 1.71 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2016). It is significant that dedicated music streaming sites SoundCloud and Spotify are less popular as a consumption destinations as these both offer arguably better sound quality than YouTube, and are geared towards users being able to select their own content and discover new material. This is particularly interesting given that much of the early blues posted in YouTube features static images of the artist, or videos of records being played, almost negating the visual element of the site's offering. 25% of the respondents to this question made use of the "other" option. The four moth persistent themes presented were (a) Live performance (b) Radio, both FM and online (b) alternative internet sites such as iTunes, Google Play and (c) existing CD and record collections. Once again, these answers emphasised the social interaction element and real-world interactions of respondents working alongside an online and virtual experience.

83% of respondents indicated that they downloaded blues music to their computers; 53.5%

"occasionally" and a smaller percentile, 30.4% "often".  Of interest is that 16.1% of respondents

claimed to "never" download music.  Of this subgroup however, 33% of this group accessed blues

content several times a day, with a further 24% accessing 2-3 times a week.  In addition, 84% made

use of YouTube, 73% made use of Facebook, suggesting a fair engagement with blues music on the

internet, despite the lack of downloading.

## 7.3 Sections 3 & 4: Online Blues Communities and internet use part 1

74.3% of respondents indicated that they participated in online blues communities, discussion

groups, and forums.  Of the remaining 25.7% however, 86% engaged with the blues through

YouTube, and 75% did the same through Facebook.  It may be that these users do not consciously

belong to a regular group of blues enthusiasts or an online society, but the data suggests that these

individuals do engage with blues-centric online group activity, but as more loosely-defined

communities of practice (E. Wenger, 1998; E. Wenger et al., 2002) or as "lurkers" (Baym, 2010, p.

87).  For those who participated in online communities, the majority participated in 2-3 different

groups.
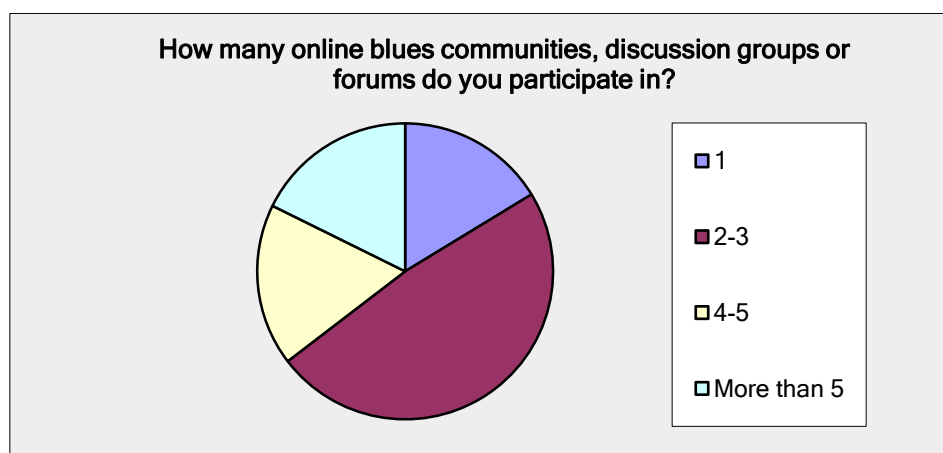
*Figure 32: Q12 - plurality of online communities for users*

Once again, this indicates good engagement within the respondent sample.  Following on from this, I

was interested to discover what activities the respondents took part in.
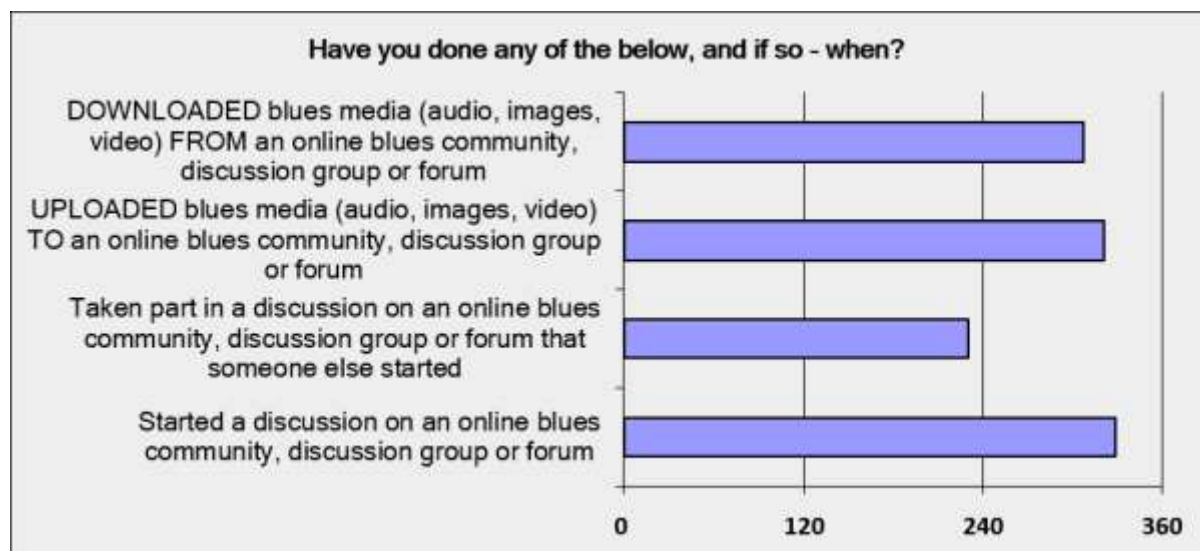
*Figure 33: Q13 - typical online activities for survey respondents*

As above, respondents appeared to be uploading and downloading material on a regular basis.  As

indicated in the full survey (appendix 1), the most users had taken part in the listed activities 'within

the last week', suggesting good engagement with the technology and the practice.  Whilst overall

more material was being shared (uploaded) than consumed (downloaded), the results suggest that

participants in blues via the internet are contributing slightly more than they are consuming.  For a

future survey, more detail concerning the nature of the materials being uploaded and downloaded

would be of interest, to ascertain the format – aural, visual or textual.

## 7.4 Sections 5 & 6: Live Music

As part of the investigation of remediation and technological mediation in blues music and blues

culture, I was particularly interested to understand how the internet affected the way that

respondents interacted with the blues in real, physical life away from a computer keyboard and

screen.  As has been previously mentioned, the concern with the introduction of new

communications technologies – certainly in the case of the telephone, phonograph recording, and

the television - is that current social distinctions will be diminished to the detriment of society

(Baym, 2010; Bolter & Grusin, 1999; Katz, 2010; Marvin, 1988; McLuhan, 1962).  Additionally,

postmodern concerns persist that the product of such interactions will be a pallid reconstruction of

visceral, tangible live performance (Auslander, 1998, 2008; Stanyek & Piekut, 2010).

The data indicates that survey respondents are very active in the attendance of blues music performances, as below.
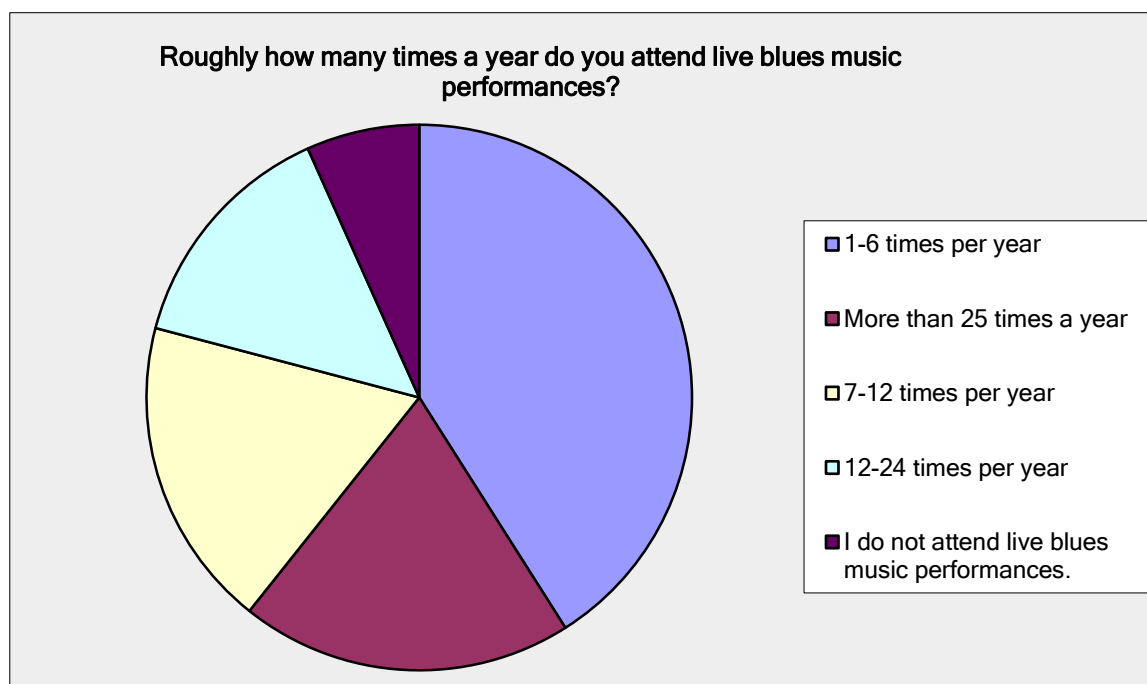


*Figure 34: Q14 - respondents' blues performance attendance per annum*

Only 6.7% of respondents do not attend blues performances at all.  For this group, it can be assumed that their experience of blues music and blues culture is totally mediated by technology – and as illustrated above, this is a very low section of the respondents.  The largest single group attend 1-6 performances annually, 41% of respondents.  18.4% attend 7-12 performances, with the remaining 33.9% attending no fewer than 12 and in excess of 25 performances a year.  Interestingly, for this high-consumption subset of concert-goers, 51.61% claimed to have "…performed blues music publically," in the 12 months leading to the survey.  Further investigation would be required to understand how many of these performances directly related to their attendance.

The next questions enquired whether respondents had (a) discovered a new artist using the internet (b) been inspired to attend a blues performance as a result of internet-based interactions (c) been discouraged from attending a blues performance as a result of internet-based interactions.  91.6% of respondents claimed to have discovered a new artist.  Clearly this would indicate that the artist is

new to the respondent, not necessarily to the blues field.  For example, a respondent may not be

familiar with the work of Charley Patton (1891-1934) or Etta James (1928-2012), as opposed to

discovering living contemporary blues artists such as Bobby Rush, Joe Louis Walker, or O.B. Buchana.

Subsequent enquiry or a more focused survey questionnaire would be able to gather this specific

data.  Nonetheless, this finding does indicate the  internet is functioning very well as a discovery tool

within the respondent group.  Similarly, 80% of respondents claimed to have been inspired to attend

a performance as a result of internet-based interactions.  It is not clear whether those interactions

are engagements with YouTube videos or as a result of recommendations received via email , blues

forum or instant messaging – but the positive message here appears to be that computer-mediated

communications (CMC) are driving consumers toward performers.  As above, a further refinement to

this question would specify exactly how the encouragement or recommendation was received.

Equally positively, survey data indicates that 60.2% of respondents were not discouraged from

attending blues performances by CMC.  Overall, these three responses suggest that blues fans are

encouraged by the internet to attend blues performances, and in the majority of cases, not

dissuaded from concert attendance by either poor reviews, negative comments, or as is increasingly

the case for live performers, poorly-shot performance videos taken by audience-members using

smartphones and uploaded to SNS and sites such as YouTube and Daily Motion (K. Hall, 2014; Shu,

2013; Warhurst, 2015).  Supplementing this line of enquiry, 87.6% of respondents indicated that

they had encouraged others to experience a blues artist via CMC.  The significance of these last few

questions appears to be that the online blues community as represented by the survey respondents

are generally encouraging of the style and genre using CMC, and are willing to accept

recommendations received via digital means.  This line of questioning could have been enhanced by

asking whether respondents had ever discouraged others from attending a performance using CMC,

but at this stage this would seem to be less important than the indication that blues fans are largely

positively motivated and positively engaging with the music via digital means.

## 7.5 Section 7: internet use

The following questions sought to further qualify how blues fans made use of the internet for their engagement with the music and culture, as per fig 37.  In addition to previous questions, the aim was to see with greater fidelity how users made use of CMC and digital tools.  As previously, the majority appear to consume YouTube videos, with the next most popular activity being research into blues history.  This seems to lead to buying media which contains blues music, which may indicate that like many other consumers, the internet is a way to sample material before purchase; to try-before-you-buy (Brynjolfsson & Smith, 2000; Hanson, 2008; Prime, 2016).

In this question, respondents made use of the free text to indicate that several respondents are practising musicians.  Users explained that they "Advertise…my blues gigs", "Promot[e] blues concerts for blues artists; look…for concerts for blues artists", and "Post…videos from concerts by my band".  For these users as well as for some of the successful and entrepreneurial performance informants in chapter 8, the internet is a method of promotion for their practice.  Other respondents emphasised their use of the internet as a way to buy music, whilst others confessed to "illegal download of blues music is most common for me :( sorry", and "Sorry I don't buy but download [sic] blues songs and records from piratebay and convert youtube to mp3".  This apologetic stance appears to be in line with the sharing/consumption ratio uncovered by previous questions.  Specifically, the users say "sorry," as they appear to understand that they are participating in an illegal activity that deprives content providers of revenue.  This particular tale of exploitation will be familiar to many fans of blues music and blues culture who will be aware of the disadvantaged sociological position occupied by many of the African Americans who participated in the origination of the blues form in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

**Have you used the internet for any of the following in the last 6 months? (Tick all that apply).**

| | Learning a musical instrument or musical performance technique in the blues style | Learning about or researching blues history | Buying CDs, DVDs, phonograph records or cassettes relating to blues music | Buying books related to blues music | Listened to a blues radio show | Listened to or downloaded a blues music podcast | Watched blues material on a video streaming site (for example: youtube, vimeo, dailymotion etc.) | Listened to blues music on an audio streaming site (for example: Spotify, TIDAL, Deezer etc.) | None of these |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ Series1 | 48.8% | 73.7% | 70.2% | 39.4% | 60.6% | 34.5% | 93.8% | 47.8% | 0.4% |

*Figure 35: Q20 - blues fan activity in the 6 months leading to the survey*

Chapter 7: **Survey Data**

The following question was further intended to discover how respondents interacted with blues music without necessarily using the internet or CMC.  Results indicate that a little under half of respondents are creators of blues music in that they had played blues in public during the 12 months leading up to the survey. 38.2% had recorded blues music in the same period, and 32% claimed to have composed blues music during this time (fig. 38).  The question does not identify the frequency with which the performances took place or whether the performers were paid for their time.  Neither does the survey indicate whether the recordings and compositions made by respondents were intended for commercial release.  It is possible to see that there is a very strong correlation between these three activities, in that all of the performers were also the composers and recording musicians.  Additionally, many of the respondents had undertaken activity as cultural intermediaries, or cultural workers.  Bourdieu defines such individuals as

> "all the occupations involving presentation and representation (sales, marketing, advertising, public relations, fashion, decoration and so forth) and in all the institutions providing symbolic goods and services . . . and in cultural production and organization which have expanded considerably in recent years. (Bourdieu, 2010, p. 359)

Wright further sharpens this definition to include "designers, club promoters and disc-jockeys, marketing professionals, magazine editors, and 'artist and repertoire' ('A&R') workers" (D. Wright, 2005, p. 109).  This would certainly include the non-performance categories indicated in the question here, and underlines the tendency of self-identified blues fans to contribute to the cultural capital of the genre.  This tendency should be viewed mindful of the racial profile of the survey respondents, which is overwhelmingly white, middle-aged and male.  In other words, the data in this question may be identifying cultural appropriation in action in that non-African Americans are clearly involved in performing, recording and composing music in the blues style.

## Have you engaged in any of the below activities in the last 12 months?  (Tick all that apply).

| | Performed blues music publically | Recorded musical material in the blues style or with a blues influence | Contributed to the staging of a blues music event | Composed musical material in the blues style or with a blues influence | None of these | Taught a musical instrument or performance technique either 1:1 or a group | Broadcast in any media (e.g. internet radio, conventional radio, podcast) concerning blues music or blues culture | Contributed to the content or admin for an online blues magazine or website | Contributed to the content or admin for a blues print magazine | Taught any subject at any level in an accredited place of learning 1:1 or to a group | Published or drafted academic material concerning blues music or blues culture | Other (please specify) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐Series1 | 47.8% | 38.2% | 33.5% | 32.0% | 25.6% | 23.9% | 20.9% | 20.0% | 12.6% | 9.8% | 8.1% | 2.6% |

*Figure 36: Q21 - real-world blues activity for respondents*

## 7.6 Section 8: Blues learning communities

The findings from section 8 of the survey concerning blues learning communities were presented

and discussed in chapter 5 of this project, 'Academy'.  Of significance was the number of survey

respondents who were engaged in multiple blues learning communities who were educated to BA

level (37.5%) and to MA level (20.8%). This trend is markedly ahead of the UK average, whereby 38%

of the population are graduates, as opposed to the 58.3% indicated here (Office for National

Statistics, 2013).

| Answer Options | Response Percent |
| --- | --- |
| Did not attend school | 2.4% |
| Experience/vocational Learning | 4.8% |
| (UK) GCSE or 'O' level / (US) 10th Grade | 2.4% |
| *(UK) A level / (US) 12th Grade* | *14.5%* |
| *Bachelor's Degree* | *37.9%* |
| *Master's Degree* | *20.2%* |
| PHD | 6.5% |
| Postdoctoral | 2.4% |
| Other | 8.9% |

*Table 8: educational attainment of survey respondents*

The incongruity here is that blues music, which from some perspectives has been marketed as the

music of the rural poor, has been embraced by a secondary audience which contains strong

representation from graduate and postgraduate academics.   From this, a pattern of educated,

middle-class white patrons began to emerge from the survey respondents, which appears to support

the alarm of (Harris, 2015b), (Harris, 2015a) and (L. R. Jones, 1963) amongst others that blues music

and blues culture is in danger of becoming a set of hyper-realistic gestures in performance that were

no longer contextualised by a narrative, socio-political, human experience grounded in objective

reality (Baudrillard, 1994; S. A. King, 2011; Ryan, 2011).

## 7.7 Section 9: Blues artists

For this section, respondents were provided with a list of 54 blues artists.  The criteria for inclusion

in the list was that artists should have been at least one of the following: featured in blues literature

such as *Living Blues*, *Blues Matters, Blues Unlimited* or *Blues in Britain* magazine; discussed as a blues

performer in book-length scholarly works including (without being limited to) Adelt (2010), A. Y.

Davis (1998), F. Davis (1995), Gioia (2008), Hamilton (2007), Lomax (1993), O'Neal and Van Singel

(2002), Palmer (1981), Russell (1997), Schwartz (2007), Wald (2009), Wald (2010); that the artist

should have been prominently featured as an artist in a festival which made specific reference to

blues music such as the Mississippi Blues Fest [ref] or the Great British Rhythm and blues festival

during the period of study (2012-2015); that the artist should have been nominated for an

international blues award such as The Grammy Awards, Blues Foundation Awards, or the British

Blues Awards during the period of study (2012-2015).  These criteria were chosen in order to

minimise the possibility of selection bias, and accordingly the artists include African Americans and

non-African Americans, living and deceased artists, male and female performers.

Since this question concerned personal opinion and so contained a strong qualitative element, I

chose to examine the data more closely.  Rather than relying on the aggregated totals presented in

column 1 of tables 2 and 3 below, I further split the data according to gender, age, and location

criteria.  The groups I chose to highlight were: women; respondents aged 18-44; respondents aged

45+; Black respondents in America; respondents excluding the US; Europeans only; non-white only;

respondents excluding the US and EU; US only.  My intention was to remove the two largest groups

(EU and US) from the data in order to facilitate a more nuanced and international reading.  In this

way, column 1 acted as a normalising control, and in the case of the top 10 and bottom 10, I was

able to identify outlying information which was particular to the groups in question.

| RANK | ALL | Women | 18-44 | 45+ | African Americans | EU & ROW | Europeans | Non-White | ROW (no EU/US) | US only |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | B.B. King | B.B. King | B.B. King | B.B. King | B.B. King | B.B. King | B.B. King | Muddy Waters | B.B. King | Muddy Waters |
| 2 | Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | B.B. King | *Charley Patton* | B.B. King |
| 3 | Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | *Bessie Smith* | Blind Lemon Jefferson | Robert Johnson |
| 4 | Robert Johnson | *Etta James* | Robert Johnson | Robert Johnson | Robert Johnson | Robert Johnson | Robert Johnson | Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf |
| 5 | Buddy Guy | Robert Johnson | Blind Lemon Jefferson | Buddy Guy | Buddy Guy | Buddy Guy | Buddy Guy | Robert Johnson | Muddy Waters | Buddy Guy |
| 6 | Albert King | Buddy Guy | Buddy Guy | T-Bone Walker | Albert King | T-Bone Walker | T-Bone Walker | Albert King | Son House | Albert King |
| 7 | T-Bone Walker | T-Bone Walker | Albert King | Albert King | T-Bone Walker | Albert King | Albert King | Buddy Guy | T-Bone Walker | Blind Lemon Jefferson |
| 8 | Blind Lemon Jefferson | *Bessie Smith* | T-Bone Walker | Blind Lemon Jefferson | Blind Lemon Jefferson | Blind Lemon Jefferson | Blind Lemon Jefferson | Leadbelly | Robert Johnson | T-Bone Walker |
| 9 | Freddie King | Albert King | Freddie King | Freddie King | Leadbelly | Freddie King | Freddie King | Blind Lemon Jefferson | Albert King | Son House |
| 10 = | Leadbelly | Blind Lemon Jefferson | Son House | Leadbelly | *Bessie Smith* | Leadbelly | Leadbelly | Freddie King | Freddie King | Freddie King |
| 10 = | Son House | Freddie King | Leadbelly | Son House | *Big Bill Broonzy* / Son House / *Bobby Blue Bland* / Freddie King | *Big Bill Broonzy* | *Big Bill Broonzy* | T-Bone Walker | Buddy Guy | Leadbelly |

*Table 9: Top 10 blues artists as chosen by survey respondents, categorised by gender, age, and location*

| Rank | ALL | Women | 18-44 | 45+ | African Americans | EU & ROW | Europeans | Non-White | ROW (no EU/US) | US only |
|------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|---------|
| 1 | Hugh Laurie | Hugh Laurie | Jack White | Jarekus Singleton | *Joe Bonamassa* | Jack White | Jack White | Marion Harris | *Ian Siegal* | Jack White |
| 2 | Jarekus Singleton | Jarekus Singleton | Marion Harris | Hugh Laurie | Marion Harris | Bex Marshall | Bex Marshall | Hugh Laurie | Jack White | Marion Harris |
| 3 | Jack White | Jack White | Jarekus Singleton | Jack White | *Seasick Steve* | Jarekus Singleton | Jarekus Singleton | Jack White | Jarekus Singleton | Hugh Laurie |
| 4 | Marion Harris | Sandie Thom | *Little Milton* | Bex Marshall | Vasti Jackson | *Little Milton* | *Little Milton* | *Kenny Wayne Shepherd* | Marion Harris | *Ian Siegal* |
| 5 | Bex Marshall | Marion Harris | Bex Marshall | Marion Harris | Hugh Laurie | Sandie Thom | Sandie Thom | *Ian Siegal* | Bex Marshall | Vasti Jackson |
| 6 | Sandie Thom | Bex Marshall | O.B. Buchana | Sandie Thom | Bex Marshall | Marion Harris | Marion Harris | Mrs Jody | Vasti Jackson | Marvin Sease |
| 7 | Vasti Jackson | Vasti Jackson | Marvin Sease | Vasti Jackson | Jack White | Mrs Jody | Mrs Jody | O.B. Buchana | Mrs Jody | Mrs Jody |
| 8 | Marvin Sease | Marvin Sease | Vasti Jackson | Marvin Sease | Mrs Jody | Marvin Sease | Marvin Sease | Vick Allen | Sandie Thom | O.B. Buchana |
| 9 | Mrs Jody | O.B. Buchana | Sandie Thom | Mrs Jody | *Kenny Wayne Shepherd* | Vasti Jackson | Vasti Jackson | Marvin Sease | Vick Allen | Bex Marshall |
| 10 = | O.B. Buchana | Mrs Jody | Mrs Jody | O.B. Buchana | Sandie Thom | O.B. Buchana | O.B. Buchana | Vasti Jackson | Marvin Sease | Sandie Thom |
| 10 = | Vick Allen | Vick Allen | Vick Allen | Vick Allen | O.B. Buchana / Vick Allen / Marvin Sease | Vick Allen | Vick Allen | Bex Marshall / Sandie Thom | O.B. Buchana | Vick Allen |

*Table 10:Bottom 10 blues artists as chosen by survey respondents, categorised by gender, age, and location*

Chapter 7: **Survey Data**

As expected, for most groups against the control data of column 1, B.B. King (1925-2015), Muddy Waters (1913-1983), Howlin' Wolf (1910-1976) and Robert Johnson (1911-1938) featured in the top 4 artists most commonly considered to be blues performers.  Each of these artists is African American, and deceased.  Each of the artists is also male and were primarily singing guitar players.  Interestingly, female respondents did not follow the trend to prioritise Robert Johnson, and named Etta James (1938-2012) as their 4th ranked artist.  Of interest is that James is part of the Chess label at the same time as Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, and similarly has songs written for her and arranged by Willie Dixon (1915-1992).  In this way the data appears to support the idea that the electric blues musicians whose period of success issued from the Chicago and urban *sound* are the "most blues" of artists for respondents.  Female respondents further illustrated a diversion from the control data by citing Bessie Smith (1894-1937) as their 8th ranked artist.  This would seem to be consistent with blues history in that Smith's pseudonym "Empress of the Blues" was commensurate with her incredible financial success and stylistic impact on the genre during the early 20th century (Albertson, 2003; A. Y. Davis, 1998; D. D. Harrison, 1988).  Smith is similarly recognised as a primary blues artist by African American and non-white respondents.  Non-US and EU respondents appear to valorise Charley Patton's foundational influence on blues music and blues culture.  This artist was ranked 18th in the control data with 68.3% of the total vote – critically, behind Stevie Ray Vaughan, who took 71.6% of the total vote.  Given the antipathy displayed to no African American blues-rock performers by the RBF as discussed in chapter 6, this might indicate that the breadth of respondents had expanded beyond the more conservative members of that specific forum.

Analysis of the bottom 10 artists across the same demographic divisions revealed a greater coherence between respondents concerning artists who they did not consider to be blues performers.  Incongruous here perhaps is Little Milton (1934-2005), a stalwart of the Chess, Stax and Malaco labels who worked with Etta James as a writer and producer, and who is commemorated by a statue outside the Blues Hall of Fame in Memphis, TN (americanbluesscene.com, 2015; blues.org, 2015).  Despite steady commercial success, Milton was perhaps more of a cultural worker than a

performance artist in the mould of Waters and Wolf, and this might account for his reduced visibility

to the consuming respondents for the survey.

For the rest of the 'bottom 10' choices, the data appears to confirm that the respondents are

members of a secondary audience for blues music and blues culture. Certainly, all of the bottom 10

artists in the control data column are still alive, whilst 9/10 of the top 10 artists in the control

column are deceased. Many of these 'bottom' 10 artists have been honoured with awards within

the last 4 years, and many have played locally in the United States and internationally – but

respondent groups appear not to be aware of their status in general. In other words, whilst the

music industry appears to consider the 'bottom' 10 as blues artists, and whilst African American

blues fans - certainly in the case of the Mississippi Blues fest 2014, 2015 and 2016 – consider these

performers to be blues artists, this definition has yet to reach the 512 respondents to the survey. In

the case of Hugh Laurie, tens of thousands of paying customers appear to valorise him as a

performer in the tradition as indicated in chapter 1 – but for individuals who have self-identified as

blues fans and have responded to this internet survey, he does not register at this time as a blues

musician. This perhaps confirms that for these particular consumers, the internet has yet to allow

them to experience what could reasonably be called "living" blues.

## 7.8 Sections 9 & 10: before the internet

As indicated by the title, this section these questions were designed to understand how respondents

acquired information about blues music and blues culture before the regular use of the internet.

Data indicates that most users began to engage with blues music via CMC between 1996 and 2005,

the 9-year period where internet use in the UK and US grew exponentially as illustrated below in

table 4 below (World Development Indicators, 2015):

.
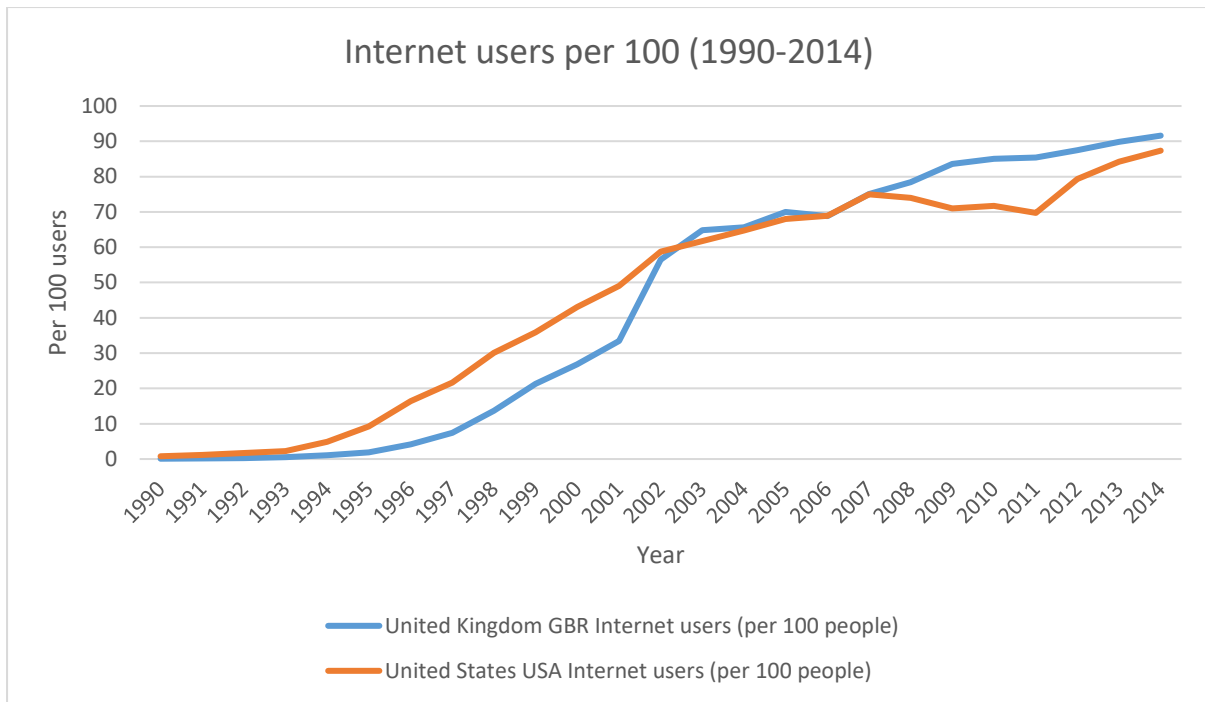
*Table 11: Internet users per 100, 1990-2014 (WDI, 2016)*

Respondents were subsequently asked to identify their primary source of information concerning

blues music prior to their regular use of the internet, as illustrated by fig. 39 below:
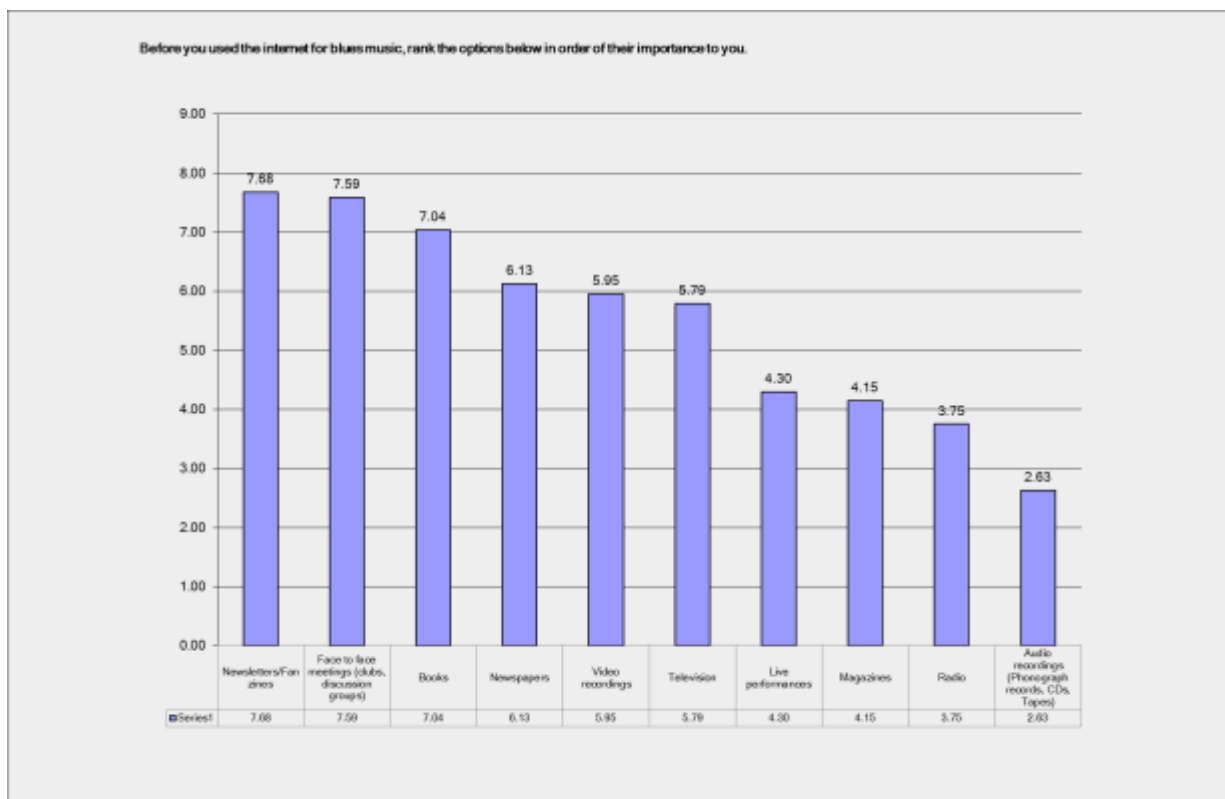


*Figure 37: Q30 - sources of information before the internet*

Of interest here is that the elements of physical culture in the first two instances are those which have been most quickly remediated by the internet (Bolter & Grusin, 1999).  Newsletters and fanzines in the main were communication media that were home-produced and bypassed the mainstream media during the flowering of the counterculture and punk rock in the US and UK (Hebdige, 1979; Savage, 2001).  Similarly, face-to-face meetings and interpersonal connections are those which have been facilitated and to a certain extent transformed by digital media, asynchronous interaction and CMC (Baym, 2002, 2010).  Following on from this, printed media have been under siege by digital media for several years (fig. 32 above), and video recordings find their equivalence in YouTube in the modern day.

The final two questions adopted a qualitative stance designed to collate respondents' overall attitude to blues music and blues culture.  Asked to position the blues as a cultural practice (fig. 40), the majority of respondents appeared to take the diachronic developmental view.  In other words, respondents appeared to appreciate the contribution that the blues has made to popular music, but also understood that the cultural practice continues to develop in the present day.  Offered a universalist statement as discussed in chapter 4, respondents were in strong agreement.

Respondents were polarised by the question of blues 'authenticity', which again indicates that the questionnaire may have been taken up by members outside the RBF main discussion area who, as per chapter 6, would have had a far more conservative and certain stance that yes, the blues was a more authentic music – with all the problematic ontological connotations that this word implies.

| Answer Options | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The blues has had an important influence on popular music since 1900. | 365 | 66 | 7 | 5 | 1 |
| Blues music continues to develop and evolve in the present day. | 213 | 160 | 46 | 18 | 4 |
| The blues can and should be performed by anyone, regardless of age, ethnicity or | 315 | 83 | 27 | 12 | 7 |
| The blues is more 'real,' or 'authentic,' than other styles of popular music. | 123 | 108 | 145 | 52 | 17 |

*Figure 38: Q31 - positioning the blues as a cultural practice*

The final, simplistic and summarising question indicates that the majority of respondents believe that the internet has enhanced their experience of blues music and blues culture.

| Answer Options | Strongly agree | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree | strongly disagree | Rating Average | Response Count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall, do you believe that the internet and social networking has enhanced your experience and understanding of blues music and blues culture? | 293 | 105 | 35 | 8 | 1 | 1.46 | 442 |

*Figure 39: Q32 - an overall summary of the way that the internet has influenced respondents' views*

## 7.9 Summary and conclusion

The survey data presented in this chapter confirms that for the self-identifying blues fans who responded to the questionnaire, the blues remains a social practice. However, the ages/gender/demographic data uncovered from the 512 respondents appears to indicate that internet users are middle-aged white men who have relatively conservative views of blues music and blues culture, and that these respondents do not necessarily experience or appreciate the work of living blues musicians who are performing in the tradition and creating new works in the style and genre.

In conclusion, the survey appears to confirm that the internet, digital media have not destroyed or broken down racial, cultural or social preconceptions of the blues. Rather, the data appears to confirm that the 1950s 'chess sound' remains the gold standard by which blues is judged, and that the style is in the early 21$^{st}$ century still dominated by the tastes and attitudes of baby-boomer consumers. Further, rather than reconfiguring attitudes to the real world, the internet has simply allowed existing ideas amongst a specific group of consumers to become more widespread via CMC, potentially dismissing ideas of technological determinism. In other words – the internet allows the dominant group to spread their ideology more widely, although a close investigation of data finds some resistance from demographic groups, such as women and racially-defined groupings.

The following chapter proceeds to examine how these attitudes, perpetuated by digital means and media affect performers in the blues idiom in the present day.

# Chapter 8: Performers

And the dead man sat up, and began to speak (Luke, Ch.7 v.15).

The previous chapter examined the role played by computer-mediated communications (CMC) in

facilitating consumers and gatekeepers in their uses of and gratifications from blues music and blues

culture.   This chapter examines how these attitudes and opinions, circulated by digital means and

media, may affect blues music performers in the present day.  This is approached in three ways.

Firstly, this chapter examines how performers engage with both their fans and the wider music

industry through digital means.  Secondly, this chapter reviews the role played by CMC in the

nomination and valorisation processes particular to individual artists in blues award ceremonies.

Thirdly, this chapter considers the role played by CMC in the media presence of deceased blues

performers via their websites and participation in social media. These three aims are achieved by

analysing data gathered by interview and online ethnography, and through the application of critical

discourse analysis (CDA).  In line with the themes of the study as a whole, this chapter considers the

range of challenges made manifest for blues artists in the present by particular views of the past

held by members of digital communities who self-identify as blues fans.  In other words, this chapter

is interested in the way that performers are potentially enabled or constrained by their engagement

with digital media, and the ways in which blues artists, both living and dead, are valorised or

marginalised by awards ceremonies and institutions whose contributions to the discourse on blues

music are both facilitated and mediated by CMC.

The significance of this brief overview within the context of this study is to examine the ways in

which power is manifested within the blues community in the construction of perceived truths about

blues music and blues culture, with particular attention paid to the role played by CMC in this

process.  Overall, it seems that as indicated in chapter 3, those able to confer status and power on

individual artists represent a widening rather than narrowing field.  This appears to be an

increasingly inclusive process which is facilitated rather than completely enabled by CMC. Despite

this generally widening participation, the voices of the direct stylistic descendants of the primary

performers and the descendants of their primary audiences appears to be marginalised. This

process, however, appears to take place with diminishing regard for the older and more polemic

members of the specialist blues community.

## 8.1 Artists

As indicated in the previous chapter, one of the functions of the pre-digital music industry was to

pre-select artists for commodification and promotion to a potential purchasing public (Titon, 1994,

p. 213). At a deeper level, this can also be regarded as what Bourdieu describes as a 'field of

restricted cultural production';

> "…the scene of competition for the power to grant cultural consecration, but also
> as the system specifically designed to fulfil a consecration function as well as a
> system for reproducing producers of a determinate type of cultural goods, and
> the consumer capable of consuming them" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 12).

Whilst the marketing of artists to a potential audience and the promotion of commodified music and

performances remains a primary function of the music industry, the significance of the internet is to

increase the potential for artists to rely less on the marketing and distribution networks established

by record companies during the 20th century. In other words, artists may use the internet to build

their audience, and take a more active role in the creation and maintenance of their relationship

with consumers (Owsinski, 2014). This is particularly important when record labels have a limited

interest in promoting new, unestablished artists or artists from a niche genre such as blues, perhaps

wary of making a short-term loss or a limited return on investment. Certainly in the contemporary

music industry, record companies prefer new artists to present with a healthy audience which is

often measured by the size of their online presence, specifically their number of followers on social

media platforms such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook (A. Harrison, 2014; Passman, 2011). Blues

vocalist and songwriter Janiva Magness recalled that during the early 2000s it was very difficult to

persuade her record label, Alligator Records, to invest in the internet because "…they thought it was

just a passing fad that no-one would buy into for blues.  You couldn't explain that this was

something new or the way things were going to be from now on and they didn't want to invest in

what they thought was something for computer geeks and a waste of [their] time" (Magness, 2016).

Magness has since made extensive use of the Facebook platform to engage with her fans and

monetise this relationship by offering live question and answer sessions as well as promoting her

performances directly to her established fan-base with short behind-the scenes style videos which

include exclusive footage of sound-checks and tours of venues.  This strategy has proven successful

since she has founded her own record label, and has won seven of the twenty-five Blues Music

Awards (BMAs) that she has been nominated for since 2005 in several categories.  The BMAs are the

highest accolade that the institutionalised blues community annually bestows on its artists and

cultural workers, and they have a similar presence within the community to the Academy Awards, or

"Oscars" within the motion picture community.  These awards are discussed later in this chapter.

As a white female born in the United States in 1957, Magness also indicates that it is routinely

difficult to engage with some "…promoters who think you have to be old, black and nearly dead to

be a real blues artist" (ibid).  Here, Magness indicates the rupture between a gatekeeping function

within certain elements of the blues community who might be exemplified by members of the RBF

discussed in chapters 6 and 7 and a wider audience willing to consume blues and blues-based music

which is not necessarily performed by African Americans.

Other non-African American artists also emphasise the positive influence of CMC on their practice.

Norman Beaker is a British blues guitarist born in 1950 who has worked with numerous leading lights

of the blues scene including B.B. King and Victor Brox since the late 1960s.  Beaker highlights that the

internet allows artists to "…organise tours to places agents won't send you.  There's a real blues

scene in Europe thriving and [who are] keen to book artists, audiences love the material and want to

see bands actually working.  The internet means you can work with promoters and book tours in a

way you couldn't have dreamed of in the 1970s and 80s" (Beaker, 2016).

Newer artists also capitalise on the potential reach of the internet, associating themselves with established artists in order to consolidate their presence within the market. Joe Bonamassa is a white American blues player championed by (amongst others) B.B. King and Buddy Guy as a performer within the blues tradition. Bonamassa also represents a polarising figure in the community. Born in 1977, Bonamassa performs the blues of his influences – Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Albert King, Freddie King, as well as writing and releasing his own original material. Despite being featured and promoted by these established masters of the genre as early as 12 years old in his career, many older commentators, particularly RBF members, regard him with suspicion and antipathy, as below;



*Figure 40: RBF member is sarcastic and uncharitable toward Joe Bonamassa*

…this particular example appears to ridicule Bonamassa's release of a Christmas-themed blues song which seems to be promoted with a healthy dose of postmodern irony. This irony appears to be missed however in the commentator's desire to denigrate the performer. The following comment from earlier in the same year is typical of the opprobrium heaped on the artist;

*Figure 41: RBF user is disparaging toward Joe Bonamassa*

Writer and musician Adam Gussow labels young performers as 'virgin bluesmen' (Gussow, 2013),

questioning their ability to perform meaningful music without necessarily having acquired the life-

experience to lend credibility to their musical gestures in the opinion of certain listeners.  Sheila

Whiteley also questions the appeal and attraction of adult performances delivered by a child not

only in terms of believability, but given the lyrical and musical content and connotations of blues

music and much rock, in terms of potential 'sexploitation' (Whiteley, 2005). Despite this however,

Bonamassa receives validation from his audience who reward him with consistent album sales

(Billboard, 2015), as well as healthy attendance for his concerts. Bonamassa also highlights his

position as part of an established blues lineage of writers and performers with the nature of his

output.  In this regard, the double-album *Muddy Wolf at Red Rocks* (Provogue, PRD 7457 2, 2015)

underlines his respect for the founding fathers of the music.  On this specific live CD and concert

DVD, Bonamassa performs 20 songs originally recorded and made famous by both Muddy Waters

and Chester "Howlin' Wolf" Burnett.  The concert also features recordings of Waters and Burnett

speaking, which were seamlessly edited into the musical material of the performance.  The virtual

presence of these deceased artists will be discussed later in this chapter.  Additionally, Bonamassa

advertises his output as below:

*Figure 42: Joe Bonamassa online advertisement posted in Facebook*

Here, Bonamassa makes twofold use of B.B. King as a blues icon.   Firstly, King gave Bonamassa stage

space and featured him on his tours during the late 1980s, introducing him to a potential audience

and establishing the young musician's career (jbonamassa.com, 2014).   Secondly, with King's

passing in early 2015, Bonamassa positions himself as a successor and perpetuator of the style.  In

addition, the absence of a personal pronoun "you" in the first statement ("Do *you* like B.B. King?")

has the effect of suggesting familiarity with the reader, as if the question is being asked informally.

Also the absence of this pronoun offers the words here as a sentence fragment, where the question

text functions in tandem with the image of Bonamassa potentially inviting the enquiry "…is Joe

Bonamassa like B.B. King?"  Following the link through to Bonamassa's website, viewers and fans are

greeted with a further article – "Three things I learned from B.B. King" (fig. 45).

*Figure 43: B.B. King (left) with a youthful Joe Bonamassa around 1989*

Each of these marketing statements is designed to situate Bonamassa as the obvious musician to

continue the tradition of the electric blues.  Aside from the prominent mention of B.B. King,

Bonamassa also makes a semiotic reference to Eric Clapton in figure 44.  The Gibson Les Paul model

guitar that he is pictured playing is the same style of instrument that was played prominently by Eric

Clapton during his ascendancy in the UK blues revival of the 1960s, particularly on the 1966 *John*

*Mayall and the Bluesbreakers featuring Eric Clapton* album (Deram 844 827-2) with which Clapton

established his career as an instrumental soloist.  From a musical perspective, this thick-toned

instrument offers a sonic link to Clapton's work in establishing blues-rock as a genre, in addition to

once again positioning Bonamassa as potentially his successor in the field.  Bonamassa also

performed with Clapton at the Royal Albert Hall in London England during 2009 on the blues

standard "Further On Up the Road" as pictured below:

*Figure 44: Eric Clapton (L) and Joe Bonamassa (R) at the Royal Albert Hall in 2009*

In introducing the song, Bonamassa indicates the power of Clapton's influence on his own choice of

career.  Of interest here is that Clapton had played the same song with African American

foundational blues artist Freddie King during the 1970s in a similar passing-of-the-torch style

performance (RSO 2394-192, 1972).  The Royal Albert Hall has special resonance as  a blues

performance venue for Clapton and so, by extension for Bonamassa; it was in this prominent venue

that Clapton performed with his own band Cream during the 1960s and laid the foundation for the

power-trio ensemble and blues-based rock (A. S. Wolfe, Miller, & O'Donnell, 1999).  The below

image makes a similar appeal to audience by association:



*Figure 45: Bonamassa references Buddy Guy*

Also as evidenced in the advertisement, the album is available as a free download for a limited period.   This would be difficult to achieve or replicate in material space; whilst physical copies could be made and distributed nationally for promotional purposes, this would be an expensive exercise – and one which in the current climate of decline in the sales and market share of physical media in music is potentially extremely wasteful (A. Harrison, 2014; Owsinski, 2016).  By advertising online and making the content available as a download, Bonamassa offers non-rivalrous material to an audience who wish to consume the material without having to invest in material artefacts as a controlled marketing and engagement strategy (Katz, 2010).

## 8.2 Awards

Returning to Bourdieu's definition above, the repeated use of the word 'consecration' is a resonant term in this discussion.  The term refers to "…making or declaring sacred, admitting or ordaining to a sacred office"(Stevenson & Waite, 2011, p. 304), a process which is partially enacted when an established, master performer such as Waters or King presents a new apprentice practitioner to their audience either on stage or as a guest performer or collaborator in a recording.  As discussed in chapter 5, such activities also function as enculturation, acculturation and education in the form of apprenticeship.  The consecration function is also carried out by institutions such as the Blues Foundation through the annual Blues Music Awards (BMAs) and The Recording Academy – formerly the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) – through the Grammys.  These organisations are important within the field as consecrating authorities since the awards are publically visible, and for many observers, confer acceptance and legitimacy on the recipient.  For many artists, this recognition is followed by an upswing in recording sales and concert bookings both nationally and internationally.  In the words of the Blues Foundation;

> "The BMAs are generally recognized as the highest honor given to blues musicians.
> The Blues Music Awards are awarded by vote of Blues Foundation members.
> Artistically, it is the premier blues music event in the world. It is the one and only
> national, even international, blues music awards show. The primary goals are, like
> any other awards show, to honor the best of the past year and focus public

attention on the art form…[e]ach year, attendees hail the latest edition as the "best ever."[27]

The above statement attempts to position the BMAs as the most important award in blues music.

The British Blues Awards (BBAs) and European Blues Awards (EBAs) have a similar function in their

respective territories, but the BMAs appear to carry the greatest social capital worldwide.  Members

of the RBF are less enthusiastic about the awards, questioning the legitimacy of the Blues

Foundation as a body able to discern and attribute value or quality in the music:



> **A.J. Love** Most of these Award Show people & Blues Societies seem like the type of folks who would give an Award to Paul Butterfield rather than Wolf or Muddy simply because "Wolf and Muddy already won in previous years". I'm convinced that they are doing more harm than good in their purported goal of "keeping the Blues alive." I know there are exceptions but look at all these Festivals with hardly any African-Americans performing, and the lack of Real Blues that is being presented. I think those presenters have a huge role in the decline of Blues' popularity. They treat it like their little fun social club.
> Like · Reply · 🔾 3 · 18 hrs · Edited

In the case of the internet commentator above, the question seems less about what is being

validated or judged as authentic, but who (Moore, 2002, p. 210).  Here again, there is precedence

ascribed to race rather than content and a suggestion that there is a 'real' blues beyond that

recognised and celebrated by a majority of consumers, or the awarding body in question.



> **Rick D Leonard** Steve, I feel like Bonamassarati has duplicated the success of some other irndustries in rebranding a commodity into a high end lifestyle product. Audio-video wire was once as much a commodity as the noodle wanking he has repackaged and up-marketed as Blues. At least the famous a/v cable brands remained wire when repackaged and up-marketed.
> Like · Reply · 7 hrs · Edited

The above comments are typical of the standpoint of many members of the RBF.  Once again, this

illustrates the conflation of aesthetics and ontology on the part of the commentator – in other

words, that the commentator believes that they have a privileged view of what is 'real' blues and

what is ephemera, and that their subjective personal preference is an indicator of objective quality.

Arguably, this is also an example of consumers ascribing authenticity to a performance, whilst

---

[27] http://blues.org/blues-music-awards/

simultaneously assuming that the realness and authenticity that they are projecting is somehow

inherent in the musical gestures or performance of "real" blues artists.  This can be viewed as an

attempt to deny that that the Blues Foundation has any relevance as a legitimate arbiter of quality.

Simply put, whilst the Blues Foundation may fund and stage the awards and promote the music, it is

only the cognoscenti of the RBF – as indicated in chapters 4 and 6 – who believe that they are able to

discern true value in the music.  Similarly, blues music for many of its consumers is "…incompatible

with the discourse of sales figures, awards ceremonies, and halls of fame" (Sanjek, 1999, p. 49), as

this institutional legitimation comes in direct contrast to notions of unmediated performance

inherent in projections of first-person authenticity (Moore, 2002, p. 211).  Of interest here is the way

that the BMAs are decided.  Any record label or blues musician may submit an album for

consideration, providing that it was released in the previous 12 months leading up to the awards.

Nomination judges then decide which suggestions should proceed to the voting stages.

> "The nominators are carefully-screened Blues experts, consisting of Blues radio
> programmers, print media representatives, retailers, educators, photographers,
> festival presenters, talent buyers, and other Blues aficionados who attend many
> live performances and actively listen to the majority of Blues recordings issued in
> any given year. The nominators are chosen from the Blues Foundation's
> membership, with a focus on geographical balance and extent of involvement
> within the Blues genre. Most are from the United States, but we currently also
> have nominators from Canada, Europe and Central America."

The make-up of the nomination board also appears to present challenges for the internet

commentators of the RBF.



> Scott Dirks I'll preface this by saying that I'm for promoting the blues,
> and am glad the Blues Foundation does what they do. But there are
> no qualifications for being a member of the Blues Music Foundation
> other than paying a small fee. So many (most?) members are
> members in order to advance their own agenda, whether it's a
> specific band, blues society, record label, etc. So it's not really a good
> way to judge the best of what's happening out there, only a way of
> seeing what is the best promoted.

The comments above appear to directly contradict the statement from the Blues Foundation

concerning the identity and motives of the nomination panel, particularly when the nomination

process specifies that "To avoid potential conflicts, those with a vested interest in any song or artist

are excluded from further involvement in the nomination process." Finally, the nominations are

shared with the ordinary Blues Foundation membership, who ultimately decide the winners. The

significance here is that the membership is able to cast their votes via the internet. Membership to

the Blues Foundation is as low as $25 (£20) per year and membership of the non-profit organisation

numbers in the tens of thousands. This would seem to represent a wide group of individuals who

identify as blues fans actively choosing their preferred candidates for valorisation. Despite this

seeming democratic access to the voting process, the challenge here perhaps lies in what – or who –

the commentators on the RBF believe is being rewarded, celebrated and valorised. This in turn

potentially highlights an ideological conflict between what is considered to be 'authentic' by virtue

of being popular in terms of unmediated and '…of the people,' as opposed to being commercially

successful and thus 'popular by numbers' (Cutler, 1989). In summary for this section, whilst CMC

allows greater numbers of people who identify as blues fans to take an active role in deciding which

blues performers are recognised by participating in the online voting for annual ceremonies which

are not specifically predicated on album sales, online commentators make use of discussion forums

to cast doubt on the validity of the awards when it becomes clear that the popular vote is at

variance with their own tastes.

## 8.3 Liveness & accessibility

In a mediatised space such as the internet, the subject "…is both shaping and being shaped by the

media which they inhabit" (Causey, 1995, p. 155). From the late 19th century, sound recording

offered the ability to preserve the bodies of the dead after life in order that they could continue to

perform a social function (Sterne, 2003, p. 292). In the case of blues music and blues culture this

included the ability for a secondary audience to engage with the performances of artists from whom

they were separated by space, time and culture. These sonic representations of performances

functioned as avatars for the performers, their representatives in remote times and places. In the

case of blues guitarist and singer Robert Johnson this was quite literally the case in the 1938 *From*

*Spirituals to Swing* concert, where a phonograph recording was played to the audience in Carnegie

Hall in his absence.  Johnson had been murdered two years before, and so in this way his

presentation to a wider audience was mediatised from the outset – presenting the archetypal

bluesman; young, black, naturally talented – and dead (Moore, 2001, p. 74).  The perfect cultural

container to receive technologically and culturally mediated projections of authenticity (Schroeder,

2004).

Digital formats and social media add a further dimension to these mediatised presences and avatars.

Early social media website MySpace provided fans with opportunities to connect with one another

using a band or solo artist's work as a nexus, rather than with artists directly.  Artists would however

occasionally patronise these fan-sites, offering a further dimension to their already multi-faceted

media presence (Beer, 2008).   In the present day, platforms such as Facebook and Twitter offer new

opportunities for fans to engage with the object of their interest.  A recent study of the way

musicians engage with fans via twitter concluded that these individuals 'perform celebrity' in a way

that 'complicates the dynamics between celebrity practitioners, their audiences, and those who

occupy spaces in-between' (Marwick & Boyd, 2011, p. 257).  In this way, whilst the relationship

between fans and stars remains asymmetrical and realised as a continuum, many performers adopt

fan-like behaviours in the presentation of self and to some extent, the simulation of availability

(Baym, 2012).   For example, following the death of B.B. King in 2015, musician Eric Clapton posted a

short tribute video via his Facebook page (Clapton, 2015):

*Figure 46: Eric Clapton delivers a short personal tribute to B.B. King*

In contrast to the clothing and make-up styling which often accompanies Clapton's public appearances, the musician appears to be in his home, unshaven and wearing an un-ironed sweatshirt. Additionally, rather than being filmed by a camera crew and sound recordist, Clapton appears to have made the video with a hand-held device, possibly a smartphone. What is presented appears to be a spontaneous and heartfelt tribute to a musical friend which collapses the media presentation of Clapton into a seemingly more immediate and sincere expression of grief, shared directly with his fan-base. The significance here is that should Clapton have wished to reach these fans in the same way prior to the digital era, it would have been necessary to engage audio and video specialists to generate the recording, even before the issue of where to screen the tribute arose – cinema? Television? In which country? At what time? With what (if any) sponsorship? How and by whom might the work be scripted?

Presentation of material in this way contributes to the way in which Clapton engages with his fans. At the time of writing, the video had been watched 16,494,441 times and had received over 18,000 comments in addition to being shared 336,246 times via Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Comments indicated the directness of contact felt by the 9,451,466 fans who 'like' the musician's

page:

> Mary Weingardt Very sincere grief & love emoted which showed us your
> gentle strength & kindness. As I think Mr. BB King showed you in a very
> special way. Not only the music, his kind soul.
> Like · Reply · 32 · 16 May 2015 at 05:50

and

> Jeff Sherman Eric Clapton, you along with BB were an amazing influence to
> me growing up and still are to this day . Much love and respect to you both.
> Like · Reply · 11 June 2015 at 00:31

> Pierre Lavoie Your the man Mr Clapton. RESPECT ALWAYS
> Like · Reply · 1 · 9 June 2015 at 00:45

Of interest here is the way that fans appear to engage directly with Clapton.  Facebook, like Twitter,

provides an assurance that the page is "…the authentic page or profile for [a] public figure, media

company or brand," (Facebook, n.d.) by means of the blue badge system.  In the case of a living artist

strongly associated with blues music such as Clapton, this appears to provide a space where fans can

comment on his media presence and artistic output in the belief that the artist himself will see and

perhaps respond to them.  For example, responses to a new, live 2016 arrangement and recording of

Clapton's 1977 song "Wonderful Tonight" below indicate a certain belief that fans are talking directly

to their idol:

> LeRoy Ackerson I was fortunate enough to catch you at a little tav in the
> university district in Seattle, about 20yrs ago. 15 feet away from my favorite
> musician in a venue that when packed to the gills, might have held 100
> people. Can't remember the name of the place, but I'll never forget that show.
> My most sincere thanks.
> Like · Reply · 53 · 6 October at 16:43

…and similarly to some of the more antagonistic comments to be found on the RBF, some

commentators feel empowered to take the artist to task:

Aside from the video tribute mentioned above, there is no direct evidence that Clapton reads the page on a regular or irregular basis, and there is certainly no instance of a response to comments from the artist himself.  This does not however diminish the flow of commentary from the fans and provides a further platform for the artist and his organisation to present material to his fan base (Baym, 2012).

Given that Clapton is alive at the time of writing and that his page is verified as official by Facebook, it is perhaps not completely unrealistic for fans to perhaps harbour some form of hope that the artist might respond to them directly.  Of further interest here is that Clapton is not the only blues figure with a verified page in social media.  The estate of B.B. King maintains a Facebook presence for the artist which perhaps confusingly continues to post under King's name:

*Figure 47: "B.B. King" wishes his followers a happy holiday via Facebook, 17 months after his death*

Whilst his followers are aware that King passed away in May 2015, many continue to address

remarks to him.
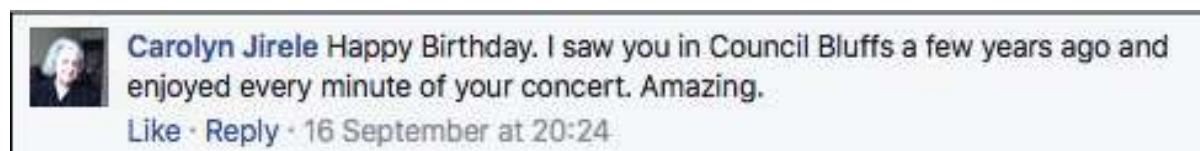






In this respect, despite the King's death, his mediatised presence to his audience continues.  As film

scholar Robert Dyer indicates, media stars are constructions and so their death does not necessarily

mark a significant change in the relationship with fans whose primary engagement with the celebrity

in question is technologically mediated (Dyer, 2004; Dyer & McDonald, 1997).  In other words, if the primary engagement with the music and musician is through audio and/or video recordings, barring the generation of new output, the star's death does not necessarily hinder fans' experience.  At the time of writing in 2016, new and previously unreleased material from recently deceased artists Prince (1958-2016) and David Bowie (1947-2016) is in circulation.  The digital image of Elvis Presley (1935-1977) continues to tour concert halls.  Significant for this study, there is a lucrative market in legacy management typified by the activities of companies such as JAM Inc., who provide services in the name of artists including influential blues musician Muddy Waters (1913-1983).  CEO Jeffrey Jampol emphasises  that the role of his organisation is to preserve the legacy of the deceased artist by connecting their essence and presence to new and successive generations of fans.  This is achieved not only be through the re-issue of existing material, but through licensing deals which support the creation of themed juke-box musicals, holographic likenesses for concert appearances, or as in the case of the *Muddy Waters 100* album (MOVLP 1536), licensing musical material for re-interpretation by a new generation of performers.  As Jampol explains, the aim is to maintain the deceased artist's presence in the popular discourse;  "I like to animate and lift up the body. Once the artist is back in the cultural conversation, the revenue follows" (Helmore, 2016).  Jampol's choice of words is of interest – his use of 'animate' resonates with the blues foundation's slogan of 'Keeping the Blues alive', connotative of cheating death and perhaps even hinting toward immortality.

Other artists appear to use Facebook and social media as another advertising platform or an arena in which to perform their celebrity (Marwick & Boyd, 2011) and through which to address their fans (Guy, 2014).

*Figure 48: veteran blues player Buddy Guy delivers a 2014 birthday greeting to B.B. King*

Pictured above, blues guitarist and singer Buddy Guy addressed a birthday greeting to B.B. King in a

Facebook video.  This is of significance since Guy has often indicated his professional and personal

closeness to King (Guy & Ritz, 2012, p. 88), and even at the time of King's death, Guy shared his

frustration at being unable to personally pay his last respects to his friend (CBS, 2015).  With this in

mind, it is possible to regard the above video as a greeting which is intended perhaps less for King

and more for King's (and Guy's) fans.  There is a clearer sense of preparation about the video when

compared to Clapton's tribute.  The camera is locked off and steady, Guy is smartly dressed in his

trademark polka dots and panama hat.  Guy is seated behind a desk in the office at his club, Legends.

Someone else is operating the camera and a certain weariness with the process seems apparent [as

above].  Whilst this does not in itself indicate a lack of sincerity, there is a stronger sense of staging

in Guy's video than is obvious in Clapton's.  This in turn underlines Guy's entrepreneurial approach

to marketing using social media; as with many other artists, Guy is clearly aware of the importance

of engaging with fans through this new medium.

## 8.4 Virtual spaces

It is not only the likenesses of artists or the potential for direct contact which are made available via

CMC.  The Blue Front Café in Mississippi is a venue famous since 1948 as the home of a distinct style

of blues called 'Bentonia Blues' after the area in which the café is located.  During the cotton seasons

of the segregation era, the café would play host to blues performers such as "…Skip James, Jack

Owens, Henry Stuckey, Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2 (Rice Miller), and James "Son" Thomas"

(msbluestrail.org, n.d.).  The significance of the jook joint for this study is that it has been recreated

as a virtual space which can be visited online.  Whilst it is possible to view the exterior of the

property through geolocation applications such as Google Maps, as a promotion for the I Am The

Blues documentary, the café has been recreated as a virtual space.

Online customers can approach the café and are greeted by the harmonica playing of soul-blues

performer Bobby Rush (pictured below).



*Figure 49: an animated representation of soul-blues performer Bobby Rush plays harmonica
on the railway lines which run in front of the Blue Front Café*

Clicking on Rush's animated, harmonica-playing image triggers a 2-minute documentary in which

Rush explains his family connections to the area and the ways in which the environment has

influenced his music-making.  Wearing a Blues Foundation T-Shirt, Rush demonstrates his proficiency

as a harmonica player and gives an introduction to the blues.  Clicking on the café building itself

brings visitors closer to the building where cartoons of musicians LC Ulmer and The Deacon are

playing looped guitar music.

Again, clicking on the performers triggers a video in which the two performers are engaged in conversation about the ways in which manual labour has influenced their approach to music, before demonstrating their music making with acoustic guitars:



Finally, clicking again on the building affords users access to a digital recreation of the café itself.

Once inside, it is possible to look in three directions:

*Figure 50: Looking left in the virtual Blue Front Café*



*Figure 51: Looking straight ahead in the virtual Blue Front Café*



*Figure 52: Looking right in the virtual Blue Front Café*

Each of the above views features items with which visitors can interact.  By clicking on posters for

example, extra footage and scenes from the "I am the Blues" film can be viewed, or buy clicking on

other items, text-based articles educate visitors about the history of Bentonia blues.  All the while, a

sound file of low murmuring conversation, clinking glasses and rustling paper plays in order to re-

create the atmosphere of the venue.  Whilst this is clearly a promotional device tied to a film, the

ability to experience sounds and sights associated with the location and its history is facilitated by

CMC.  Although ultimately the aim is to persuade visitors to watch or purchase the film, the ability to

"visit" the juke joint and experience the music of the area is in advance of the purely aural

experience of perhaps listening to a Bobby Rush recording, or simply engaging with the film's

narrative structure.  Through the virtual representation of the space there is an attempt to create a

sense of agency for the visitor who may proceed through the set pieces of the virtual space at their

own pace, revisiting material at will.  As the venue is still in business, this virtual experience may also

be enough to persuade visitors to take a trip to Bentonia and follow the Blues Trail – a series of

designated markers which tell the story of the blues through a series of historic locations.   In this

way, the virtual construction offers something beyond a purely audio or video representation; there

is an attempt to confer a sense of the space itself, however representational and 2-dimensional the

graphical figures might be.  There is an attempt to bring the audience into the space, whilst

simultaneously maintaining a safe, technologically mediated distance.

## 8.5 Summary and conclusion

In each of the examples given above – engagement with performers directly, influencing awards

ceremonies and visiting virtual sites – CMC has distinct and direct effects for performers, mostly in

providing a more seemingly immediate engagement with fans.  Whilst perhaps the "aura"

(Benjamin, 1936) or "liveness" (Auslander, 2008) of an original performance in space and time

witnessed directly is absent from these experiences, CMC offers additional dimensions to the ways

in which performers and spaces are experienced by blues consumers. Theodore Gracyk indicates

that in popular styles, musicians are "…usually re-creating music in live performances, not making it"

(Gracyk, 1996, p. 77).  This assertion is correct in the case of early and mid-period blues music in that

those performances exist now only as audio and visual recordings; the artists are dead, and with a

few exceptions such as Buddy Guy and Chuck Berry (80 and 90 years old respectively at the time of writing), the only engagement with their work is mediated.  Thus, as indicated in previous chapters, blues music in the 21$^{st}$ century for some fans is less about performance and more about recordings (Auslander, 2008, p. 64).  As indicated in previous chapters, the problematic notion of 'authenticity' being ascribed to blues music and performances persists within a certain sector of the audience who actively comment through CMC.  As a result, studio recordings have become the standard for judging live performances in some circles  (Gracyk, 1996, p. 84).   As a result, for some blues musicians, rather than a spontaneous music created for a primary audience, blues music performance can potentially become (or be restricted to) a hyper-realistic set of gestures designed to confirm a pre-existing idea of blues music and blues culture for a secondary audience (Duffett, 2015; S. A. King, 2004; Ryan, 2011).  New performers who work in blues music indicate the restriction that this places on their creativity, often referring to the more polemic members of the blues community  as the "blues police" (Magness, 2016).  Despite this, living artists such as Janiva Magness, Joe Bonamassa and Eric Clapton continue to make new music and with the encouragement and endorsement of established performers such as B.B. King and Buddy Guy create new material in the blues style for a willing and accepting audience distanced from the limiting and subjective opinions of vocal blues fans who express their opinions via the internet.  As award-winning white blues stylist Seasick Steve observes  "[t]he kids who come to my shows don't know nothin' about Charley Patton or Son House.  They just know it rocks" (Wold, 2008).

The aim of this chapter has been to indicate that the internet and digital media open new possibilities for blues artists to engage with their fans, and for blues consumers to engage with blues music and blues culture.  These possibilities represent a widening field of participation which does not necessarily subscribe to the subjective views of sometimes vocal, exclusive and polemic blues fans.  Additionally, this chapter has attempted to illustrate that on occasion, fans sometimes place unrealistic expectations of contact on the  artists that they engage with through CMC.  Despite this, it seems that artists, their representatives and providers of social media services such as Facebook

and other builders of virtual online spaces are aware that the internet represents an important site of engagement for creative artists beyond traditional pre-digital media (Baym, 2012).

The following chapter now turns to the ways in which the audio medium, which was initially so important to the exponential spread of blues music and blues culture during the early- to mid- 20th century, has been affected by computer-mediated communications.

## Chapter 9: Remediation and .mp3

> The mediation of rock through social and cultural formations has received a
> good deal of attention in recent years – likewise, its historical mediation is
> frequently addressed.  However, there is a further set of mediatory factors
> that tend to [b]e overlooked, and they are the product of the technology
> involved in the production of the music itself (Moore, 2001, p. 20).

In media studies, **_remediation_** is described as the appropriation of the content of one medium into

another (Bolter & Grusin, 1999).  For example, when early blues music recordings issued as 78rpm

records were captured as sound for the first time, they became subject to a number of new factors.

Firstly, the musical performance was commodified as an artefact, the marketable and saleable unit

of a phonograph record.  Secondly, the artefact became objectified cultural capital in its own right, a

non-human actor in a network of market forces and power relations (Bourdieu, 1986; Piekut, 2014).

Thirdly, the music contained therein became subject to "Phonograph effects":  tangibility;

portability; invisibility; repeatability; media-specific limits on temporality; psychoacoustic receptivity;

manipulability (Katz, 2010).  Fourthly, the recording and creation of the artefact made manifest an

act of schizophonia – the dissolution of "…the binding relationship between a sound and the person

making it" (Schafer, 1969, p. 44).  Each of these factors have limitations which are specific to the

medium in question.  For example, 10-inch 78 rpm records are subject to restrictions on how much

musical material can be stored and played back, typically around 3 minutes.  This in turn has

consequences for the form of the music being captured in that the musical material needs to fit into

that 3-minute format in order to have presentational coherence within the medium.  For this reason,

blues scholars suggest that the persistent acceleration of tempo in some early blues recordings is a

result of players nearing the end of the time limit for the recording session and being forced to

speed up in order to reach the end of the song (Robert Malcolm Ward Dixon & Godrich, 1970;

Rothenbuhler, 2007; Sullivan, 2014; Wald, 2004).  Similarly, the fragility of this original medium

combined in many cases with limited production runs and the  contemporary status of phonograph

records as ephemera during the 1920s and 1930s mean that the medium and its content become

more scarce and generally more valuable over time to collectors and potential consumers of the music.

This chapter examines the discourse themes concerning the remediation of blues music from physical to digital media, firstly from phonograph to digital as compact disc (CD) during the 1980s, and secondly from CD to .mp3 later in the 1990s and into the 21$^{st}$ century. As indicated by the quotation at the head of this chapter, these effects are often overlooked in the study of popular music. In the case of these two specific medium shifts, elements of cultural gatekeeping, connoisseurship and valorisation are discussed as these manifest as expressions of distinction (Bourdieu, 2010). Also in both cases, themes of race and authenticity emerge from analysis of the text and talk. These themes underpin the inequality of power relations within the field of blues music and blues culture between consumers and performers. As indicated in previous chapters, these themes can be characterised as essentialised projections of blackness, and in the most problematic cases, may potentially be considered as racist.

## 9.1 78 to LP

As indicated in previous chapters, the conspicuous process of valorisation of certain artists over others by a secondary audience was initiated by the publication of *The Country Blues* (Charters, 1959). In this scenario, James McKune – a collector of blues 78s and writer on blues music - was unhappy with Charters' choice of subjects for his book, writing that:

> Charters wrote his book on the basis of record sales…all of us have been interested in knowing who the *great* country blues singers are, not in who sold best. … I write for those who want a different basis for evaluating blues singers. This basis is their relative greatness, or competence, as country blues singers. (McKune (1960) cited in Hamilton, 2007, p. 183)

Setting aside the problematic vagueness of the term "greatness", McKune seems unaware of the primary filtering that took place in order to identify and record blues artists during the 1920s and 1930s. Inspired by the commercial success of artists such as Mamie Smith, Bessie Smith and Blind Lemon Jefferson, record companies such as Columbia (CBS), Okeh,

Paramount and Vocalion relied on talent scouts to source African American talent. Amongst the most consistently successful of these scouts were Henry C. Speir and Frank Buckley Walker, both men from outside the African American community. The paradox here is that Speir's taste in artist selection identified country blues artists including (without being limited to) Charley Patton, Son House, Robert Johnson, The Mississippi Sheiks and Geeshie Wiley, whilst Walker "discovered" classic blues artists including Bessie Smith. Their standards for selection appeared to be that the artist had a substantial body of original material and an aurally distinctive performance style. Whilst this may seem obvious, these two requirements appear to have been enough to disqualify significant numbers of performers who either relied on standardised – and thus copyrighted – material for performance, and who enhanced their practice with visual tricks and clowning (Titon, 1994, pp. 212-213). What is significant here is that the material which McKune was listening to was pre-selected by other non-Africa-Americans largely on the basis of perceived commercial value, rather than any consideration of "greatness". What McKune was promoting as objective, innate truth was largely subjective and thus creating what Bourdieu would describe as distinction. Speir, Walker, and the recording companies they served were in the business of making money from a specific audience, rather than promoting great art; in the final choice "Speir had no formal musical training; he simply relied on his musical taste" (Titon, 1994, p. 213). Simply put, the music which was recorded on 78rpm records and which now commands prices in excess of $37,000 (£29,900) in auction (Records, 2013) was initially and primarily picked for its commercial value to a primary audience with arguably different aesthetic criteria to a secondary audience displaced by space and time, carried to these new listeners in a format which promoted the invisibility of the artist, and which divorced their practice from its context.

Chapter 9: **Remediation** and .mp3

### 9.1.1 Issues, re-issues and compilations

Early 78rpm records were designed to reproduce music acoustically, without the aid of an electrical

amplifier.  In addition, the flat discs were heavy and fragile and so were prone to shattering or

breaking.  As indicated above, the content time available on the side of each record was limited to

around 3 minutes.  The format's successor, the long playing record or "LP" introduced commercially

in 1949 was designed to spin at the slower $33\frac{1}{3}$ rpm and featured considerably smaller grooves,

initially called 'microgrooves,' and could contain up to 50 minutes of music  (Graves, 2006, p. 812). In

other words, compression and format technology meant that a single LP could contain the content

of up to 8 double-sided 78s.  This advantage in format was utilised on *The Country Blues* (RF 1, 1959)

the LP which accompanied Charters' previously mentioned book, which contained 14 individual

tracks remediated from the original 78rpm format.  The significance of this album release, despite

the misgivings of McKune and the other members of his circle who went by the name of the 'Blues

Mafia' (Hamilton, 2007, p. 176), was that the re-mastered and re-issued material was now available

to a new generation of young white musicians such as Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, the Allman Brothers

and the Grateful Dead who adapted and adopted the songs into their repertoire.  Additionally, to

counter what they perceived as the incomplete presentation of "great" blues records, the Origin Jazz

Library record label issued two LPS.  29/11/2016 *The Immortal Charlie Patton Number 1 1929-32*

(OJL-1, 1960) and *Really! The Country Blues 1927-1933* (OJL-2, 1962) allowed listeners to hear for

themselves what McKune had previously described as "greatness," by bringing artists including

Charley Patton, Son House, Tommy Johnson and  Skip James to the vinyl LP format for the first time.

This act of remediation thus facilitated the circulation of technologically mediated performances -

sound recordings - amongst an increased number of confirmed and potential fans of the music.

Important effects of this for the development and perpetuation of blues music were twofold.  Firstly,

the songs entered  the repertoire of young folk, blues and countercultural artists during the 1960s,

further exposing the material to an extended secondary audience.  Secondly those artists featured

on the records who were still living – particularly Bukka White, Skip James and Son House – were

granted second careers as performance musicians for a new audience of young, non-African

American  listeners (F. Davis, 1995; Gioia, 2008).  As mentioned in chapter 5, this confluence of

activity meant that young white artists such as guitarists Aurora "Rory" Block and Mike Bloomfield,

as well as harmonica players Paul Oscher and Mike Bloomfield, were able to perform with and

become acculturated to blues music and blues culture alongside older, black artists.

In the same period, Columbia records issued *King of the Delta Blues Singers* (CL1654, 1961), a

compilation album which brought together 16 tracks by blues musician Robert Johnson.  By the time

of this release, Johnson had been mythologised by Samuel Charters in print.  Additionally, both

folklorist Alan Lomax and talent scout John Hammond II had sought Johnson out during the late

1930s to include him in field recordings and concert presentations respectively, only to find that he

had died in August 1938.  It is not the focus of this chapter to examine the myth-making and

sociological status of Johnson as a cultural figure, work which is more adequately undertaken by

Guralnick (1990),  Schroeder (2004) and Wald (2004).  What is of interest to this study is that

Johnson's presence in mainstream popular culture is one which is technologically mediated from the

outset.  His introduction to a wider public at the 1938 *From Spirituals to Swing* concert was via

phonograph record following his death earlier that year, and his presence as an artist and influence

is equalled only by his absence as a sharply-defined cultural personality (Schroeder, 2004).  *King of*

*the Delta Blues Singers* drew influential admirers from the blues revival who took inspiration from

Johnson's for-the-record aesthetic, his material seemingly crafted specifically to fit the phonograph

medium (Rothenbuhler, 2007).  In his autobiography, blues-rock musician Keith Richards indicated

that "…Robert Jonson was like an orchestra all by himself.  Some of his best stuff is almost Bach-like

in construction," by way of a compliment (Richards & Fox, 2011, p. 105).  Similarly Eric Clapton

confesses that "At first the music almost repelled me, it was so intense, and there was no attempt

being made by this man to sugar-coat what he was trying to say, or play. It was hardcore, more than

anything else I had ever heard.  After a few listenings, I realised that, on some level, I had found the

master, and that following this man's example would be my life's work" (Clapton & Sykes, 2007, p.

40).  Both quotations here are reactions to the 1961 vinyl LP.  Both musicians are white, from the

United Kingdom, and went on to be central figures in the blues revival and later, the development of

blues-rock.  It is interesting to note that Richards makes high-cultural references to the orchestra

and Bach as a reaction to Johnson's playing.  Clapton, arguably part of a similar south-east of

England cultural  milieu, references the emotional directness and rawness that he identifies in

Johnson's music.  The diversity of these psychoacoustic images indicate clearly the variation possible

when the artist is divorced from his context, and the listener is part of a secondary audience.  Both

musicians, as indicated here, cite Johnson as a major influence, and both have recorded

arrangements of his work.  Also of interest is that as indicated in chapter 6 and as will be

subsequently illustrated, the current iterations of the blues mafia resident in some quarters of the

internet as discourse participants demonstrate extreme antipathy toward both Richards and

Clapton, despite the clear and consistent respect for the blues tradition evidenced by the musicians'

words, deeds and musical gestures over several decades.

### 9.1.2 From LP to CD: Robert Johnson - The Complete Recordings

The magnetic tape compact cassette was available from 1963 in two specific modes. On the one

hand pre-recorded material was available, but consumers were also able to purchase blank tapes

which could be filled from a variety of sources such as radio or LPs via home-taping.  The portability

of tape recorders also made the technology ideal for clandestine recording of performances, or

"bootlegging".   Additionally, cassette tape was also an ideal medium for people to generate and

copy their own compilation albums, a practice which continued into the early 1980s (Sterne, 2003).

Despite the popularity of compact cassettes with some consumers, recording companies continued

to focus on the vinyl LP as the dominant consumer music media (Knopper, 2009).  An indication of

the rising fortunes of blues-based rock such as that produced by bands including Cream and Led

Zeppelin who cited African American blues as significant influences is that production runs of their

LPs tended to be in the tens of thousands, where blues LPs "…were pressed in runs of hundreds" (E.

M. Komara, 2006, p. 818).

Communications company AT&T spearheaded the digitisation of sound, initially in order to improve the number of conversation signals which could be carried by telephone lines (Sterne, 2012). Rather than using electrical impulses and mechanical contact to reproduce sound which in turn induced physical wear on the media, the digital recording process sampled sounds at intervals ranging up to 50, 000 times a second – also represented as 50kHz. These samples were then read back by a computer which a) reduced mechanical wear on the media and b) featured a greater dynamic range at 96dB than LP's 70dB. By the end of the 1970s, LPs were being produced using digital masters for their increased fidelity and consistency (Graves, 2006).

Compact Discs (CDs) were commercially introduced in 1982. These discs could hold up 80 minutes of music, an increase in the capacity available via LP. In blues music, companies such as Delmark made use of this extra space to include out-takes and alternative versions of material on CD reissues of albums, such as Magic Sam's *West Side Soul* [DS 615] and Junior Wells' *Hoodoo Man Blues* [DD 612]. The most significant blues music release of the early CD era was *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings* (CBS 467246 2, 1990). Originally projected to sell 20-30,000 copies, the album initially sold more than ten times that number, perhaps mimicking the early unexpected success of Mamie Smith's seventy years previously (E. M. Komara, 2006, p. 819). The success of the album can be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, the audience for the music were familiar with Johnson's work through the re-recording of his songs by artists such as Cream, Led Zeppelin, Eric Clapton and others. Secondly, the persistent myth that Johnson had "…sold his soul to the devil" had by 1990 been in circulation for over 20 years and had achieved folklore status in many quarters (Beaumont, 2011; Schroeder, 2004; Wald, 2004). This notion had also by 1990 been represented as a musical fantasy in the 1986 feature film, *Crossroads* (Hill, 1986). Thirdly, the compact nature of the media meant that Johnson's entire recorded output – 29 songs and 13 alternate takes recorded across 5 sessions in 1936 and 1937 - could be contained on 2 CDs, small enough to fit in the palm of a consumer's hand. Fourthly, the CDs were priced to sell at £20, reasonably affordable for such objectified cultural capital. Fifthly, the CD was accompanied by extensive liner notes by Steve

LaVere and lyrical transcriptions which, although inaccurate in places[28], allowed the secondary

audience for the material a greater purchase on the content.  Sixthly (and perhaps returning to the

first point) the album featured celebrity endorsements from Keith Richards and Eric Clapton, both

long-time devotees of Johnson's musical work.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive commercial success of the album which allowed CBS/Sony to

re-issue more *Complete Recordings* as part of their Legacy series such as those of Bessie Smith, some

critics were disappointed at the sound quality (Pearson, 1992).  The masters for the re-issue had

been digitised from tape and these featured a large amount of potentially intrusive surface noise for

an audience used to loudness, clarity and the amplified bass response of the RIAA curve[29].  Similarly,

the chronological presentation of the tracks with alternate takes side-by-side with the issued

recordings was criticised for breaking up the flow of the material and for deviating from the

sequence of the 1961 King of the Delta Blues LP.  Finally, the inclusion of endorsements from

Richards and Clapton in the liner notes was criticised as being unnecessary "…show business"

(Pearson, 1992, p. 220).  Re-mastered in 2011, the collection has sold over 1 million copies, and been

preserved in the Library of Congress' National Recording Registry and was awarded a Grammy the

year after its release for "Best Historical Album".

The significance of this release is that having been absorbed as a foundational text by the blues-

rockers of the 1960s, Johnson's work was translated into a form suitable for these performers'

primary audience  - the folk revivalists, baby-boomers and members of the counterculture of the

1960s.  In other words, Johnson's technologically mediated work was made available to a secondary

audience of musicians who absorbed his influence and in so doing, familiarised a new generation

with his work.  Not all consumers of course were happy with this.  As indicated above, some critics

saw this inevitable musical re-interpretation of Johnson's material as as at best a dilution of their

---

[28] Greil Marcus' parsing of "Bernice" as "Bunny Ears" from *Walking Blues* is a good example of the
mondegreening misinterpretation of lyrics, most likely from a lack of familiarity with Johnson's regional dialect
(Pearson, 1992, p. 220).
[29] RIAA EQ.

projections of the blues aesthetic, and at worst a clear-cut case of cultural appropriation.  This

thematic confusion of ontology and aesthetic preference  - in other words, mistaking individual taste

for concrete markers of quality or definition ("I don't like it, therefore it is not real blues") - persists

into computer-mediated communications (CMC) and is illustrated below:

Ness Mesileipä For me one aspect of Corey's point came after years of hearing the Cream version, finally getting to hear the way Albert King sang the words. Clapton no doubt felt the song, as did I as a listener, but for neither of us the illiteracy and all its implications and causes was an actual reality. My heart broke when Albert sang it, with an entirely different feeling.

I can't read, haven't learned how to write
My whole life has been one big fight
Born under a bad sign
I been down since I begin to crawl
If it wasn't for bad luck, I wouldn't have no luck at all

Like · Reply · 5 · 26 August at 11:28

> Peter Crowley Eric is the Pat Boone of the blues. He should stick to making pop songs as he's really good at it.
> Like · Reply · 9 · 26 August at 11:32

> Keith Randall 'The Pat Boone of the blues...' That's pure poetry
> Like · Reply · 9 · 26 August at 11:35

> Keith Randall However, I would prefer not to see either name on the RBF, ever. Or anywhere else for that matter.
> Like · Reply · 3 · 26 August at 11:37

> Paul Vernon then if you ever have cause to raise the name again, then feel free to use his RBF nom-de-wank Bat Poone....
> Like · Reply · 9 · 26 August at 13:40

> Rick D Leonard Ness, that is an excellent example. I struggle to share my experience about what the Blues means to me with folks who can't put themselves in the segregated South that spawned the Blues. It's hard to imagine a world where so many people could not read and write, but that was the world I grew up in.
>
> It's hard to describe a world where education was denied, by tradition, by necessity and by law. It's impossible to describe the heartbreak when I recognize illiteracy in a person today. Bat Poone singing Bad Sign is as disingenuous as him singing A Change Goin' Come.
> Like · Reply · 5 · 26 August at 14:39

Rick D Leonard The RBF oasis provides great sustenance in a Blues world laid barren by Bonamassarati and Bat Poone locusts.
Like · Reply · 9 · 26 August at 14:29 · Edited

Paul Vernon that, of course, was the point in launching it in the first place.
Like · Reply · 6 · 26 August at 14:56 · Edited

> Rick D Leonard I am always blown away by the diversity of kindred spirits. In all honesty, it is one of the very few places I am comfortable expressing my love-hate relationship with the South, particularly as it relates to the Blues.

*Figure 53: RBF members discuss the authenticity of Eric Clapton as a blues player*

In this scenario, paradoxically Clapton is vilified for seemingly being inauthentic on aesthetic grounds by a commentator who then advances his own credentials which appear to be based on little more than geography.

In simple terms, the re-issue of Robert Johnson's 1930s recordings as digitised and restored media allowed an increased secondary audience to engage with the music. This secondary audience brought their own psychoacoustic and constructivist experience of the text to their conception of blues music and blues culture. In this way, blues music and blues culture were perpetuated and disseminated via digital means to a consumer base far beyond that envisioned by the Vocalion talent scouts during the 1930s. Through this example of remediation of Johnson's music – from 78rpm records sold to a primary audience in the late 30s, to LPs sold to a secondary audience in the 1960s, to CDs sold to an expanding audience in the 1990s, we are able to trace the role played by technological mediation in the perpetuation, development and dissemination of blues music and blues culture. Additionally, we are able to observe the problematic issues inherent with valorisation by a secondary audience. Where James McKune issued an Adornian dismissal of Johnson as a commercial pop artist (Hamilton, 2007, p. 183), later commentators praised this same artist as the bellweather who hastened the stylistic development of blues music during the middle 20th century. Further, two of the most influential and commercially successful artists inspired by Johnson's music – Richards and Clapton - are similarly dismissed as appropriators of black music despite both their consistent reference and homage to the source of their inspiration, and their endorsement by African American stylistic innovators in the style. This problematic paradox, whereby fans regard white performers as interlopers to "real" blues music, undeterred by master musicians such as B.B. King, Muddy Waters and Freddie King's praise for the same individuals, is discussed in greater depth in chapter 10.

## 9.2 CD, restoration and .mp3
As indicated above, increased capacity is one of the distinguishing factors in successive rounds of remediation in sound media technology. Where 78 rpm phonograph records contained up to 3

minutes of audio per side, LPs had a total capacity of up to 50 minutes, and CDs initially offered up

to 80 minutes of storage.  Additionally, between these different media, fidelity in terms of the

accurate and life-like reproduction of sound was promoted as a positively differentiating element

between formats (T. Brooks, 2004; Sterne, 2003).  The introduction of the .mp3 format in 1993

altered this relationship between media and fidelity by emphasising availability.  Specifically, the use

of audio masking techniques whereby louder sounds masked those that were quieter in the

recorded content and these quieter sounds were equalised out of the final audio signal meant that

the data size of CD-quality files could be significantly reduced, with varying effect on the overall

sound.  This "lossy compression" of signal file size meant that this particular medium was ideal for

transmission and reception via telephone lines and broadband connection – in other words, via the

internet (Graves, 2006; Knopper, 2009; Sterne, 2012).   Significantly for this study, the choice of

which frequencies would be masked and compressed was made by exposing idealised listeners to

different masking experiments by AT&T, Sony and other communications companies keen to reduce

sonic fidelity to the bare minimum required for a seemingly satisfactory auditory experience, raising

the question of "…who listens for whom, and with what effect" (Sterne, 2012, p. 164). Specifically,

these expert listeners could in no way be familiar with the range of musical content that would be

contained and transmitted by the format.  In other words, the pre-selection of frequencies for

exclusion and compression by expert listeners based on their personal tastes partially mirrors the

pre-selection of material by talent scouts such as Speir and Walker which is fundamental to the

narrative of blues music and blues culture.  Despite this, however, the .mp3 format has allowed the

transmission and reception of musical content via the internet to proceed in a manner which has

adversely affected revenues to the recording industry which were previously accrued from the sale

of physical formats.  Since the late 1960s, the recording industry had generated considerable annual

income from the sale of phonograph records.  Additionally, a change in format such as that to CD

also brought the opportunity for revenue as consumers re-purchased existing material in a new,

higher fidelity format (Knopper, 2009).  However, the confluence of the introduction and availability

of .mp3 alongside the increased proliferation of the internet for domestic and commercial use

brought a change in the marketplace and the buying habits of consumers, which led to what has

been characterised as a catastrophic decline in the value of the recorded music industry of around

$7 billion since 1999, a contraction of almost 50% (Sisario, 2015; Sisario & Russell, 2016).  The

following case study illustrates several of the challenges brought by .mp3, digital enhancement

technologies and format changes to blues music and blues culture in the 21$^{st}$ century.

## 9.3 Case Study: The Blues Calendar

American John Tefteller is a collector of blues 78 rpm records and is known in blues circles as an

individual who is willing to pay large sums of money – in the tens of thousands of dollars - for rare

items (Petrusich, 2015).  As indicated in chapter 5, Tefteller paid £37,100 (£29,800) for a copy of

Tommy Johnson's *Alcohol and Jake Blues* in November 2013 (eBay.com, 2013; Records, 2013).  Since

2004, Tefteller has issued an annual blues calendar which features rare images as monthly

illustrations, but also includes a CD of remastered blues rarities from his own extensive collection -

such as "Alcohol and Jake Blues".  The calendar and CD retails for $20 (£16).  In September 2015,

Tefteller made the appeal presented in figure 56 below:

**John Tefteller**
13 September 2015

A topic for SERIOUS discussion: As I see the orders coming in for the new 2016 Blues Calendars (THANK YOU ALL!) I would like to open up a discussion that will impact greatly on where we go from here.

So far, only members of the AMERICAN EPIC team and a few of my close friends in Oregon have actually HEARD any of the new audio restorations done for this new Calendar. Those who have heard have been blown away by the sound...and rightly so. To those of you who just ordered, it will be a matter of a few short days and you too will know how great these sound with the new restoration techniques developed by the AMERICAN EPIC team.

Here is the discussion I need to have: The costs of doing these restorations, using the new methods, are quite substantial. Without getting too specific, let me just say that they run well over $1,000.00 per track, by the time all is said and done and restoration completed. This makes the actual cost of a twenty track CD very expensive. Contrary to some popular folklore, I am not made of money and cannot justify the costs of doing all this without a substantial increase in sales of the Blues Calendars from where we are normally, which is about 6,000 copies.

My biggest fear and dilemma is spending all this cash to create these gorgeous sounds and then seeing folks immediately posting all the songs to You Tube and sharing them for free all over the world. I KNOW I can't stop this and I don't have the time or energy to try....but I feel it my duty to warn the world here, that if this happens and sales are not dramatically better this year, I will be unable to do a 2017 Calendar...or at least not do one using the new restoration methods.

I am more than happy to break even on the Calendars, so this is not a money grubbing enterprise, but I can't LOSE thousands and thousands of dollars on each one in the future. As long as I can pay my expenses and come out even, or better, I can continue this series. If I start losing my shirt, pants and wallet, then I have to stop.

I have told some friends in recent weeks that we have kind of created a "Frankenstein monster" here and it has just now been let out of the lab. The good news is that everyone is going to go nuts over the new sound quality and the bad news is that many are going to want to share it, for free, with their friends etc.

So, I would like to open up the discussion here on the RBF, which I consider the best and most serious forum on the internet where things such as this should and could be discussed.....what are folks thoughts and opinions about this???? I know it is a bit premature as you haven't HEARD any of the new restorations yet....but as you get your new Calendars and listen to the CD's, please continue the discussion. How do I continue to present vintage Blues 78's in the very finest possible sound and still be able to count on enough sales to justify the costs of the kind of extensive restoration that it takes to get them to sound like they do?

I know some people are "happy" with any kind of sound, as long as they can hear the songs---but I have dedicated my entire life to finding and preserving vintage recordings of all types and figuring out how to make them sound the very best they possibly can. The AMERICAN EPIC team has now gotten us to "sound nirvana" as far as 1920's and 30's records go.....but at a very substantial cost. if that cost cannot be recouped because so many folks think that music should be free and shared freely around the world, then we may just have to put that genie back in the bottle and take a step backwards instead of forwards.....what say all of you???

I will comment when and if I can as this thread grows.....and again, I know it is a bit premature as none of you have heard any of this yet....but that is only days away and I thought this pre-emptive strike might be a good idea and a good starting point.......

Thanks, and again, thank you to all of you who are ordering the new 2016 Blues Calendar! Keep those orders coming and buy extra ones to give to friends and family!

*Figure 54: John Tefteller appeals to the 12,500 members of the RBF*

Chapter 9: **Remediation** and .mp3

Tefteller's complaint is that the sonic restorations for the calendar CD are expensive and pains-taking, and that consumers immediately share these via YouTube is damaging to his business model - a microcosmic representation of the way that .mp3 has adversely affected the wider recording industry. Although that said, his statement as presented here does not make clear mathematical sense. If each track costs around $1,000 (£800) for restoration, for a 20-track CD this is $20,000 (£16,000). If sales are in the region of 6,000 units, this equates to $120,000 (£96,000). Before any other costs, this would seem to indicate a profit of £100,000 (£80,000). The missing figure here may be the cost for acquiring the 78pm records which form the content.

As explained, the challenge in this case comes from a key affordance of digital media, specifically that it is non-rivalrous (Katz, 2010, p. 163). If a consumer buys a copy of the calendar and its CD, they own the medium and the content which, as Tefteller explains, has been restored using state-of-the-art techniques to offer the highest fidelity listening experience. If these consumers then make a digital copy of this content and make it available via YouTube, they still have their copy of the material, and others have a perfect facsimile of the content, bereft of surface noise and enhanced by an expensive restoration process. From a Benjaminian perspective, whilst the digital copy may not have the 'aura' inherent in the original medium – which is itself a mediated representation of the original performance – consumers of the YouTube content have no incentive to invest the $20 in the calendar to acquire the CD content. In this respect, Tefteller's complaint highlights both the Marxist imperative indicated by Alan Lomax's work discussed in chapter 4 and the more overt capitalist approach inherent in the marketing of blues music and blues culture. Otherwise stated – whilst Tefteller clearly has a seemingly altruistic motive in the dissemination of quality blues performances from the early to middle 20th century, there is a capitalist concern fundamental to the process which is undermined by the free distribution of the material through digital means.

The significance for this study is not only that of the digital nature of the content, but that the relationship between the medium and content appears to be further dissolved. That said, the

potential removal of physical media afforded by .mp3 should not disregard the requirements for playback equipment.  Admittedly, an .mp3 file does not require shellac as was the case with 78rpm record, vinyl as was the case with $33\frac{1}{3}$ rpm media, or the polycarbonate plastic necessary for the manufacture and supply of CDs.  What is required, however, is access to a computer in the form of a desktop, laptop, smartphone or portable digital music player such as an iPod or similar device, which like the gramophone, might be regarded as a token of wealth, and in societies grounded in materialist concerns should be regarded as a significant capital investment.  Part of Tefteller's complaint in this scenario, emphasised by his use of capital letters – is that digital media is non-excludable.  Once a consumer has the necessary reception equipment, they might acquire the content without having to financially compensate the provider.  In simple terms – the gatekeeping authority of the content provider is eroded by the affordances of the sound recording and reproduction technology – as was the case for certain African American performers at the beginning of the 20th century.

## 9.4 Summary & conclusion

This chapter indicates some of the problems inherent in the capturing of sound in a physical medium.  The chapter also suggests that the medium in question pre-supposes methods of consumption and carries with it messages about the society in which it was created.  Whilst there are increases in fidelity, capacity and availability with successive developments in recording and playback technology, and "…more recordings exist and circulate in mp3 format than in all other audio formats combined" (Sterne, 2012, p. 1), this availability does not diminish the capitalist imperative.  Whilst increasing the possibilities for dissemination and consumption, availability in non-rivalrous digital formats such as .mp3 does not reduce the nature of power relationships pre-supposed by the production, supply and consumption of the content.  Lastly, this chapter has presented examples of the contingent and subjective notions of artistic value as expressed by blues critics and performers in both the analogue and digital phases of blues music availability.  Through the case study, it is possible to discern an inequality in power relations between content providers

and consumers facilitated by digital means.  Specifically, Tefteller makes a significant investment in the production of high-quality audio material for his annual blues calendar, only for this to be freely distributed on the internet.  As indicated above, this partially mirrors the unscrupulous treatment of several of the original blues artists operating during the early- to middle- twentieth century. Certainly, at the time of writing several high-value law suits concerning ownership and copyright in blues music are ongoing.  At present, Eric Clapton is being sued by the estate of Bo Carter for an incorrect credit for a song on the *Unplugged* album for a sum of $5 million (Kreps, 2016; Marc Schneider, 2016).

The concluding chapter aims to pull together these observations with those of the preceding chapters, and present a triangulated overview of the position of blues music and blues culture from a technologically mediated perspective in the early decades of the 21st century.

# Chapter 10: Conclusion

## 10.1 The research questions

This study has explored the persistence of blues music and blues culture as represented through

computer-mediated communications.  Specifically, the aim of this study was to examine the effects

of digital remediation on blues music and blues culture.  The study focused on the challenges to

equivocal and egalitarian processes of cultural exchange, acculturation and diffusion – specifically

indicating that the treatment of blues music, blues culture, and its practitioners, is concerned with

power.  In other words, there is tension over the perpetuation and potential re-creation of the blues

and its history in the image of a dominant culture, whose negative treatment of African Americans

brought the cultural practice into existence in the first place.  In addition, the study uncovered the

conservative, contradictory and borderline racist attitudes of a certain sector of the secondary

audience for blues music and blues culture who confuse objective and ontological ideas of what

constitutes blues music with their own aesthetic preferences, and express their opinions through ICT

and CMC.

In pursuit of the central research question "what are the effects of digital remediation on blues

music and blues culture?", this thesis considered the specific following problems:

1. What are the themes which constitute the discourse on blues?
2. Who participates in the discourse on blues in the internet age?
3. How and where do participants do this?
4. How is information concerning blues music and blues culture stored and shared in the internet age?
5. How do the members of a blues community emerge, identify and act through computer-mediated communications (CMC)?
6. Who constitutes this community?
7. How do their behaviours and ideology relate and compare to their behaviours before the proliferation of CMC?
8. How does the internet/CMC affect performers and consumers of blues music and blues culture?

The research study made use of critical discourse analysis (CDA), participant observation, online

ethnography, an online questionnaire, and interviews to gather qualitative and quantitative data.  As

indicated in chapter 2, these approaches were used in order to both remain in the traditions of blues research established through the 20th century, and to make use of tools appropriate to the task of investigating decentralised and asynchronous online communities.

The study indicates that the most persistent themes in the discourse on blues are authenticity and race.  These two themes further manifest in a concern for geography and as reported by interview informants, gender.  This suggests that despite a desire for universalism in the music as evidenced by the "No Black, No White, Just Blues," slogan (CirlotAgency, 2006; S. A. King, 2011), there is still an expectation amongst self-identifying blues fans that "real" or "authentic" blues music is played and sung by African American males (S. A. King, 2004, 2011; Ryan, 2011).  This contradicts the history of the music, whereby the first commercially successful performers were female, and in the case of Marion Harris, white.  Additionally, this preoccupation with authenticity serves to support a faulty ideology based around distinction within the area of the community investigated for the project.

The most vocal participants in the discourse on blues in the internet age from 1996 – and individuals who self-identify as blues fans – appear to be middle-aged to elderly white men from northern America and Europe.  Even allowing for proportional representation of demographics, this group appears over-represented in the discourse.   Within this group are also scholars, cultural workers, and to some extent performers.  Several of these individuals participated in the blues revival of the 1960s and so might be considered as "baby-boomers". This is significant as these are gatekeeping functions which do not necessarily represent the blues from the perspective of its primary audience. In other words, with a very few exceptions, the narrative of blues music and blues culture is outside the control of black people.  Attempts to redress this balance are being made through the sponsorship of artists such as B.B. King via the *Delta Blues and Interpretive Center*, and Buddy Guy's *Chicago Blues Experience*.  Other attempts to engage with this imbalance such as those made by Corey Harris' blogs receive online commentary at a volume and velocity which is facilitated by ICT and CMC, but nonetheless the arguments that Harris makes are often viewed as polemic and

paradoxically for RBF members, racist.  This indicates that power relations in this area remain

unequal and that truth in this area remains contingent.

There are two main sites for online discourse participation.  (1) The social networking site (SNS)

Facebook hosts a number of blues-focused discussion groups.  This particular platform facilitates the

sharing of digitised materials such as printed texts, audio, images and moving image files.  In a

further manifestation of power, not all subscribed users are permitted access to the materials

available through the forum.  The Facebook SNS also allows forum administrators to control who are

members of the group, and to moderate and exercise control over the community by means of

warning and curtailment of discussions which they believe violate the conditions of membership of

the forum.  The most substantial of these focused groups on the Facebook platform is *The Real Blues*

*Forum*, whose central definition of what constitutes blues music appears to confuse ontology with

aesthetics. This places a limitation on the texts that might be discussed and so causes ruptures in the

view of the narrative of blues development  (2) There are text-based forums which allow users to

congregate, and these often have a wider interpretation of blues music and blues culture to include

blues-rock.  These forums however feature a limited amount of focused discussion as English

appears to be a secondary or tertiary language for discussion participants.  This however gives voice

and visibility to a non-anglophone section of the audience who are able to extend their relationship

with blues music and blues culture.  This developmental relationship further manifests in the real

world as valorisation through awards ceremonies and festival bookings for performers which are

facilitated by ICT and CMC.  In other words, participation via digital communications allows a greater

number of individuals to participate in the discourse on blues by buying blues music, attending blues

concerts, and participating in the voting in blues awards ceremonies.  In this way, the conservative

values of other self-identifying blues fans are challenged.  As an example; whilst typical RBF

members may not consider Eric Clapton, Joe Bonamassa, Susan Tedeschi or Derek Trucks to be

'authentic' blues performers and writers, a wider audience overrides this opinion by choosing to

consume their material in numbers which constitute commercial – and by extension cultural -

success for the artists in question.

Repositories of public knowledge (RPKs) such as museums, libraries and archives contain an

increasing amount of interactive digital information to which the public have access.  These RPKs

also promote multi-media experiences which promote an educationally constructivist engagement

with texts, artefacts and the culture from the perspective of a primary audience.  Increasingly,

materials are digitised for scholarly research.  These materials however require the curatorial gaze of

an archivist, or the unifying theory often imposed by physical RPK in order for users to realise the

potential value of the items being made available.

Certain organically intellectual blues scholars express alarm and concern at the fate of collections

such as that of Mack McCormick which are (1) in a distressing state of access and repair and (2) off-

limits to non-accredited or academically affiliated researchers such as themselves.  These individuals

exhibit a distrust of traditional RPKs, believing that the collected materials will not receive the care

and attention necessary for long-term preservation.  It is possible to view this concern as alarm that

RPKs exert more power in this space than the members of the blues community.  It is unclear how

splitting up such collections and distributing the materials amongst blues fans would preserve the

integrity of the archive.

The internet, CMC and digital technology also provide a wealth of materials to assist researchers

with their tasks, thereby potentially advancing the understanding of the field and enriching the

narrative and discourse on blues with important persepctives.  Editions of contemporary sources

such as newspapers, census information and other public documents such as birth, marriage and

death certificates available online allow researchers to confirm the whereabouts of performers and

other cultural workers in order to inform the narrative of the blues.  CMC also allows researchers to

collaborate with greater velocity and over greater distances than was previously possible.  Experts

who live many thousands of miles apart are able to collaborate and share materials for writing and

production projects.

Chapter 10: **Conclusion**

From participant observation on the online ethnography site, the RBF, it became clear that there is a separation between 'insider' and 'outsider' members of online communities. 'Insiders' have access to an increased store of materials in terms of texts, images, and audio-visual items. There is a limited progression from 'outsider' to 'insider' status, with the majority of the RBF being 'outsiders', and restricted to general discussions in a semi-public space within the closed community. 'Insider' members seem to be academics and scholars who make a clear contribution to the discourse in terms of previous or ongoing musicological and ethnographic work. It is unclear how the distinction is made in the case of new members although, the discourse themes (race, gender, authenticity, power) appear to have an impact. As a black scholar, I was accorded privileged access to materials and members.

Importantly, the study found minimal evidence of technological determinism. The behaviours exhibited online are facilitated and mediated by technology, but are not in the main unique to this mode of communication. Power structures and relationships mirror those of the real world. Notable is that there are no African American or otherwise black members of the moderating/control community. In the main, black or African Americans members of the forum are present as performers and scholars, rather than administrative members. This again highlights elements of the power structure predicated on the persistent themes within the discourse. This is significant as it illustrates how power and control are distributed amongst a secondary audience.

The question of who constitutes the online community differs slightly from research question 2 – "who participates in the discourse?" - in that it focusses exclusively on the members of the online community. From participant observation and the results of the survey, it seems that the online community of self-identifying blues fans is largely middle-aged to elderly white males, mostly educated to degree level. These individuals are generally members of a secondary audience by virtue of their separation in time and space from the original performers and audience. Some members of the online community however participated in the blues revival of the 1960s and bring that experience and perspective to the online community.

Chapter 10: **Conclusion**

Technological mediation means that previous behaviours inherent in the real world are extended into an online sphere. Particularly, a conflation of aesthetics and ontology appears to influence ideology amongst this group concerning the nature of blues music and blues culture, particularly what constitutes "…real blues". This definition is at odds with what African Americans who live in the geographic area which generated blues music and blues culture consider to be blues music.

These behaviours further manifest as indicated in the response to RQ5 above, with the formation of power structures which appear to exclude African Americans. As a result, these power structures are not necessarily informed by individuals with direct access to blues culture as members of a primary audience. This extends pre-ICT/CMC behaviours from the real world exhibited by folklorists and commentators who valorised specific artists based on their own aesthetic concerns.

Blues performers regard the internet and CMC as useful for discovery and promotion. Blues performers are able to engage directly with fans and promoters and so are able to build up their performance networks with reduced constraints from time and space as indicated by performers in other genres by Baym (2012).

Some performers are able to enhance their personal practice through research using digital media and CMC. They are able to identify new material and new markets, and to transfer materials to potential clients with greater speed and efficiency, particularly in territories that may otherwise be hard to reach from their current locations. The conservative and exclusive ideology of certain blues gatekeepers also manifests via CMC. This in part is solved by performers being able to use digital media as a sales platform, and leverage innovative engagement strategies to attract audiences such as real-time transmission of performances, individualised contact through SNS hosted interviews, and making general use of SNS and CMC as an interactive sales platform.

## 10.2 Findings and research literature

The findings of this study challenge a universalist or egalitarian view of blues music and blues culture. Whilst there is an increasing involvement of African Americans and women in the construction of the narrative on blues, as L. R. Jones (1963), Hamilton (2007) and Dougan (2001)

indicate, the development of the blues ontology has largely been undertaken by a secondary audience.  Projects such as the *B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center* as well as the *Chicago Blues Experience* and *Center for Black Music Research* in Chicago go some way to addressing this deficit.  The essential conflict appears to be between a synchronic view of what constitutes blues music and blues culture, and the diachronic lived experience of the music as a cultural practice.  From this perspective, this study adds to what is known about the perpetuation of musical subcultures and communities as demonstrated by Evans (1982), Grazian (2003), and Baym (2010, 2012) in terms of the way that musical subcultures self-identify and coalesce in the ways indicated by Holt (2007) and Fabbri and Chambers (1982).

The findings of the study also support the suggestion from L. R. Jones (1963) and Hamilton (2007) that the definitions of blues music and blues culture are beyond the direct influence of African Americans, even in  a digital age which might offer the prospect of a more equivocal and inclusive approach to the definition of such cultural areas.   In this way, the study contributes to the literature on African American culture by building on the work by Levine (2007) and Morrison (1992), who indicate that black Americans make visible and valuable contributions to world culture without necessarily having the power to direct how those contributions are viewed.  Specifically, ICT and CMC reproduce the unequal power structures evident in the physical world (Marvin, 1988).  It seems that on the internet, African American performers and audiences are not empowered to say what blues is.  This lends credence to the suggestion that the blues has moved from '…a music by and chiefly for black Americans' to 'a music by black and white Americans primarily for white Americans and Europeans' (Titon, 1993, p. 223).

From a theoretical perspective, the methodological and conceptual methods employed to produce knowledge and what we consider to be truth appear to be confirmed as contingent (Fairclough, 1989; Foucault, 1989).  Also, Bourdieu's notions of capital and distinction appear sound, such as they are applied to this particular problem (Bourdieu, 1986, 1996, 2010).  Postmodern ideas of hyper-

realistic representation are also relevant here (Baudrillard, 1994). Finally and fundamentally, a

Marxist view of history and the distribution of power underpins the findings of the study (Foucault,

1977, 1978).

## 10.3 Implications of new knowledge

The implications of this new knowledge are that whilst the contribution of African Americans is

visible, fundamental and tangible from both a musicological and cultural perspective, the formation

of the history of that contribution is subject to power relations which appear to remain beyond the

direct influence of this demographic. As a result, it is not possible to consider the ontology or

narrative of blues music and blues culture to be complete in that the voices of those who

established, developed and perpetuated the cultural practice initially appear to be minimised and

filtered through the understanding of a secondary audience. This understanding is of importance to

any researcher who seeks to promote or circulate a narrative of blues music and blues culture.

Whilst CMC and digital media at this time offer the ability to include more voices and perspectives,

currently the dominant narrative, such as it is available through ICT and CMC is largely constructed

by a secondary audience.

A result of including the perspective advanced by this study in future work in the field might lead to

a richer, more nuanced and inclusive representation of African Americans in the history of blues

music and blues culture, and by extension, of the black experience in America during the 20th

century and into the present day. Specifically, an understanding of the audience and contributors to

the discourse on blues such as it is enabled by CMC might inform the future content and

presentation of narrative and ontology of blues music and blues culture.

## 10.4 Limitations

Firstly, as indicated in chapter 2, it is not possible to completely quantify the audience for blues

music or the total community who participate in blues culture. Any study in this area will be

concerned with a representative sample. With this in mind, a study of blues music and blues culture

in a majority black environment which built on Grazian (2003) and Keil (1966) would be a relevant

addition to this study.  Secondly, qualitative data such as that gathered by this study privileges an experiential view.  Researchers  however indicate that attending to experience remains an important task for cultural studies (Pickering, 2008). This study notes that the experiential view is subject to change through recall; respondents may intentionally or unintentionally embellish or omit events over time.  As indicated in the introduction to this study, much of the work in blues music and blues culture has privileged the experiential through ethnographic practices, particularly given the status of blues music and blues culture as firstly an oral tradition, and secondly as the culture of a subaltern sociological group (Evans, 1982; Lomax, 1993).

The research could be enhanced by the inclusion of quantitative data in terms of the size of overall potential size of the audience for blues music.  The limitation here, however, is that as I have discovered during my own performances and as is indicated throughout this study, ontological definitions of "blues" are so varied and widespread that individuals may not always self-identify as being "blues fans".

As indicated in chapter 2, the research could have been enhanced by the conduct of a real-world survey as well as that which was conducted online. This might have been conducted at any of the 220 blues performances which I gave during the research period.  This might have enhanced the data concerning the part played by the internet and CMC in persuading the audience to attend the shows.  I argue however that since the main focus for this research was primarily concerned with online blues activity that the online nature of the survey was, in this case, appropriate.

Finally, I would have preferred to speak with more African American interviewees.  Whilst their voices are present in the work and any study of the blues is predicated on the practice of this demographic group, greater attention should be paid and stronger representation of this sector of society is needed.

## 10.5 Further research

As a result of this study, further research might well be conducted on the ways that blues music and

blues culture are represented on the internet, and the effect that this has on living contemporary

performers.  By extension, future research might consider the ways in which African Americans do or

do not engage with ICT and CMC as participants in the discourse concerning the history of blues

music and blues culture, and the ways that this narrative extends beyond that of a subaltern

demographic group (T. S. Jones & Copeland, 2010; Smith, 2000).  Additionally, the links between

online blues music and blues culture interactions and their realisations in the real world might be

further investigated from a commercial and sociological perspective, extending and consolidating

the work of this study with that of Ryan (2011) and S. A. King (2011).  As indicated in chapter 2, any

of the research questions presented above could potentially generate a larger-scale study of their

own, either as monographs or larger research projects.  As CMC appears to collapse traditional

conceptions of time and space, idiolectic cultural practices such as the blues continue to flourish in

circumstances and communities far beyond their points of origin.  As Gussow (2016) indicates, there

are now many blues nights in Vietnam; Evans (2016) describes a thriving blues scene in Venezuela;

musicians such as Maki Shizusawa and Samantha Fish problematise conservative notions of gender,

age and race in terms blues guitar and vocal performance.  These ideas might provide a starting

position for further research in blues music and blues culture with a specific focus on the ways that

producers, consumers and cultural workers are further enabled or constrained by ICT and CMC.

Following on from this, questions raised by this study concern the resistance of the existing blues

community to consider white musicians a part of the evolving diachronic blues tradition.  Whilst it is

clear that not all African American performers were fairly represented or remunerated for their work

in the field (Hamilton, 2007; L. R. Jones, 1963; Levine, 2007), it is also clear that players such as Eric

Clapton, the Rolling Stones and others made public their debt to originators of the form (Clapton &

Sykes, 2007; Rudinow, 1995).  The acceptance and transformative potential of these non-African

American performers was made clear by artists such as Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Freddie King and

others during their lifetimes.  These young, white performers were also acculturated to the form in public and demonstrative terms by the African American artists.  That the diachronic development of the form in this way is resisted by conservative discourse participants who appear to confuse ontology with aesthetics represents a challenge that might potentially be overcome by the inclusive and communicative potential offered by CMC and digital media.

Whilst I maintained field notes for 220 performances as part of my performance practice during the research period, these were ultimately not relevant to the work as they focused on real-world behaviours and norms and so had extremely limited relevance to this research project. These autoethnographic notes recorded the names of artists who performed, their ethnicity, choice of repertoire, type of venue and other personal details concerning fee, performance location and observations concerning the audience and environment.  These may however form the basis for a subsequent work which focuses on representation and the perpetuation of blues music and blues culture outside the United States in the 21st century.

In summary – clearly, blues music and blues culture persists in the modern day and is accessible to consumers via ICT and CMC.  A conservative group of fans continue to promote a problematic ideology concerning what constitutes "real" blues in their opinion, but as indicated above and throughout this study, this can be considered as the manifestation of power-structures that have roots in the blues-revival of the 1960s and find partial sociological explanation in notions of sociological distinction (Bourdieu, 2010).  Whilst much ethnographic and musicological work has been undertaken since that period, it appears to remain the case that the experiences of the primary audience for blues music are under-represented within the presentation of the narrative as analysts, if not as performers.

Examination of the discourse as enacted by the members of the Real Blues Forum shows a conservatism at odds with the diversity of the blues' diachronic development, a conservatism shown up as almost racist in that it privileges the opinion of elderly white men over that of the primary

Chapter 10: **Conclusion**

audience and master performers of the genre who appear to welcome change and development within blues music and blues culture.  This continues to be a question of power; who has the right – and the ability – to decide what the blues is?  The performance of blues music and continued persistence of blues culture are to some extent acts of endurance and resistance.  As far as is possible, the voices of its practitioners and its contemporary audience might be raised in analysis, as well as in song.  Perhaps this might represent the final collapsing between performance and analysis; it is for those who can to sing and play and feel what the music means in the moment in their context regardless of their gender or ethnicity, and for those who are absented by time and space and culture to find meaning in theirs.  As the leading lights of the first expressions of blues music and blues culture are now either very elderly or long-dead, it is perhaps for we, the living, to create new music and culture from what we have been bequeathed by Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Bessie Smith and others, viewing the new digital technologies available to us with the same curiosity and creativity that these giants of the field regarded valves, steel strings, microphones and magnetic tape.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

# DISCOGRAPHY: index of recordings cited

The dates and catalogue numbers cited below relate to the versions of the tracks that were used for the

study.  In some cases I was lucky enough to have access to original recordings, but in others I worked with re-

issued materials.

Discography

THE LIVERPOOL SCENE
'I've got those Fleetwood Mac, Chicken Shack, John Mayall can't fail blues'; *Bread on the night*; RCA 1969 [SF8057]. 83

JOHN MAYALL AND THE BLUESBREAKERS featuring ERIC CLAPTON
*Blues Breakers*; London 1968 [LK4804]. 90, 239

CHARLIE MCCOY
'Baltimore blues'; Decca 1934 [7007]. 143

CHARLEY PATTON
*The immortal Charley Patton number 1*; Origin Jazz Library 1962 [OJL-1]. 118, 261

DONNIE RAY
'She was at the hideaway'; *I'm goin' back*; ECKO 2012 [ECD1139]. 50

ROSE ROYCE
'Car Wash'; MCA 1976 [MCA-267]. 50

MAGIC SAM
*West Side Soul*; Delmark 1993 [DD-615]. 264

SATAN & ADAM
*Harlem Blues*; Flying Fish 1991 [FF70567]. 98
*Mother Mojo*; Flying Fish 1993 [FF70623]. 98
*Living on the river*; RaveOn Productions 1996 [ n/a]. 98
*Back in the game*; independent release 2011 [n/a]. 98

STEVEN SEAGAL
*Mojo Priest*; Steamroller/Ark 21 2006 [186-810-096-2]. 191

U2
*Rattle & hum*; Island 1988 [303-400]. 98

VARIOUS
*The road to Robert Johnson - and beyond*; JSP 2007 [JSP-7795]. 143

VARIOUS
*Muddy Waters 100*; Raisin Music 2013 [MOVLP1536]. 187, 250

VARIOUS
*The Country Blues*; RBF records 1959 [RF1]. 19, 20, 123, 259, 261

VARIOUS
*Really! The country blues*; Origin Jazz Library 1962 [OJL-2]. 20, 261

Discography

MUDDY WATERS
*Fathers and sons*; Chess 1969 [CHD-92522]. 62, 83
*Electric Mud*; Chess 1968 [CRLS-4542]. 185
*After the Rain*; Chess 1969 [CRLS 4553]. 185
*Hard again*; Blue Sky 1977 [PZ34449]. 183, 184, 185, 187, 188

JUNIOR WELLS
Hoodoo Man Blues; Delmark 1993 [DD-612]. 264

HOWLIN' WOLF
*The London Howlin' Wolf sessions*; Chess 1971 [CH-60008]. 148
'Coon on the Moon'; *Back Door Wolf*; Chess 1973 [CLP-50045]. 195
'Commit A Crime'; *All night boogie*; Blue Moon 1984 [BMLP-1019]. 52

# Appendix 1: Survey Results

The aim of the following survey was to investigate how individuals use the internet to discover, experience and perpetuate blues music and blues culture.  The survey was conducted between 28th May 2015, and 30th September 2015; a total of 4 months and 3 days.  This period was chosen as the summer months are typically the most active period for blues festivals and performances in the United Kingdom, mainland Europe and United States.

Total responses were 512.  Invitations to the survey were published in The Real Blues Forum in Facebook, the most populous blues forum on the social media site with a membership of 12,106.  The survey was publicised at 21 live blues music performances around the United Kingdom and mainland Europe between the survey active dates.  Blues musicians and other cultural workers including photographers, DJs, academic course-leaders and festival organisers were invited to both complete and publicise the survey.

The survey was conducted online to ascertain how blues fans who are currently using the internet make use of online technology to experience blues music and blues culture.  Although a paper-based survey was considered, this approach was not used as this may have included respondents who did not use the internet.  Even allowing for this, 4% of respondents claimed to not have an active social media account.

Given the perception of the blues as a music of black origin, I was surprised and disappointed by the low number of respondents who identified as black (0.8%) or non-white (5.9%).  Similarly, despite publicising the survey in areas dedicated to women in blues music, only 19.6% of respondents identified as female.

An area for future surveys would specifically target blues performers and cultural workers such as festival organisers, temporary and permanent exhibition curators and teachers of blues music and blues culture in both online and physical institutions.

## Survey Questions

The questions focused on how blues fans used the internet to experience and discover blues music and blues culture, with specific reference to live performances and blues-related events. Questions also sought to ascertain how blues fans participated in the blues community before they had access to the internet. The third and final area of interest concerned whether blues fans actively used the internet to further their knowledge of blues music and blues culture by participating in online learning communities.

**_Note_**: *The electronic version of this document contains hyperlinks in order to aid navigation around the survey. Users may click on individual questions and use the 'return to questions' link at the bottom of each question summary page (page 4 onward) to return to the list of questions on page 2.*

### Section 1 – About You
1. What is your age?
2. Which continent do you currently live on?
3. What is your ethnicity?
4. What is your gender?
5. Where are you most often when you use the internet?
6. Do you have an account on a social networking website (like Facebook, Twitter or Myspace)?

### Section 2 - Discovery
7. From which sources do you most regularly receive information concerning blues music and blues culture?
8. How often do you access blues music or blues culture on the internet?
9. In the last three months (12 weeks) which of the below have you used to experience blues music or blues culture?
10. Do you download blues music to your computer?
11. Do you participate in any online blues communities, discussion groups or forums?

### Section 3 – Online Blues Communities part 1
12. How many online blues communities, discussion groups or forums do you participate in?

### Section 4 – Internet Use part 1
13. Have you done any of the below, and if so - when?

### Section 5 – Live Music
14. Roughly how many times a year do you attend live blues music performances?
15. How far are you willing to travel for a blues music performance or cultural event?

### Section 6 – You and the Blues on the internet (artists)
16. Have you ever discovered a new blues artist as a direct result of internet-based interactions?
17. Have you ever been inspired to attend a blues artist performance as a result of internet-based interactions?

**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 1, ABOUT YOU**
**QUESTION 1: What is your Age?**

| What is your age? | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| 18 to 24 | 3.5% | 18 |
| 25 to 34 | 5.9% | 30 |
| 35 to 44 | 14.3% | 73 |
| 45 to 54 | 26.8% | 137 |
| 55 to 64 | 36.1% | 185 |
| 65 or older | 13.5% | 69 |
| | answered question | 512 |
| | skipped question | 0 |
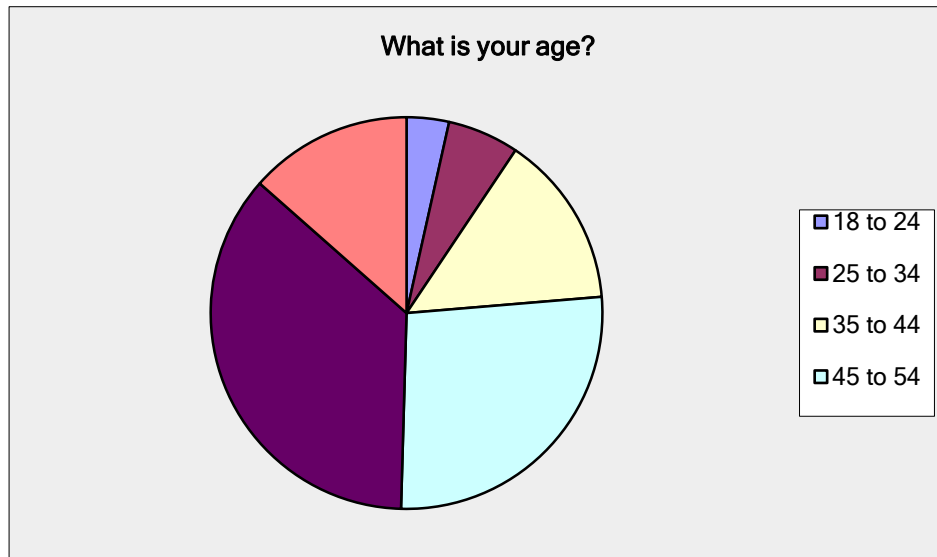
**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 1, ABOUT YOU**
**QUESTION 2: What continent do you currently live on?**

| Which continent do you currently live on? | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Europe | 50.2% | 256 |
| North America | 44.9% | 229 |
| South America | 0.8% | 4 |
| Asia | 0.2% | 1 |
| Australia | 3.7% | 19 |
| Africa | 0.0% | 0 |
| Antarctica | 0.2% | 1 |
| *answered question* | | 510 |
| *skipped question* | | 2 |
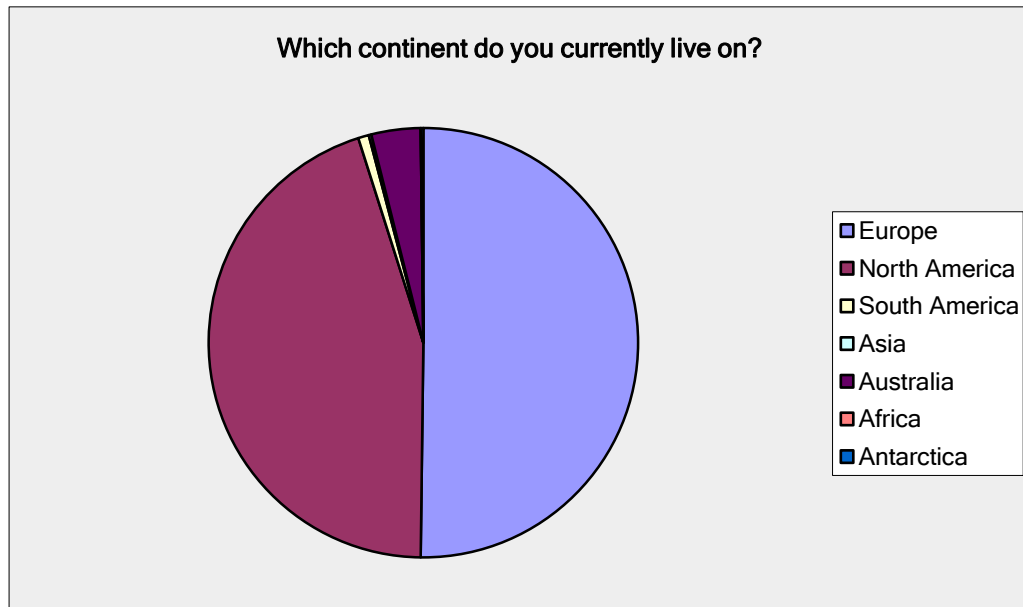
**Which continent do you currently live on?**



- Europe
- North America
- South America
- Asia
- Australia
- Africa
- Antarctica

| What is your ethnicity? | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native | 0.2% | 1 |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 0.4% | 2 |
| Black or African American | 0.8% | 4 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 1.2% | 6 |
| White / Caucasian | 94.1% | 482 |
| Prefer not to answer | 0.8% | 4 |
| Other (please specify) | 2.5% | 13 |
| answered question | | 512 |
| skipped question | | 0 |



What is your ethnicity?

Legend:
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- White / Caucasian
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify)
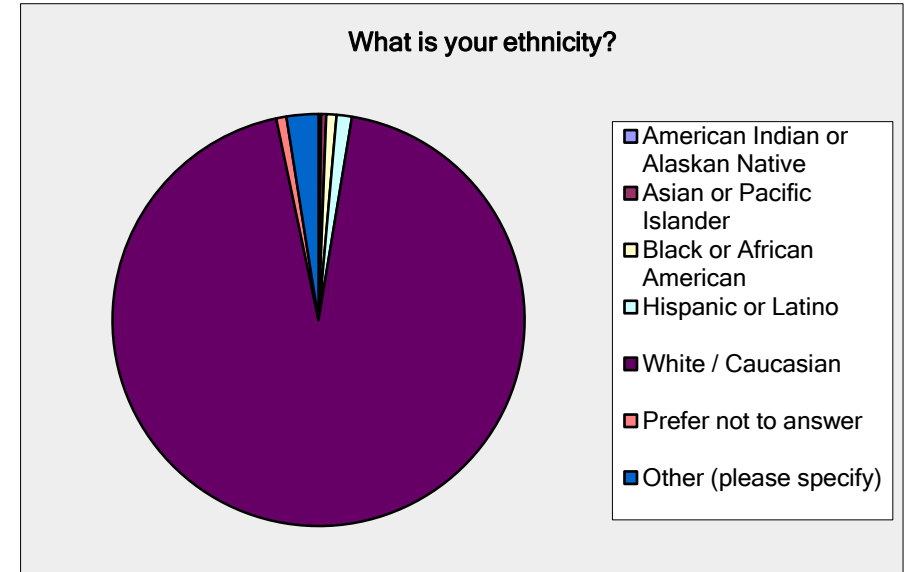
| Number | Response Date | Other (please specify) | Categories |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Sep 22, 2015 6:05 PM | White Swiss, grew up with Westafricans | |
| 2 | Jun 26, 2015 4:48 AM | Some mixture of American that is not fully apparent | |
| 3 | Jun 23, 2015 1:45 AM | Maori | |
| 4 | Jun 22, 2015 3:24 PM | We dont use these so it doesn't seem valid | |
| 5 | Jun 3, 2015 9:58 AM | Irish-American | |
| 6 | Jun 2, 2015 9:25 PM | Asian Aboriginal Irish | |
| 7 | Jun 2, 2015 7:51 AM | Caucasian/Asian/Black 5/8, 1/4, 1/8 | |
| 8 | Jun 2, 2015 3:56 AM | illegal alien | |
| 9 | Jun 1, 2015 11:56 PM | Samoan | |
| 10 | Jun 1, 2015 10:24 PM | African European | |
| 11 | Jun 1, 2015 7:26 PM | Biethnic (White and South Asian) | |
| 12 | Jun 1, 2015 6:48 PM | Mixed caucasian latino | |
| 13 | Jun 1, 2015 12:42 PM | Mixed race: White / Black Caribbean | |

**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 1, ABOUT YOU**
**QUESTION 4: What is your gender?**

| What is your gender? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Female | 19.6% | 99 |
| Male | 80.4% | 407 |
| answered question | | 506 |
| skipped question | | 6 |



What is your gender?
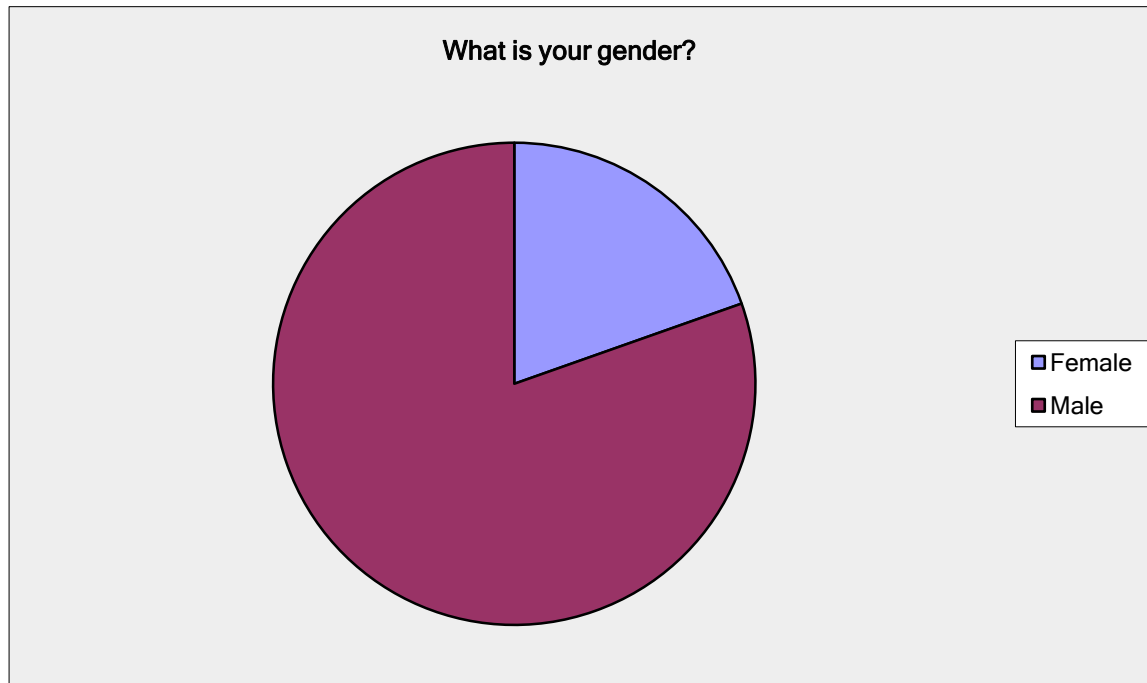
**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 1, ABOUT YOU**
**QUESTION 5: Where are you most often when you use the internet?**

| Where are you most often when you use the internet? | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Bookstore | 0.4% | 2 |
| Cafe or coffee shop | 0.2% | 1 |
| Friend's home | 0.2% | 1 |
| Home | 88.3% | 451 |
| Library | 0.0% | 0 |
| Outside | 0.8% | 4 |
| Work | 7.8% | 40 |
| Other (please specify) | 2.3% | 12 |
| answered question | | 511 |
| skipped question | | 1 |

| Number | Response Date | Other (please specify) | Categories |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Sep 8, 2015 9:19 PM | Use it all the time everywhere | |
| 2 | Jun 3, 2015 6:53 PM | Every where | |
| 3 | Jun 3, 2015 6:51 AM | All of the above on my phone | |
| 4 | Jun 2, 2015 3:51 PM | Home and work | |
| 5 | Jun 2, 2015 7:29 AM | Mobile | |
| 6 | Jun 2, 2015 2:30 AM | I travel constantly so : all of the above plus hotels, airports etc. | |
| 7 | Jun 1, 2015 9:01 PM | My work space is at home | |
| 8 | Jun 1, 2015 7:31 PM | everywhere, actually, since I always have access on my smartphone | |
| 9 | Jun 1, 2015 5:33 PM | I am constantly connected, every waking hour. | |
| 10 | Jun 1, 2015 4:25 PM | Home AND work (and I work in a library) - sorry to muddy your waters! | |
| 11 | Jun 1, 2015 2:45 PM | I'm a road musician eight months of the year, so I generally use friends' computers. My laptop is a piece of junk. | |
| 12 | Jun 1, 2015 12:09 PM | Home office | |
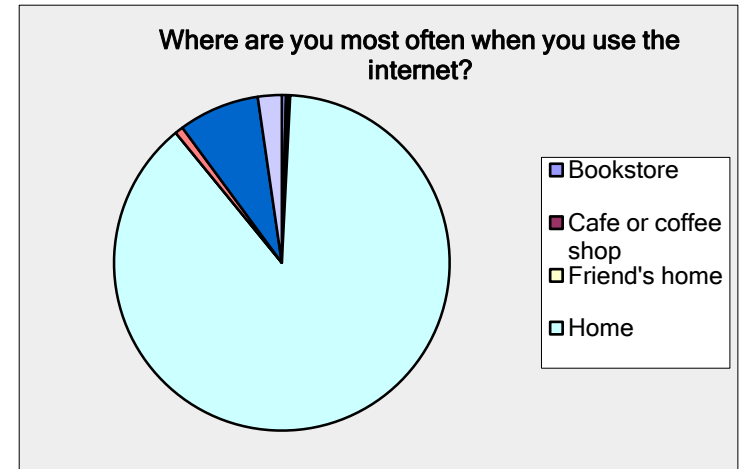
**QUESTION 6: Do you have an account on a social networking site such as Facebook, Twitter or MySpace?**

| Do you have an account on a social networking website (like Facebook, Twitter or Myspace)? | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 95.9% | 491 |
| No | 4.1% | 21 |
| answered question | | 512 |
| skipped question | | 0 |
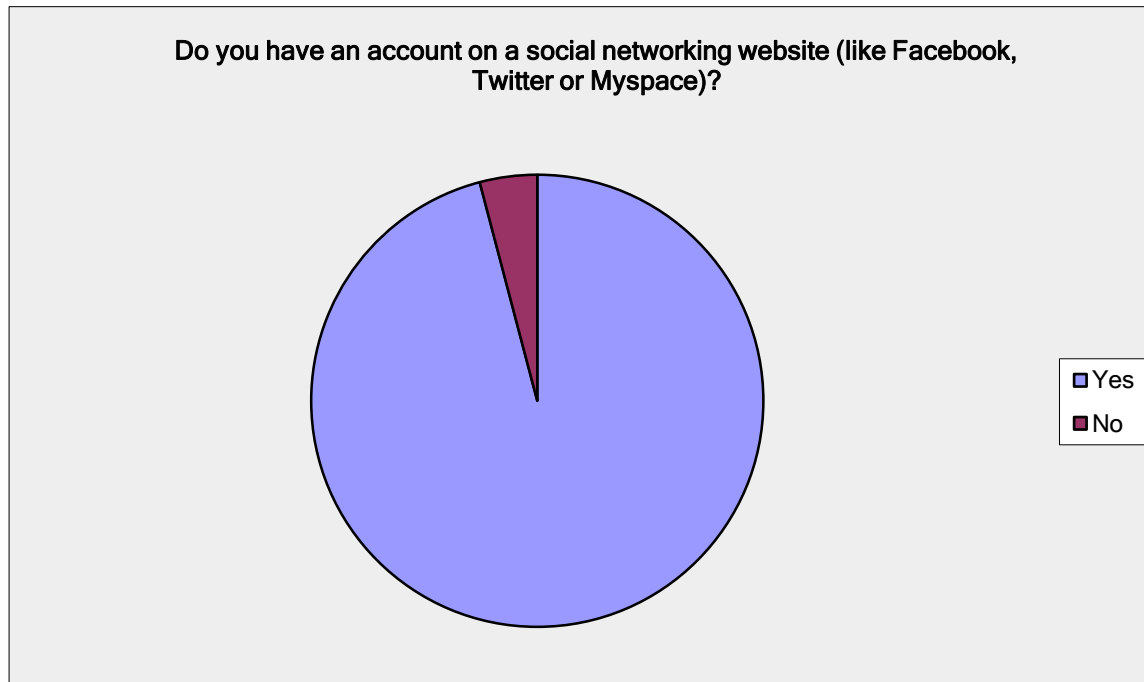
Do you have an account on a social networking website (like Facebook, Twitter or Myspace)?



☐ Yes
☐ No

**QUESTION 7: From which sources do you most regularly receive information concerning blues music and blues culture?**

| From which sources do you most regularly receive information concerning blues music and blues culture?  (click three choices) | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Print media (magazines, journals, newsletters) | 35.7% | 175 |
| Radio | 28.4% | 139 |
| Television | 6.1% | 30 |
| Internet | 95.1% | 466 |
| Word of mouth | 39.6% | 194 |
| Other (please specify) | 7.1% | 35 |
| | answered question | 490 |
| | skipped question | 22 |

| Number | Response Date | Other (please specify) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Sep 22, 2015 6:06 PM | Musicians |
| 2 | Jun 26, 2015 4:51 AM | My husband and the local community personal literature and cd leaflets |
| 3 | Jun 23, 2015 4:56 AM | Boos concerning blues music and blues culture |
| 4 | Jun 20, 2015 2:28 AM | Records and their liner notes |
| 5 | Jun 3, 2015 9:17 PM | email |
| 6 | Jun 3, 2015 6:55 PM | From every where ... |
| 7 | Jun 3, 2015 12:25 AM | Printed and recorded resources in my collection |
| 8 | Jun 3, 2015 12:08 AM | While attending blues shows |
| 9 | Jun 2, 2015 3:36 PM | i am a blues promoter |
| 10 | Jun 2, 2015 12:22 PM | musician friends |
| 11 | Jun 2, 2015 12:18 PM | social media |
| 12 | Jun 2, 2015 12:02 PM | Music (Harmonica) class |
| 13 | Jun 2, 2015 10:31 AM | Spotify, online blues music training |
| 14 | Jun 2, 2015 4:40 AM | blues society membership |
| 15 | Jun 2, 2015 12:56 AM | Blues Society |
| 16 | Jun 1, 2015 11:57 PM | the Real Blues Forum (facebook) |
| 17 | Jun 1, 2015 11:30 PM | From other musicians |
| 18 | Jun 1, 2015 11:28 PM | cable television music channel |
| 19 | Jun 1, 2015 9:02 PM | Social Media |
| 20 | Jun 1, 2015 8:49 PM | Social media |
| 21 | Jun 1, 2015 8:46 PM | Friends |
| 22 | Jun 1, 2015 8:45 PM | local blues society |
| 23 | Jun 1, 2015 8:20 PM | Podcasts |
| 24 | Jun 1, 2015 7:31 PM | festivals and live shows |
| 25 | Jun 1, 2015 5:44 PM | facebook |
| 26 | Jun 1, 2015 5:27 PM | books (mostly biographies, lesson books) |
| 27 | Jun 1, 2015 4:26 PM | Books - lots of books |
| 28 | Jun 1, 2015 4:21 PM | Social media |
| 29 | Jun 1, 2015 3:46 PM | Books, both academic and popular |
| 30 | Jun 1, 2015 2:46 PM | Other musicians. |
| 31 | Jun 1, 2015 1:36 PM | Music festivals, and also books (or is this included in "Print media"?) |
| 32 | Jun 1, 2015 12:53 PM | The Blues Foundation emails |
| 33 | Jun 1, 2015 12:09 PM | recordings purchased in conventional shops |
| 34 | Jun 1, 2015 11:52 AM | Friends & musicians |
| 35 | Jun 1, 2015 11:24 AM | University |

**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 2, DISCOVERY**

**QUESTION 7: From which sources do you most regularly receive information concerning blues music and blues culture?**

From which sources do you most regularly receive information concerning blues music and blues culture? (click three choices)
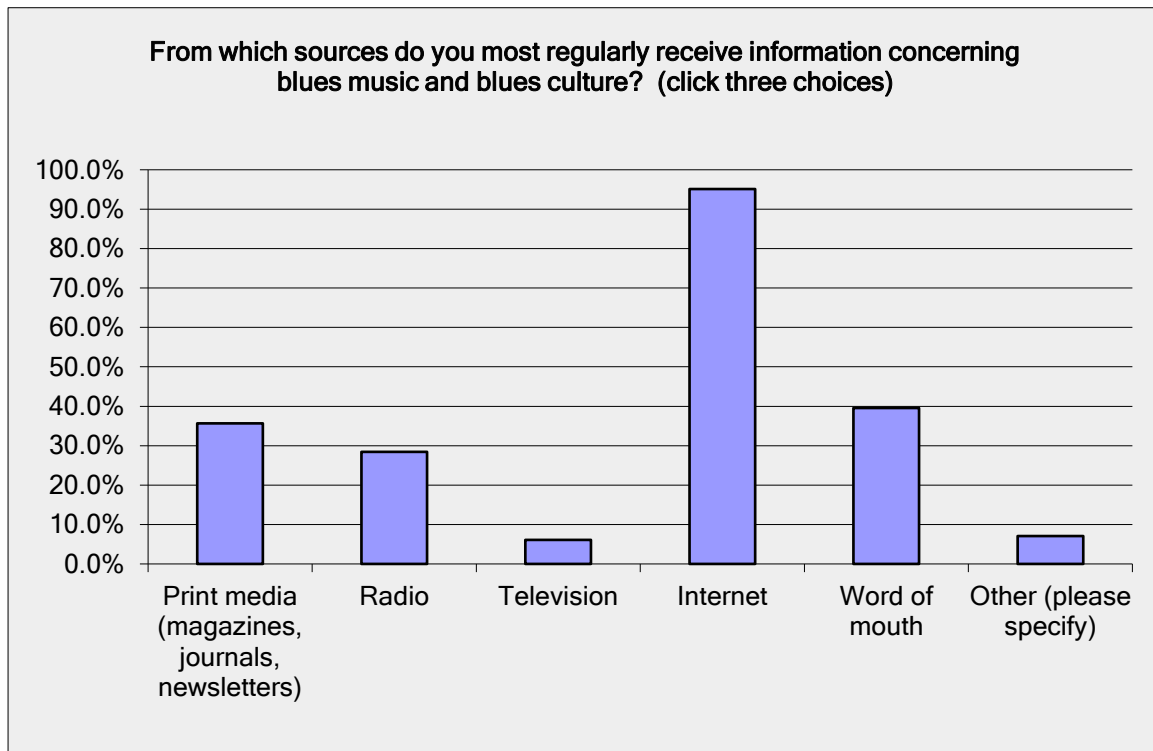
**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 2, DISCOVERY**

**QUESTION 8: How often do you access blues music or blues culture on the internet?**

| How often do you access blues music or blues culture on the internet? | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Several times a day | 51.6% | 253 |
| Once a day | 18.4% | 90 |
| 2-3 times a week | 20.4% | 100 |
| Once a week | 3.7% | 18 |
| Less than once a week | 5.1% | 25 |
| Never | 0.8% | 4 |
| answered question | | 490 |
| skipped question | | 22 |
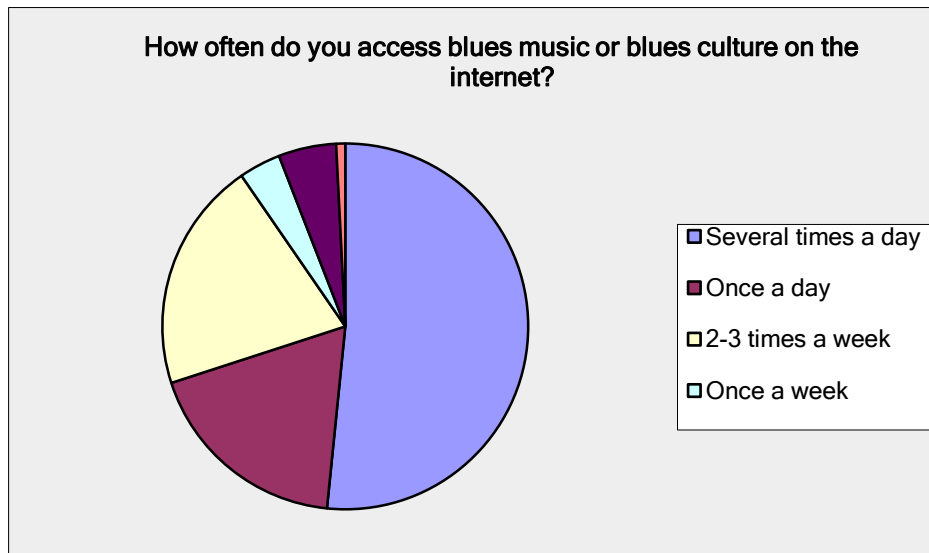


How often do you access blues music or blues culture on the internet?

- Several times a day
- Once a day
- 2-3 times a week
- Once a week

**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 2, DISCOVERY**

**QUESTION 9: In the last three months (12 weeks) which of the below have you used to experience blues music or blues culture?**

| In the last three months (12 weeks) which of the below have you used to experience blues music or blues culture? (Tick all that apply). | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| YouTube | 92.6% | 448 |
| Facebook | 82.9% | 401 |
| Soundcloud | 28.7% | 139 |
| Podcast | 16.9% | 82 |
| internet radio station | 44.0% | 213 |
| spotify | 24.8% | 120 |
| Other (please specify) | | 100 |
| | answered question | 484 |
| | skipped question | 28 |
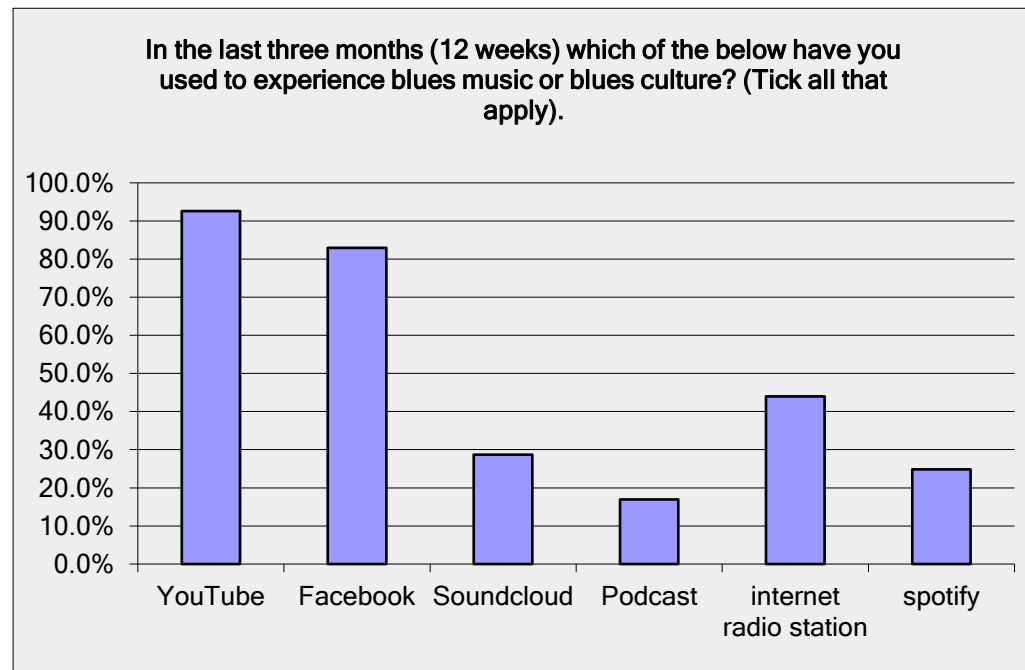
In the last three months (12 weeks) which of the below have you used to experience blues music or blues culture? (Tick all that apply).

**QUESTION 9: In the last three months (12 weeks) which of the below have you used to experience blues music or blues culture?**

| Number | Response Date | Other (please specify) | Categories |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Sep 9, 2015 1:28 PM | I-Tunes | |
| 2 | Sep 8, 2015 10:08 AM | Apple music | |
| 3 | Jul 10, 2015 9:08 PM | Records and CDs. and performances I have a big collection of blues music | |
| 4 | Jul 3, 2015 5:06 PM | | |
| 5 | Jun 26, 2015 4:51 AM | Records cassettes CDs and CDs ripped on to my harddrive | |
| 6 | Jun 26, 2015 4:17 AM | Live | |
| 7 | Jun 23, 2015 4:56 AM | My personal collection both old recordings and recent additions. | |
| 8 | Jun 22, 2015 6:11 PM | My own record collection. | |
| 9 | Jun 20, 2015 2:28 AM | Books, songbook and record jackets/inserts | |
| 10 | Jun 9, 2015 6:30 PM | Youtube | |
| 11 | Jun 7, 2015 8:58 PM | gigs- mine and others, CDs playing with other people | |
| 12 | Jun 5, 2015 6:28 AM | Modern Blues Harmonica website/forum | |
| 13 | Jun 5, 2015 12:09 AM | iPod, iPhone and car has hard drive with all my Blues CDs recorded to it..... | |
| 14 | Jun 4, 2015 12:38 AM | Live | |
| 15 | Jun 4, 2015 12:33 AM | C.K.U.A.   the best radio station bar None | |
| 16 | Jun 3, 2015 10:09 PM | Live at a local club | |
| 17 | Jun 3, 2015 9:51 PM | attending a blues festival or blues club | |
| 18 | Jun 3, 2015 9:43 PM | Live performances, festivals | |
| 19 | Jun 3, 2015 9:31 PM | LIVE VENUES!!! | |
| 20 | Jun 3, 2015 9:06 PM | Pandora | |
| 21 | Jun 3, 2015 8:43 PM | I own an internet radio station with 19 DJ's.w | |
| 22 | Jun 3, 2015 6:55 PM | Clouds | |
| 23 | Jun 3, 2015 1:18 PM | Car radio | |
| 24 | Jun 3, 2015 12:24 PM | FM Radio | |
| 25 | Jun 3, 2015 5:52 AM | Blues jam sessions in local clubs | |
| 26 | Jun 3, 2015 4:51 AM | LIVE! | |
| 27 | Jun 2, 2015 11:12 PM | CD | |
| 28 | Jun 2, 2015 9:49 PM | Pandora | |
| 29 | Jun 2, 2015 9:26 PM | Live performance | |
| 30 | Jun 2, 2015 9:18 PM | Live music gigs | |
| 31 | Jun 2, 2015 7:24 PM | Sirius XM | |

**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 2, DISCOVERY**

**QUESTION 9: In the last three months (12 weeks) which of the below have you used to experience blues music or blues culture?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 32 | Jun 2, 2015 6:44 PM | Reverbnation |
| 33 | Jun 2, 2015 5:44 PM | XM radio |
| | | Modern Blues Harmonica forum, |
| 34 | Jun 2, 2015 5:36 PM | satellite radio (Sirius/XM's "Bluesville" station), |
| 35 | Jun 2, 2015 5:13 PM | google |
| 36 | Jun 2, 2015 4:43 PM | Google Play Music |
| 37 | Jun 2, 2015 4:04 PM | Internet Forums |
| 38 | Jun 2, 2015 3:56 PM | Napster |
| 39 | Jun 2, 2015 3:52 PM | Festval |
| 40 | Jun 2, 2015 2:24 PM | Live music, terrestrial radio |
| 41 | Jun 2, 2015 2:02 PM | Ipod |
| 42 | Jun 2, 2015 1:59 PM | Rhapsody |
| | | Good old fashioned CD's from my collection |
| 43 | Jun 2, 2015 12:43 PM | The radio in my car |
| 44 | Jun 2, 2015 12:22 PM | concerts |
| 45 | Jun 2, 2015 12:18 PM | Spotify is an internet radio station... |
| 46 | Jun 2, 2015 12:09 PM | XM and Pandora |
| 47 | Jun 2, 2015 10:31 AM | various online instruction sites |
| 48 | Jun 2, 2015 10:01 AM | Own LP & CD collection. |
| 49 | Jun 2, 2015 8:54 AM | bit tottent sites |
| 50 | Jun 2, 2015 7:30 AM | Gigs |
| 51 | Jun 2, 2015 6:18 AM | Modernbluesharmonica.com |
| 52 | Jun 2, 2015 5:49 AM | Satellite radio |
| 53 | Jun 2, 2015 3:58 AM | live |
| 54 | Jun 2, 2015 3:44 AM | Radio, iPod |
| 55 | Jun 2, 2015 2:58 AM | sites like Modern Blues Harmonica |
| 56 | Jun 2, 2015 2:46 AM | Live concerts |
| 57 | Jun 2, 2015 2:34 AM | Regular FM radio |
| 58 | Jun 2, 2015 1:46 AM | and live |
| 59 | Jun 2, 2015 1:32 AM | Satellite radio. |
| 60 | Jun 2, 2015 1:03 AM | FM RADIO KPFT HOUSTON |
| 61 | Jun 2, 2015 12:04 AM | cable TV, live shows |
| 62 | Jun 1, 2015 11:57 PM | Forum website |

**QUESTION 9: In the last three months (12 weeks) which of the below have you used to experience blues music or blues culture?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 63 | Jun 1, 2015 11:51 PM | radio |
| 64 | Jun 1, 2015 11:29 PM | iPod, Satellite Radio, my guitars and drums |
| 65 | Jun 1, 2015 11:10 PM | Live music |
| 66 | Jun 1, 2015 11:09 PM | Live music |
| 67 | Jun 1, 2015 11:05 PM | Ipod. |
| 68 | Jun 1, 2015 10:30 PM | travelled to mississippi |
| 69 | Jun 1, 2015 10:05 PM | modernbluesharmonica.com<br>Private CD / LP Collection |
| 70 | Jun 1, 2015 9:15 PM | Public Library<br>Vintage record shop - brought records back home to play on my turntable.<br><br><br>Amazon Music |
| 71 | Jun 1, 2015 9:02 PM | iHeartRadio |
| 72 | Jun 1, 2015 8:58 PM | Reverbnation |
| 73 | Jun 1, 2015 8:57 PM | Recordings |
| 74 | Jun 1, 2015 8:50 PM | my own digitized collection |
| 75 | Jun 1, 2015 8:26 PM | Live events. Tumblr. Vimeo |
| 76 | Jun 1, 2015 8:21 PM | Live shows |
| 77 | Jun 1, 2015 7:51 PM | CDs |
| 78 | Jun 1, 2015 7:31 PM | Iam a blues bass player |
| 79 | Jun 1, 2015 7:31 PM | gone to festivals and clubs |
| 80 | Jun 1, 2015 7:28 PM | Google Play Music All Access |
| 81 | Jun 1, 2015 7:19 PM | Live performance, CD, Records |
| 82 | Jun 1, 2015 7:13 PM | CDs, Old Vinyls |
| 83 | Jun 1, 2015 6:53 PM | Live performance |
| 84 | Jun 1, 2015 5:44 PM | word of mouth |
| 85 | Jun 1, 2015 5:27 PM | Amazon music cloud |
| 86 | Jun 1, 2015 5:13 PM | Amazon Prime |
| 87 | Jun 1, 2015 5:04 PM | BBC Radio 4 |
| 88 | Jun 1, 2015 4:43 PM | and my own collection of course!!! |

**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 2, DISCOVERY**
**QUESTION 9: In the last three months (12 weeks) which of the below have you used to experience blues music or blues culture?**

| 89 | Jun 1, 2015 4:21 PM | modernbluesharmonica forum |
|---|---|---|
| 90 | Jun 1, 2015 3:37 PM | Radio/home stereo |
| 91 | Jun 1, 2015 2:46 PM | Live, usually with other musicians. |
| 92 | Jun 1, 2015 1:57 PM | Pandora, blues forums |
| 93 | Jun 1, 2015 1:42 PM | Modern Blues Harmonica forum, bluesharmonica.com, sonic junction music lesson site |
| 94 | Jun 1, 2015 1:36 PM | file sharing |
| 95 | Jun 1, 2015 1:27 PM | I go to open blues jams in southern Maine all the time; I am a member of the Maine Blues Society and love this music and realize its importance in American history and culture |
| 96 | Jun 1, 2015 1:23 PM | Twitter |
| 97 | Jun 1, 2015 1:15 PM | 8Tracks |
| 98 | Jun 1, 2015 12:53 PM | other internet sites. |
| 99 | Jun 1, 2015 12:00 PM | Newspaper archives online, blogs etc |
| 100 | Jun 1, 2015 11:59 AM | ReverbNation |

**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 2, DISCOVERY**
**QUESTION 10: Do you download blues music to your computer?**

| Do you download blues music to your computer? | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Often | 30.4% | 149 |
| Occasionally | 53.5% | 262 |
| Never | 16.1% | 79 |
| answered question | | 490 |
| skipped question | | 22 |

Do you download blues music to your computer?



☐ Often
■ Occasionally
☐ Never
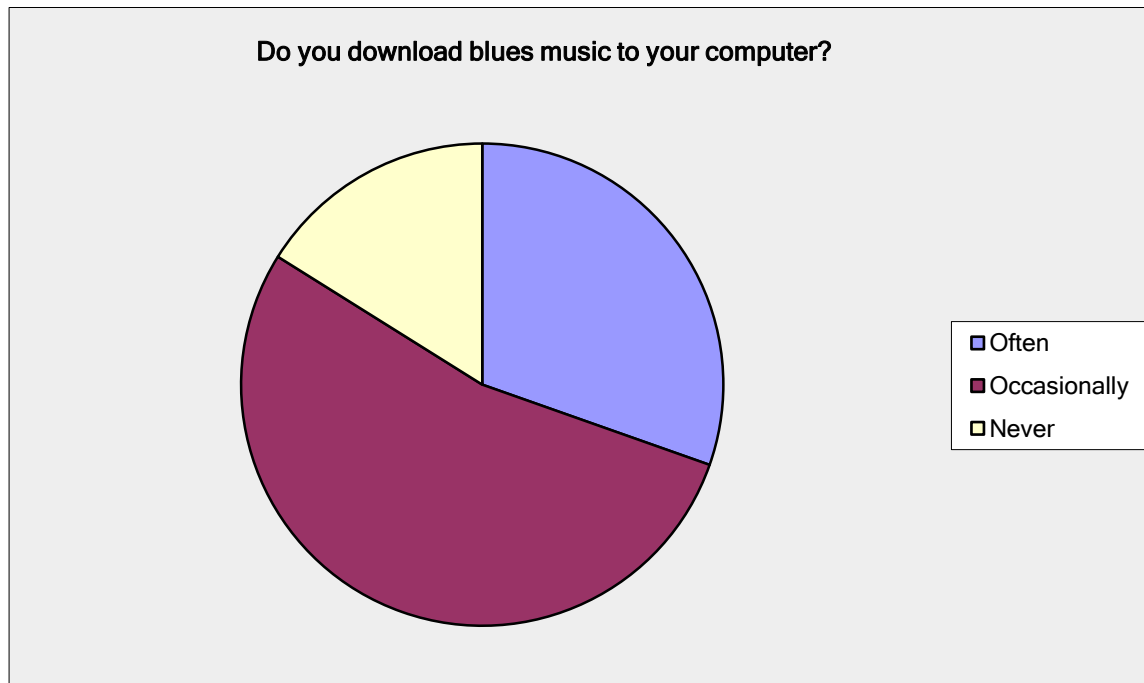
**QUESTION 11: Do you participate in any online blues communities, discussion groups or forums?**

| Do you participate in any online blues communities, discussion groups or forums? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 74.3% | 365 |
| No | 25.7% | 126 |
| answered question | | 491 |
| skipped question | | 21 |

Do you participate in any online blues communities, discussion groups or forums?



- Yes
- No
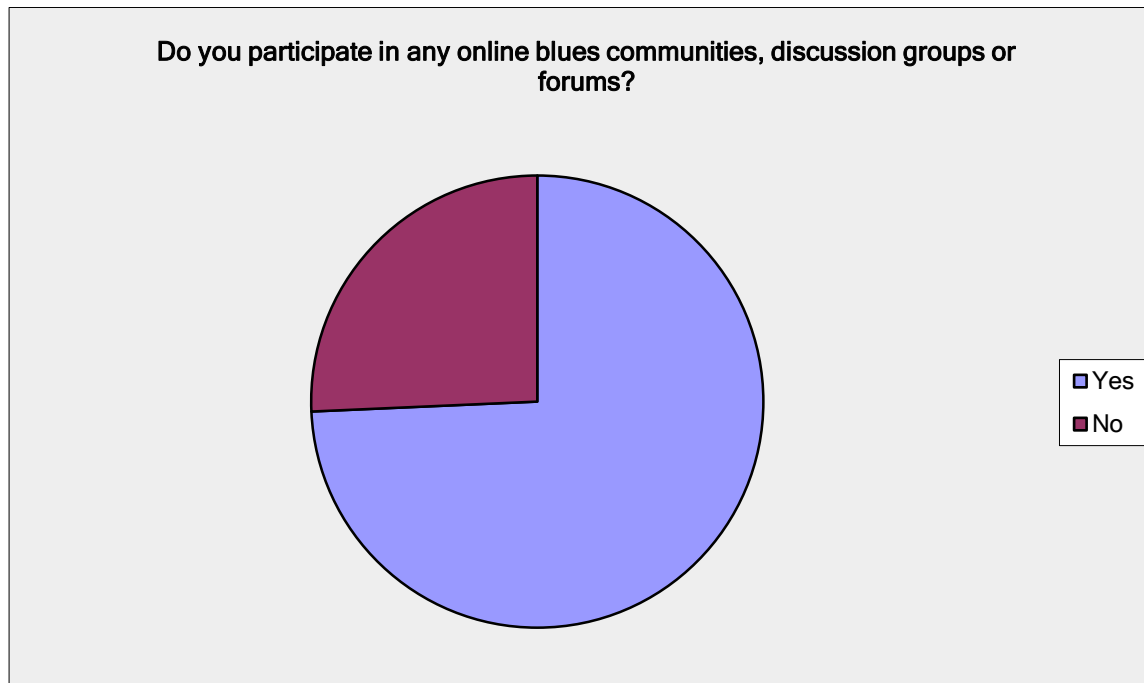
**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 3, ONLINE BLUES COMMUNITIES part 1**
**QUESTION 12: How many online blues communities, discussion groups or forums do you participate in?**

| How many online blues communities, discussion groups or forums do you participate in? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| 1 | 16.3% | 59 |
| 2-3 | 48.3% | 175 |
| 4-5 | 17.7% | 64 |
| More than 5 | 17.7% | 64 |
| answered question | | 362 |
| skipped question | | 150 |
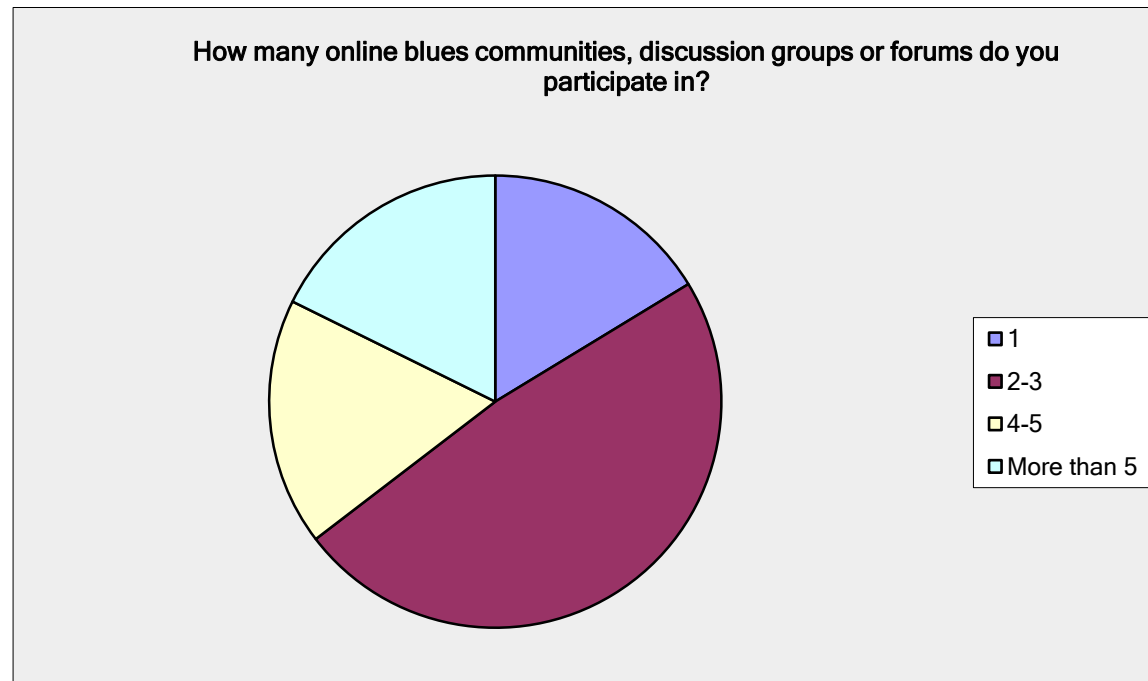


How many online blues communities, discussion groups or forums do you participate in?

Legend:
- 1
- 2-3
- 4-5
- More than 5

| Have you done any of the below, and if so - when? | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | within the last week | within the last month | within the last 6 months | within the last year | Never | Rating Average | Response Count |
| Started a discussion on an online blues community, discussion group or forum | 92 | 83 | 62 | 46 | 66 | 2.74 | 349 |
| Taken part in a discussion on an online blues community, discussion group or forum that someone else started | 176 | 87 | 46 | 32 | 13 | 1.92 | 354 |
| UPLOADED blues media (audio, images, video) TO an online blues community, discussion group or forum | 112 | 72 | 53 | 42 | 69 | 2.67 | 348 |
| DOWNLOADED blues media (audio, images, video) FROM an online blues community, discussion group or forum | 101 | 103 | 43 | 44 | 55 | 2.56 | 346 |
| | | | | | answered question | | 359 |
| | | | | | skipped question | | 153 |



Have you done any of the below, and if so - when?
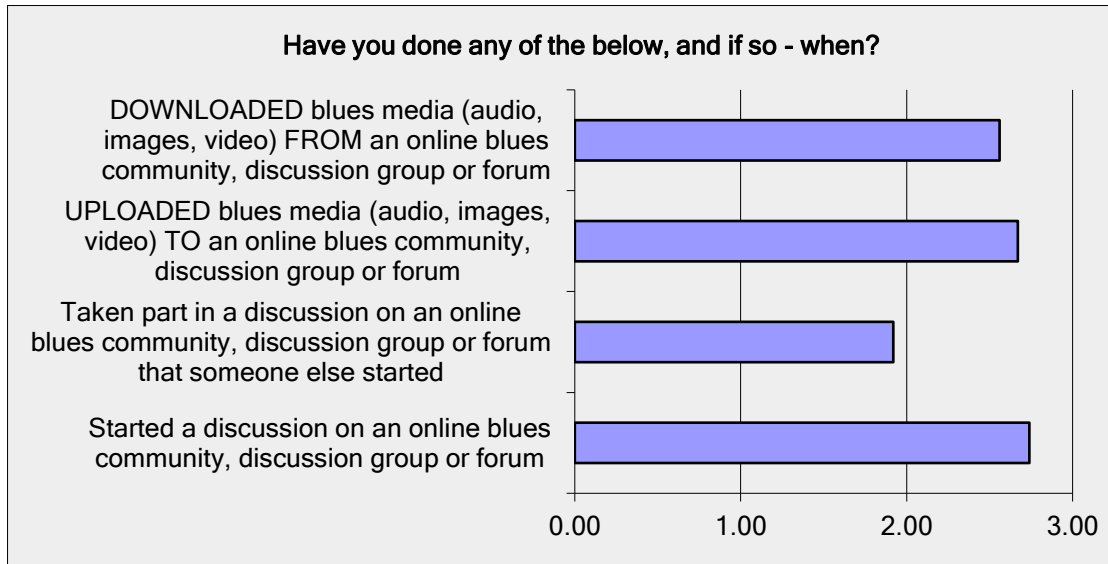
**QUESTION 14: Roughly how many times a year do you attend live blues music performances?**

| Roughly how many times a year do you attend live blues music performances? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| I do not attend live blues music performances. | 6.7% | 32 |
| 1-6 times per year | 41.0% | 196 |
| 7-12 times per year | 18.4% | 88 |
| 12-24 times per year | 14.2% | 68 |
| More than 25 times a year | 19.7% | 94 |
| answered question | | 478 |
| skipped question | | 34 |

**Roughly how many times a year do you attend live blues music performances?**



- I do not attend live blues music performances.
- 1-6 times per year
- 7-12 times per year
- 12-24 times per year
- More than 25 times a year
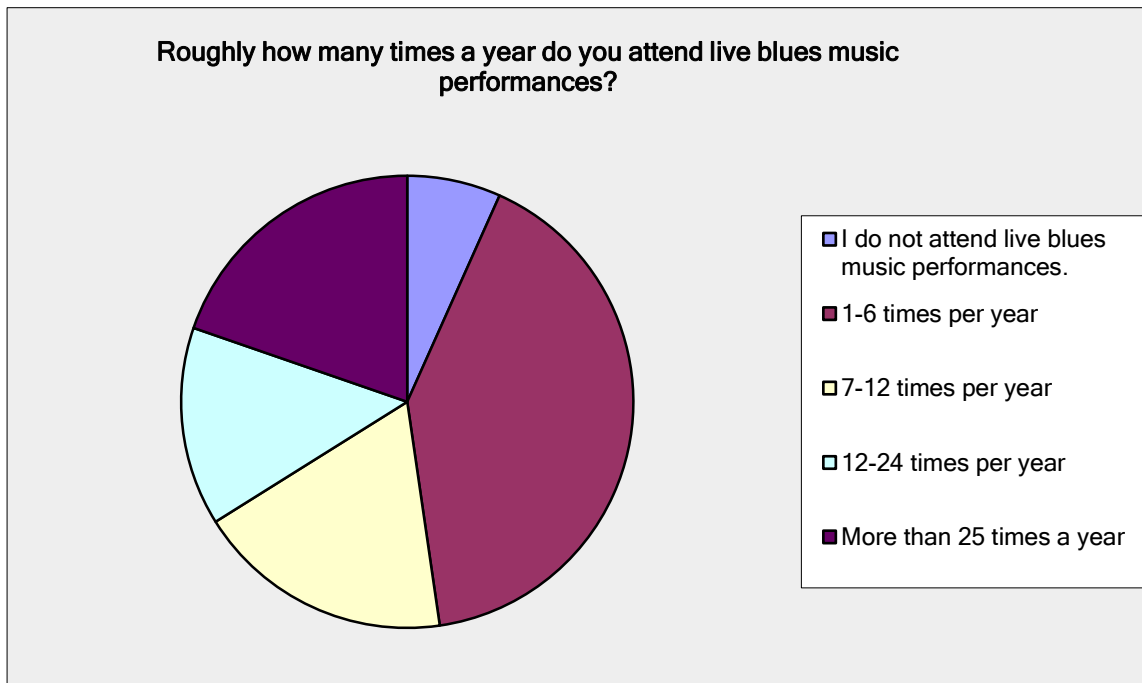
**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 1, ABOUT YOU**

**QUESTION 15: How far are you willing to travel for a blues music performance or cultural event?**

| How far are you willing to travel for a blues music performance or cultural event? | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| I do not go to blues festivals | 6.9% | 33 |
| 0-50 miles | 29.7% | 143 |
| 51-100 miles | 18.1% | 87 |
| 100-200 miles | 12.3% | 59 |
| Over 200 miles | 18.3% | 88 |
| International travel | 14.8% | 71 |
| | answered question | 481 |
| | skipped question | 31 |

How far are you willing to travel for a blues music performance or cultural event?



- I do not go to blues festivals
- 0-50 miles
- 51-100 miles
- 100-200 miles
- Over 200 miles
- International travel

**QUESTION 16: Have you ever discovered a new blues artist as a direct result of internet-based interactions?**

| Have you ever discovered a new blues artist as a direct result of internet-based interactions? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 91.6% | 437 |
| No | 3.8% | 18 |
| Not sure | 4.6% | 22 |
| answered question | | 477 |
| skipped question | | 35 |



Have you ever discovered a new blues artist as a direct result of internet-based interactions?

**QUESTION 17: Have you ever been inspired to attend a blues artist performance as a result of internet-based interactions?**

| Have you ever been inspired to attend a blues artist performance as a result of internet-based interactions? | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Yes | 80.3% | 382 |
| No | 13.4% | 64 |
| Not sure | 6.3% | 30 |
| answered question | | 476 |
| skipped question | | 36 |



Have you ever been inspired to attend a blues artist performance as a result of internet-based interactions?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

QUESTION 18: Have you ever been discouraged from attending a blues artist performance as a result of internet-based interactions?

| Have you ever been discouraged from attending a blues artist performance as a result of internet-based interactions? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 30.3% | 144 |
| No | 60.2% | 286 |
| Not sure | 9.5% | 45 |
| | answered question | 475 |
| | skipped question | 37 |



Have you ever been discouraged from attending a blues artist performance as a result of internet-based interactions?
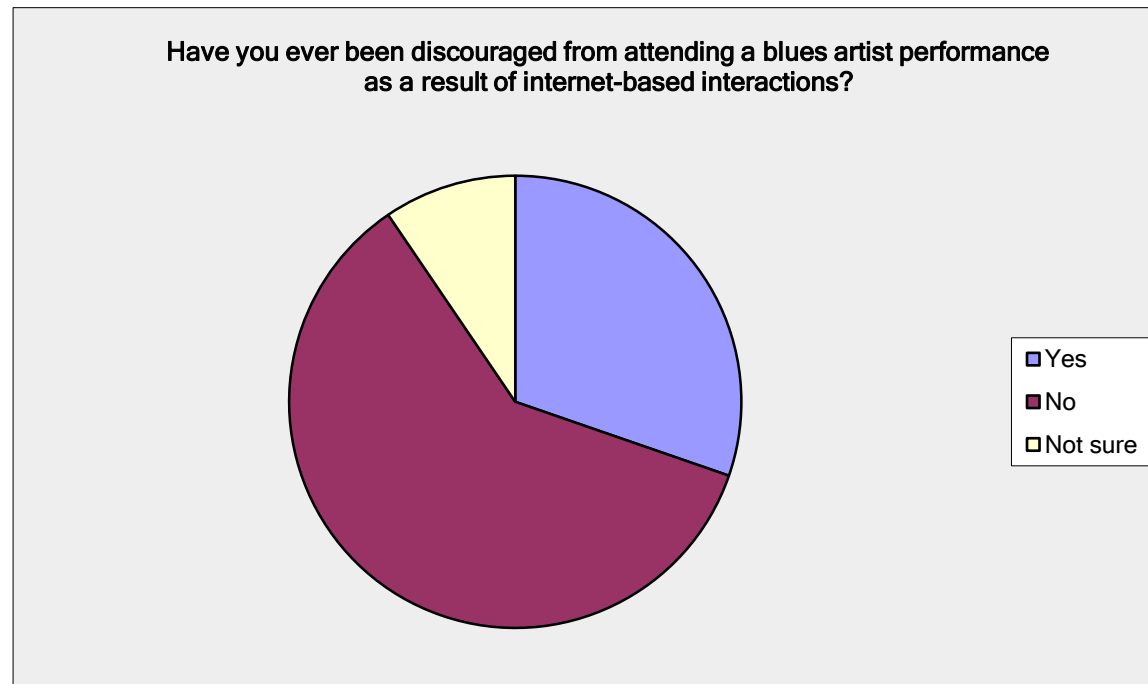
**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 6, INTERNET USE - ARTISTS**

**QUESTION 19: Have you ever encouraged others to experience a blues artist through internet-based interactions?**

| Have you ever encouraged others to experience a blues artist through internet-based interactions? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 87.6% | 416 |
| No | 7.2% | 34 |
| Not sure | 5.3% | 25 |
| answered question | | 475 |
| skipped question | | 37 |
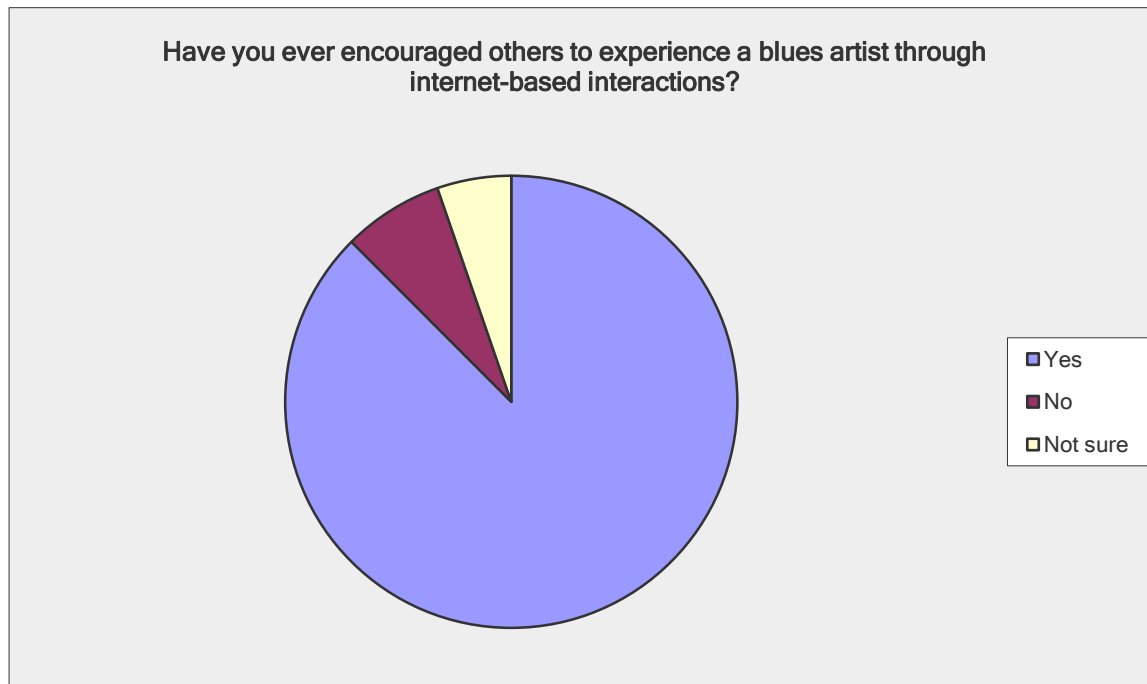


Have you ever encouraged others to experience a blues artist through internet-based interactions?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

**QUESTION 20: Have you used the internet for any of the following in the last 6 months?**

| Have you used the internet for any of the following in the last 6 months? (Tick all that apply). | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Learning a musical instrument or musical performance technique in the blues style | 48.8% | 228 |
| Learning about or researching blues history | 73.7% | 344 |
| Buying CDs, DVDs, phonograph records or cassettes relating to blues music | 70.2% | 328 |
| Buying books related to blues music | 39.4% | 184 |
| Listened to a blues radio show | 60.6% | 283 |
| Listened to or downloaded a blues music podcast | 34.5% | 161 |
| Watched blues material on a video streaming site (for example: youtube, vimeo, dailymotion etc.) | 93.8% | 438 |
| Listened to blues music on an audio streaming site (for example: Spotify, TIDAL, Deezer etc.) | 47.8% | 223 |
| None of these | 0.4% | 2 |
| Other (please specify) | | 13 |
| answered question | | 467 |
| skipped question | | 45 |

| Number | Response Date | Other (please specify) | Categories |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Jun 23, 2015 6:14 AM | Buying 78 RPM records of pioneer blues singers | |
| 2 | Jun 3, 2015 8:45 PM | MDORadioBlues.com  I own it. | |
| 3 | Jun 3, 2015 5:56 AM | Advertised my blues gigs | |
| 4 | Jun 2, 2015 11:24 PM | Promoting blues concerts for blues artists; looking for concerts for blues artists. | |
| 5 | Jun 2, 2015 11:57 AM | illegal download of blues music is most common for me :( sorry | |
| 6 | Jun 2, 2015 10:35 AM | Download backing tracks | |

**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 7, INTERNET USE part 2**

**QUESTION 20: Have you used the internet for any of the following in the last 6 months?**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | Jun 2, 2015<br>8:38 AM | Buying mp3's (or equivalent) relating to blues music |
| 8 | Jun 2, 2015<br>5:38 AM | Download from I-tunes |
| 9 | Jun 2, 2015<br>3:23 AM | Discussion with friends about artists and music |
| 10 | Jun 1, 2015<br>9:05 PM | Posting videos from concerts by my band |
| 11 | Jun 1, 2015<br>8:38 PM | Purchased tracks from Apple Store. Downloaded MP3s from other websites. |
| 12 | Jun 1, 2015<br>3:02 PM | Sorry I don't buy but dowload blues songs and records from piratebay and convert youtube to mp3. |
| 13 | Jun 1, 2015<br>12:46 PM | Buying music online as a Download |

**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 7, INTERNET USE part 2**
**QUESTION 20: Have you used the internet for any of the following in the last 6 months?**

Have you used the internet for any of the following in the last 6 months?
(Tick all that apply).
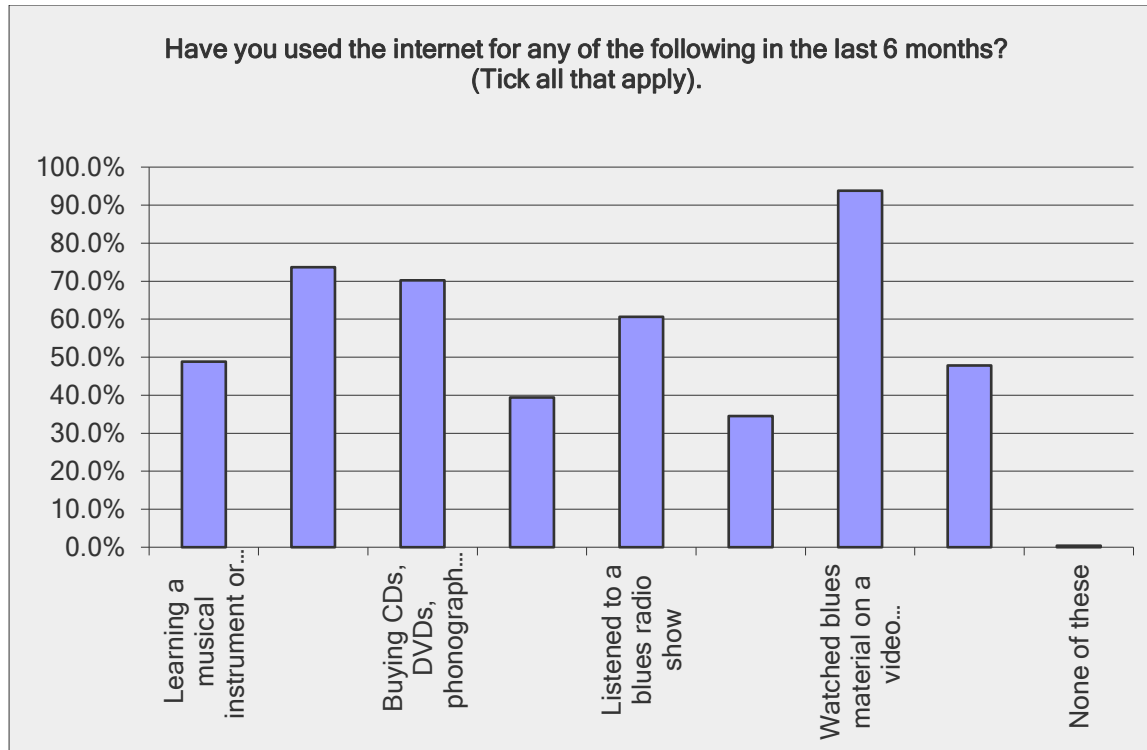
**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 7, INTERNET USE part 2**
**QUESTION 21: Have you engaged in any of the below activities in the last 12 months?  (Tick all that apply).**

| Have you engaged in any of the below activities in the last 12 months?  (Tick all that apply). | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Performed blues music publically | 47.8% | 224 |
| Contributed to the content or administration for a blues print magazine | 12.6% | 59 |
| Contributed to the content or administration for an online blues magazine or website | 20.0% | 94 |
| Published or drafted academic material concerning blues music or blues culture | 8.1% | 38 |
| Contributed to the staging of a blues music event | 33.5% | 157 |
| Taught a musical instrument or performance technique either 1:1 or a group | 23.9% | 112 |
| Taught any subject at any level in an accredited place of learning 1:1 or to a group | 9.8% | 46 |
| Recorded musical material in the blues style or with a blues influence | 38.2% | 179 |
| Composed musical material in the blues style or with a blues influence | 32.0% | 150 |
| Broadcast in any media (e.g. internet radio, conventional radio, podcast) concerning blues music or blues culture | 20.9% | 98 |
| None of these | 25.6% | 120 |
| Other (please specify) | 2.6% | 12 |
| *answered question* | | 469 |
| *skipped question* | | 43 |

| Number | Response Date | Other (please specify) |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Jun 5, 2015 3:12 PM | Archival research |
| 2 | Jun 3, 2015 7:00 PM | Working on the instrument ... custom work, and all interaction that follows |
| 3 | Jun 3, 2015 10:00 AM | jammed with family/friends |
| 4 | Jun 2, 2015 12:44 PM | I share status/announcements/ posters relating to blues artists, concerts or festivals on facebook |
| 5 | Jun 2, 2015 11:57 AM | I usually volunteer at a blues festival, but not this year |
| | | when i checked "taught a musical instrument" it was more of me showing someone a few things about the harmonica...but not proper lessons |
| 6 | Jun 2, 2015 7:21 AM | I play blues music once a week. Covers. |
| 7 | Jun 2, 2015 6:26 AM | Played blues music as a Dj in bars and promotional events. |
| 8 | Jun 1, 2015 11:08 PM | Videoing bands and publishing on you tube chamnela |
| 9 | Jun 1, 2015 9:05 PM | Do Master's level papers count? |
| 10 | Jun 1, 2015 8:28 PM | Founded a British Blues Exhibition |
| 11 | Jun 1, 2015 8:09 PM | Blues inspired fine art |
| 12 | Jun 1, 2015 4:09 PM | Facebook group |

**QUESTION 21: Have you engaged in any of the below activities in the last 12 months?  (Tick all that apply).**

Have you engaged in any of the below activities in the last 12 months?  (Tick all that apply).
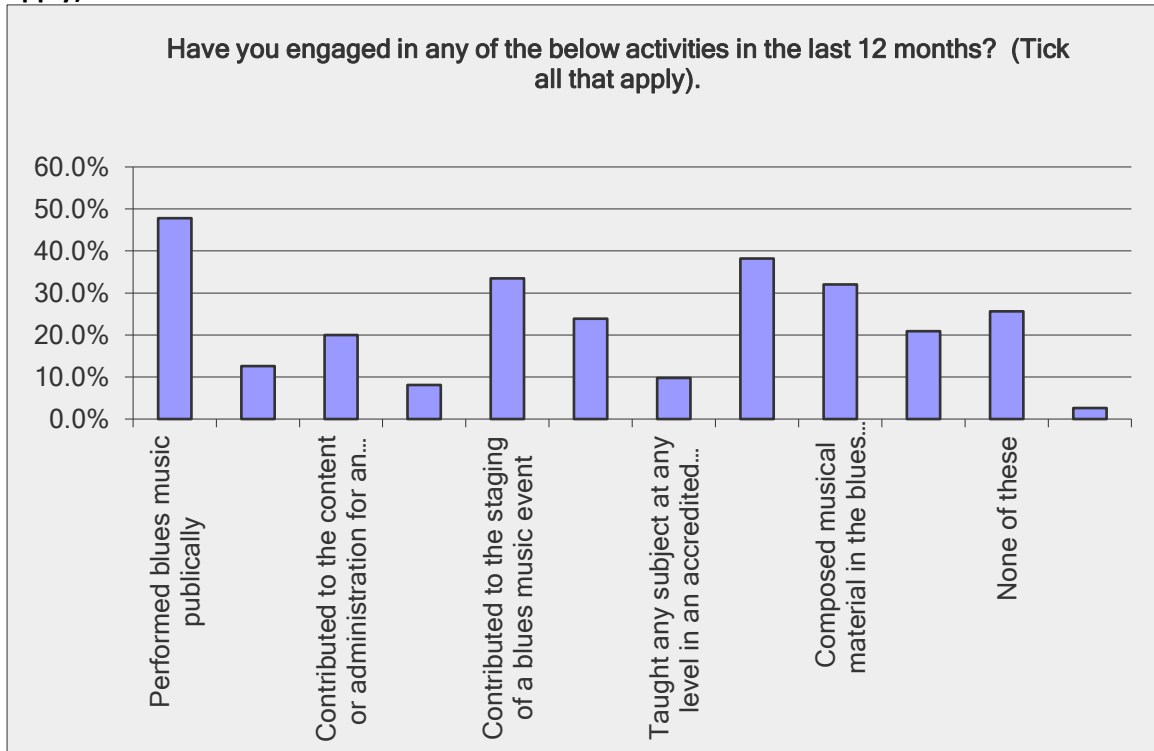
**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 7, INTERNET USE part 2**
**QUESTION 22: Are you part of an online blues learning community?**

| Are you part of an online blues learning community? | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 25.8% | 121 |
| No | 74.2% | 348 |
| answered question | | 469 |
| skipped question | | 43 |

Are you part of an online blues learning community?
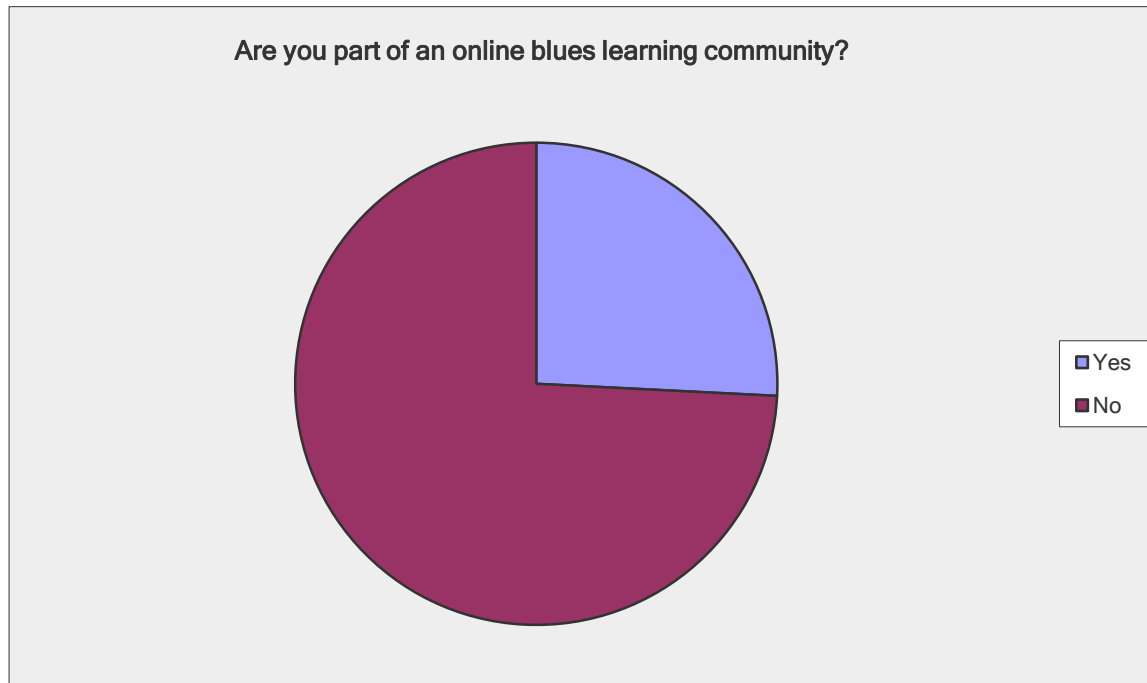
**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 8, BLUES LEARNING COMMUNITIES**
**QUESTION 23: How many blues learning communities do you belong to?**

| How many blues learning communities do you belong to? | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| 1 | 32.5% | 39 |
| 2-3 | 54.2% | 65 |
| 4-5 | 3.3% | 4 |
| more than 5 | 10.0% | 12 |
| answered question | | 120 |
| skipped question | | 392 |

How many blues learning communities do you belong to?
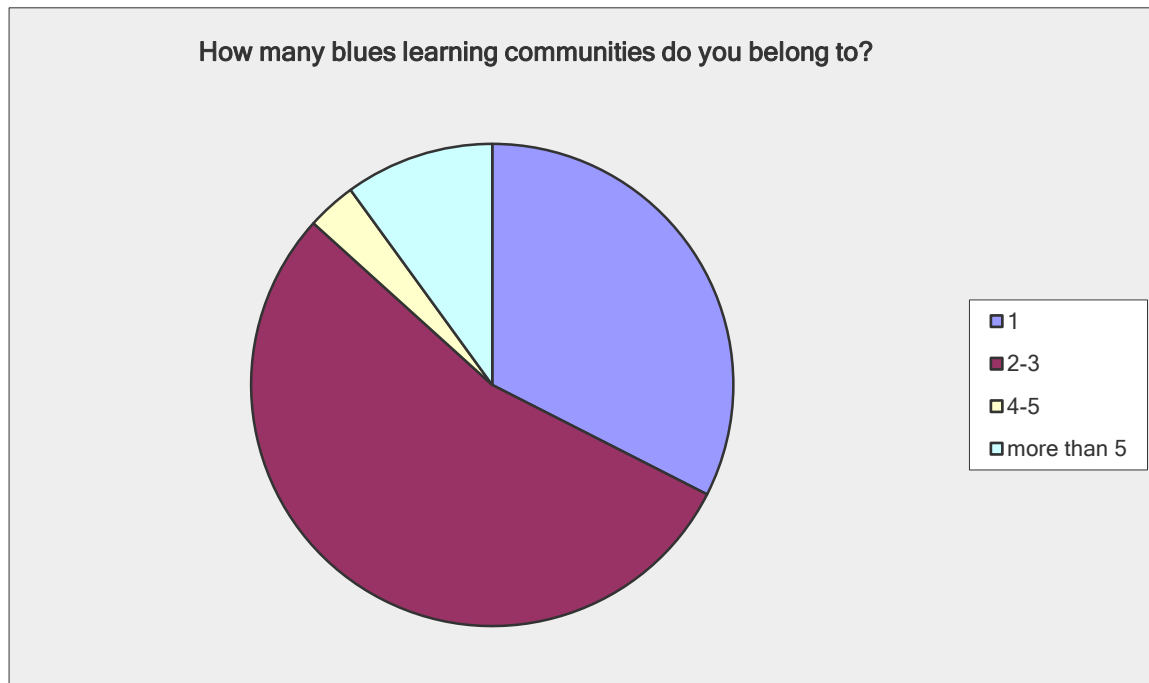
**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 8, BLUES LEARNING COMMUNITIES**
**QUESTION 24: What is the object of your learning?  (Tick all that apply).**

### What is the object of your learning?  (Tick all that apply).

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|
| Learn to play an instrument or performance technique | 64.2% | 77 |
| Learn about current blues artists, performances and events | 62.5% | 75 |
| History of blues music and blues culture | 71.7% | 86 |
| | answered question | 120 |
| | skipped question | 392 |

What is the object of your learning?  (Tick all that apply).
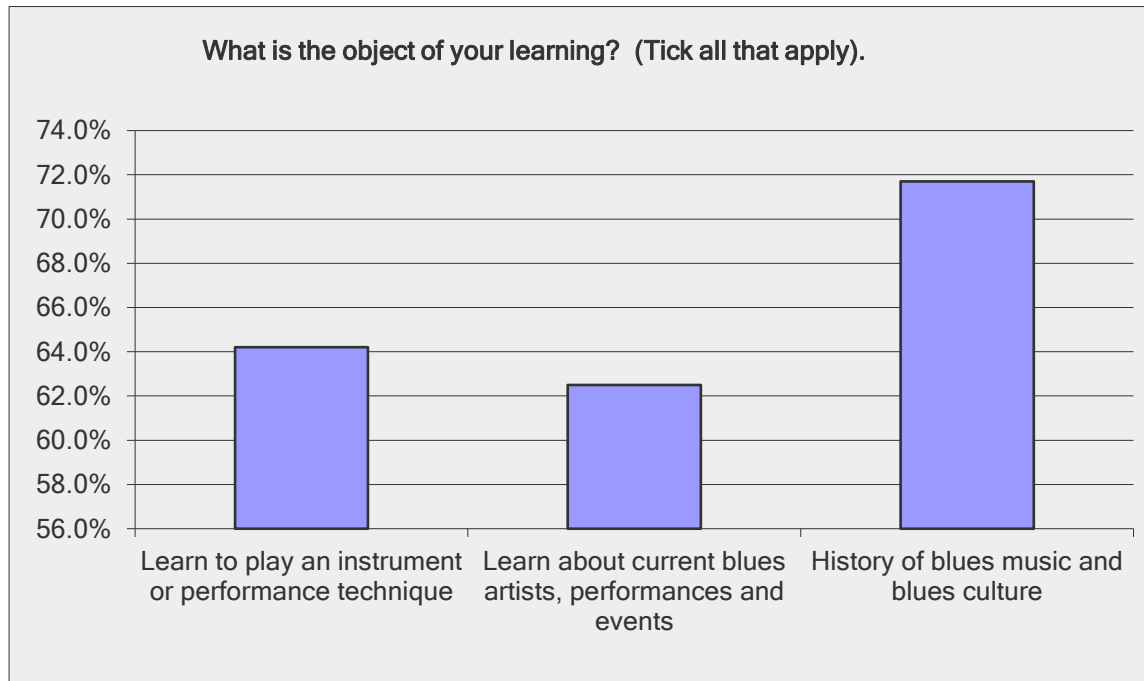
**QUESTION 25: What level of qualification will this learning lead to?**

| What level of qualification will this learning lead to? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| No formal qualification | 98.3% | 115 |
| College certificate | 0.0% | 0 |
| Diploma | 0.0% | 0 |
| Bachelors Degree | 0.0% | 0 |
| Masters Degree | 1.7% | 2 |
| PhD | 0.0% | 0 |
| Other (please specify) | | 6 |
| | answered question | 117 |
| | skipped question | 395 |



What level of qualification will this learning lead to?
- No formal qualification
- College certificate
- Diploma
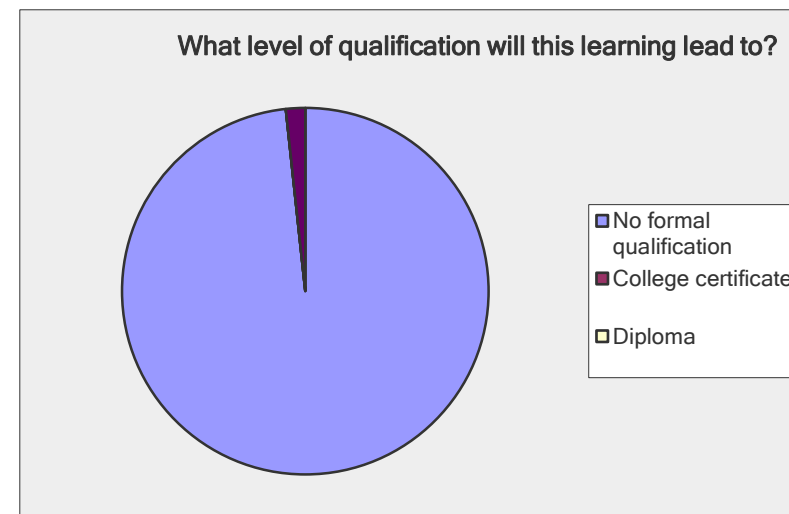
| Number | Response Date | Other (please specify) | Categories |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Jun 3, 2015 4:55 AM | I am an "expert" on a blues learning site - I am not using it to learn specifically (though of course I learn there!) | |
| 2 | Jun 2, 2015 6:27 PM | self taught | |
| 3 | Jun 2, 2015 1:55 AM | Harmonica Teaching Certification, via bluesharmonica.com | |
| 4 | Jun 2, 2015 12:00 AM | to further my professional knowledge | |
| 5 | Jun 1, 2015 4:30 PM | Blues is Life | |
| 6 | Jun 1, 2015 2:49 PM | I'm a lifer. | |

**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 8, BLUES LEARNING COMMUNITIES**
**QUESTION 26: What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

| What is the highest level of education you have completed? | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Did not attend school | 2.4% | 3 |
| Experience/vocational Learning | 4.8% | 6 |
| (UK) GCSE or 'O' level / (US) 10th Grade | 2.4% | 3 |
| (UK) A level / (US) 12th Grade | 14.5% | 18 |
| Bachelors Degree | 37.9% | 47 |
| Masters Degree | 20.2% | 25 |
| PHD | 6.5% | 8 |
| Postdoctoral | 2.4% | 3 |
| Other | 8.9% | 11 |
| answered question | | 124 |
| skipped question | | 388 |
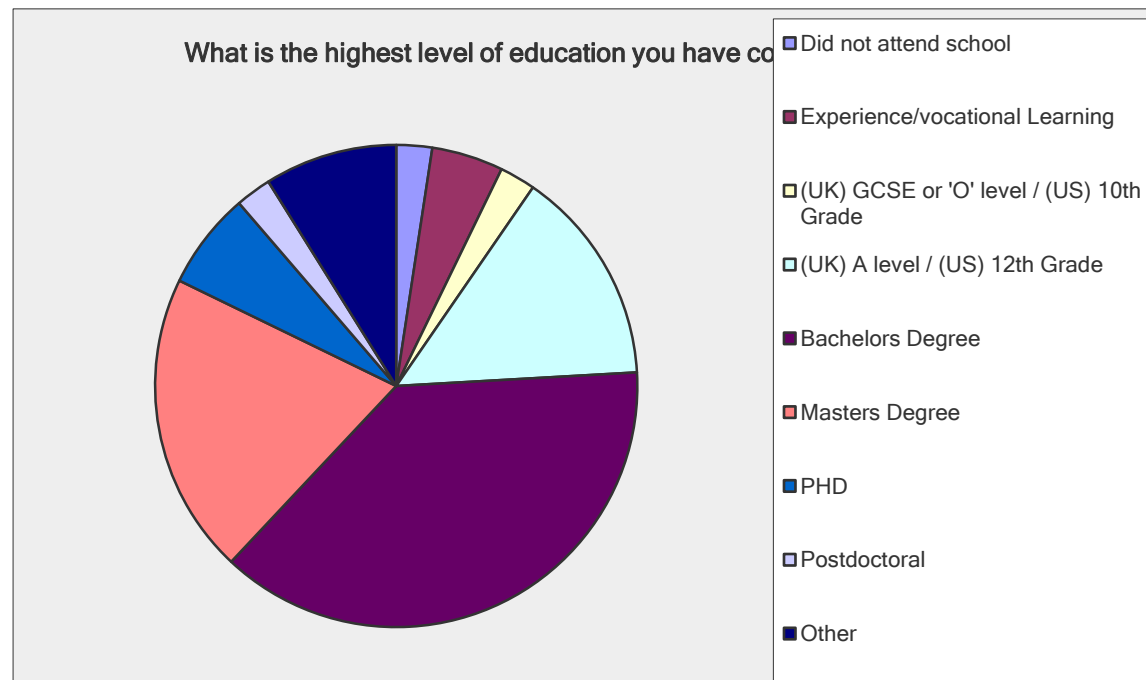
**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 8, BLUES LEARNING COMMUNITIES**

**QUESTION 27: How do you interact with your blues learning community? (Tick all that apply).**

| How do you interact with your blues learning community? (Tick all that apply). | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Text / written  (email, instant message, SMS/text message) | 89.7% | 104 |
| Voice / audio (Skype, Google) | 20.7% | 24 |
| Video (Skype, Google) | 20.7% | 24 |
| Face to face meeting | 40.5% | 47 |
| answered question | | 116 |
| skipped question | | 396 |
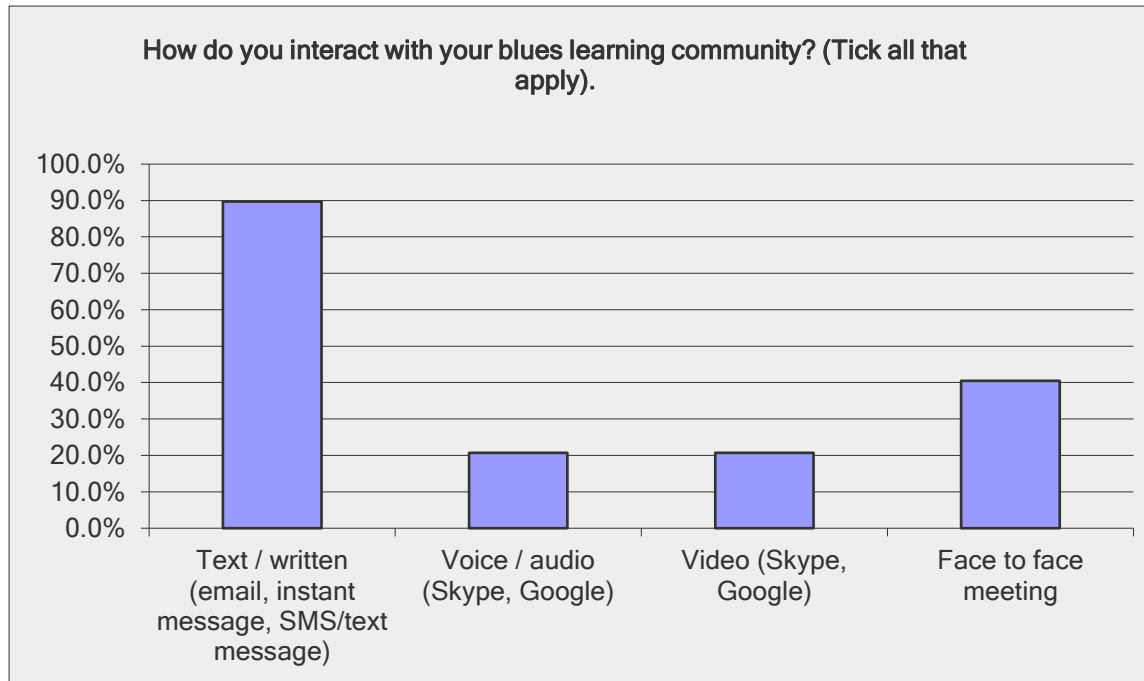


How do you interact with your blues learning community? (Tick all that apply).

**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 9, BLUES ARTISTS in 2015**

**QUESTION 28: Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists? (Tick all that apply. If you are not familiar with an artist, leave them blank.**

| Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists? (Tick all that apply. If you are not familiar with an artist, leave them blank. | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Joe Bonamassa | 46.9% | 215 |
| Eric Clapton | 61.8% | 283 |
| Mamie Smith | 48.7% | 223 |
| Leadbelly | 81.9% | 375 |
| Charley Patton | 68.3% | 313 |
| Blind Lemon Jefferson | 88.9% | 407 |
| Bessie Smith | 79.0% | 362 |
| Ethel Waters | 29.7% | 136 |
| Marion Harris | 12.4% | 57 |
| Jimmie Rodgers | 54.6% | 250 |
| Lonnie Johnson | 61.1% | 280 |
| Big Bill Broonzy | 78.8% | 361 |
| Son House | 81.4% | 373 |
| T-Bone Walker | 89.5% | 410 |
| Howlin' Wolf | 95.4% | 437 |
| Robert Johnson | 94.1% | 431 |
| Muddy Waters | 97.6% | 447 |
| Sister Rosetta Tharpe | 58.5% | 268 |
| Albert King | 90.4% | 414 |
| Billie Holliday | 50.4% | 231 |
| B.B. King | 98.0% | 449 |
| Bobby Blue Bland | 65.3% | 299 |
| Freddie King | 84.1% | 385 |
| Buddy Guy | 91.5% | 419 |
| Etta James | 78.2% | 358 |
| Bobby Rush | 56.3% | 258 |
| Seasick Steve | 41.0% | 188 |
| Jimi Hendrix | 41.7% | 191 |
| Taj Mahal | 71.8% | 329 |

**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 9, BLUES ARTISTS in 2015**

**QUESTION 28: Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists?  (Tick all that apply.  If you are not familiar with an artist, leave them blank.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Johnny Winter | 67.7% | 310 |
| Bonnie Raitt | 57.6% | 264 |
| Little Milton | 24.9% | 114 |
| Joe Louis Walker | 56.8% | 260 |
| Keb' Mo' | 65.9% | 302 |
| Robert Cray | 72.5% | 332 |
| Vasti Jackson | 7.9% | 36 |
| Stevie Ray Vaughan | 71.6% | 328 |
| Mud Morganfield | 60.5% | 277 |
| Hugh Laurie | 21.2% | 97 |
| Alvin Youngblood Hart | 41.5% | 190 |
| Corey Harris | 40.0% | 183 |
| Susan Tedeschi | 51.5% | 236 |
| Ian Siegal | 30.6% | 140 |
| Bex Marshall | 12.4% | 57 |
| Jack White | 17.5% | 80 |
| Mrs Jody | 5.9% | 27 |
| Kenny Wayne Shepherd | 40.8% | 187 |
| Jonny Lang | 36.7% | 168 |
| Sandie Thom | 9.6% | 44 |
| Gary Clark Junior | 40.8% | 187 |
| Jarekus Singleton | 21.2% | 97 |
| O.B. Buchana | 5.2% | 24 |
| Vick Allen | 3.7% | 17 |
| Marvin Sease | 7.0% | 32 |
| *answered question* | | **458** |
| *skipped question* | | **54** |

**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 9, BLUES ARTISTS in 2015**

**QUESTION 28: Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists? (Tick all that apply. If you are not familiar with an artist, leave them blank.**



Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists? (Tick all that apply. If you are not familiar with an artist, leave them blank.
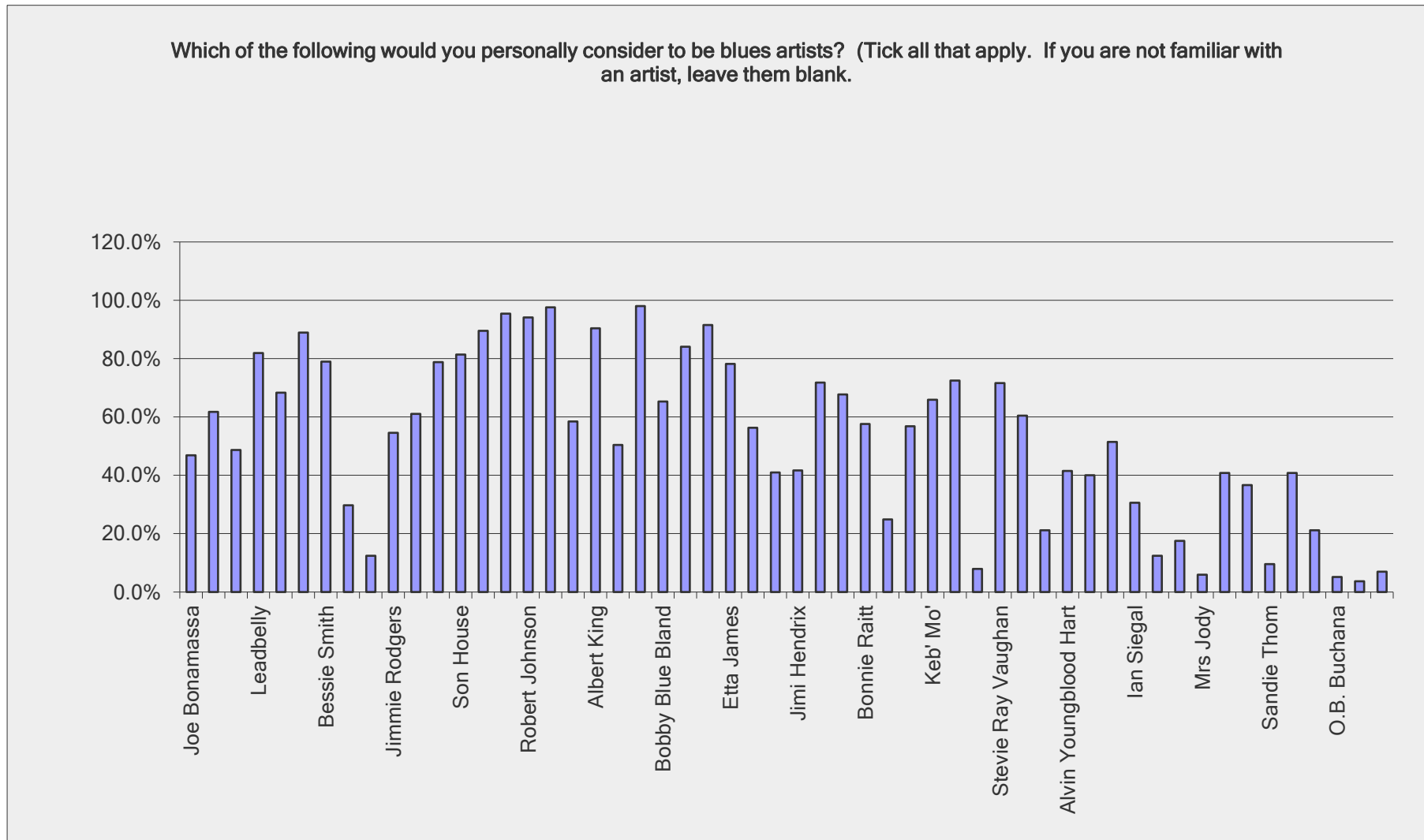
**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 10, BEFORE THE INTERNET**
**QUESTION 29: Roughly when did you first use the internet for blues music?**

| Roughly when did you first use the internet for blues music? | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| 1980-1990 | 6.3% | 28 |
| 1991-1995 | 15.3% | 68 |
| 1996-2000 | 24.2% | 107 |
| 2001-2005 | 24.8% | 110 |
| 2005-2013 | 29.3% | 130 |
| answered question | | 443 |
| skipped question | | 69 |

Roughly when did you first use the internet for blues music?



Legend:
- 1980-1990
- 1991-1995
- 1996-2000
- 2001-2005
- 2005-2013
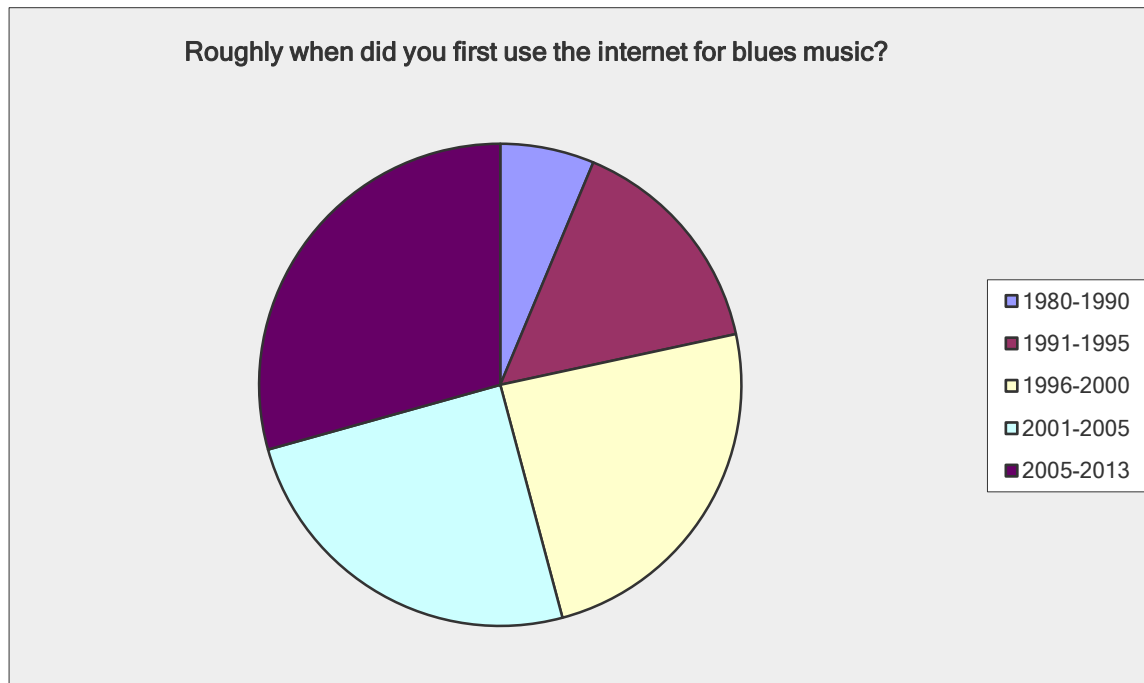
**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 10, BEFORE THE INTERNET**

**QUESTION 30: Before you used the internet for blues music, rank the options below in order of their importance to you.**

Before you used the internet for blues music, rank the options below in order of their importance to you.

| Answer Options | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | Rating Average | Response Count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Magazines | 68 | 56 | 66 | 60 | 59 | 56 | 40 | 20 | 11 | 4 | 4.15 | 440 |
| Newspapers | 17 | 35 | 15 | 40 | 58 | 66 | 77 | 51 | 36 | 45 | 6.13 | 440 |
| Radio | 68 | 74 | 101 | 61 | 43 | 31 | 29 | 19 | 9 | 5 | 3.75 | 440 |
| Television | 9 | 24 | 32 | 71 | 63 | 74 | 62 | 51 | 31 | 23 | 5.79 | 440 |
| Audio recordings (Phonograph records, CDs, Tapes) | 198 | 87 | 52 | 31 | 28 | 11 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 16 | 2.63 | 440 |
| Video recordings | 4 | 23 | 41 | 44 | 65 | 73 | 78 | 64 | 34 | 14 | 5.95 | 440 |
| Newsletters/Fanzines | 5 | 9 | 11 | 16 | 18 | 23 | 70 | 114 | 111 | 63 | 7.68 | 440 |
| Live performances | 57 | 88 | 69 | 56 | 35 | 28 | 21 | 51 | 22 | 13 | 4.30 | 440 |
| Face to face meetings (clubs, discussion groups) | 6 | 15 | 24 | 28 | 29 | 33 | 22 | 34 | 140 | 109 | 7.59 | 440 |
| Books | 8 | 29 | 29 | 33 | 42 | 45 | 38 | 27 | 41 | 148 | 7.04 | 440 |
| | | | | | | | | | | answered question | | 440 |
| | | | | | | | | | | skipped question | | 72 |



Before you used the internet for blues music, rank the options below in order of their importance to you.
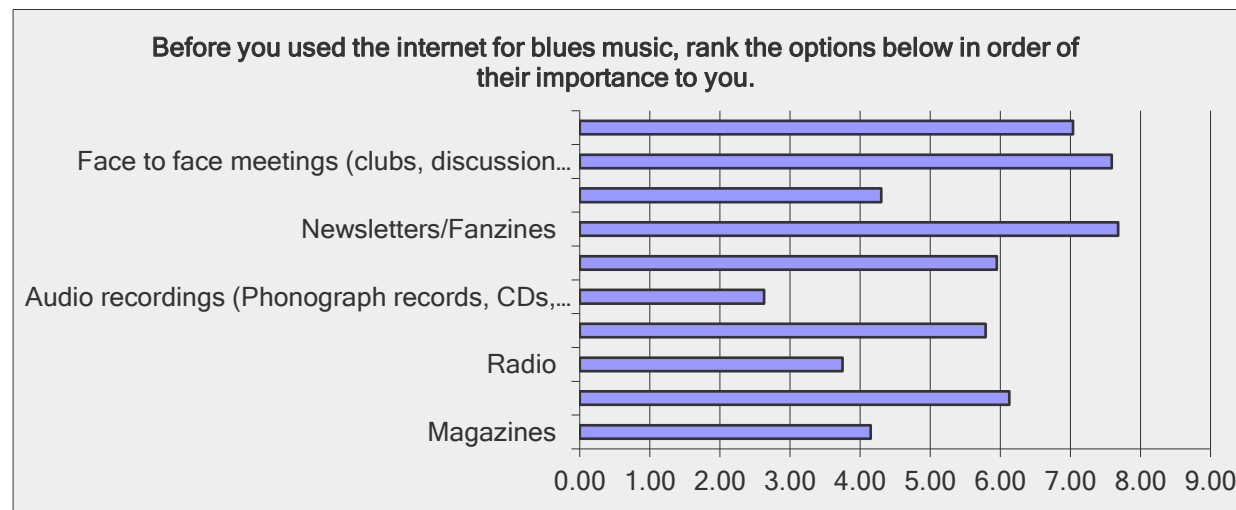
**YOU AND THE BLUES: SECTION 11, CLOSING QUESTIONS**

**QUESTION 31: Rank the following statements in order of importance.**

| Rank the following statements in order of importance. | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | disagree | Strongly disagree | Rating Average | Response Count |
| The blues has had an important influence on popular music since 1900. | 365 | 66 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 1.22 | 444 |
| Blues music continues to develop and evolve in the present day. | 213 | 160 | 46 | 18 | 4 | 1.73 | 441 |
| The blues can and should be performed by anyone, regardless of age, ethnicity or gender. | 315 | 83 | 27 | 12 | 7 | 1.45 | 444 |
| The blues is more 'real,' or 'authentic,' than other styles of popular music. | 123 | 108 | 145 | 52 | 17 | 2.40 | 445 |
| | | | | | | answered question | 445 |
| | | | | | | skipped question | 67 |
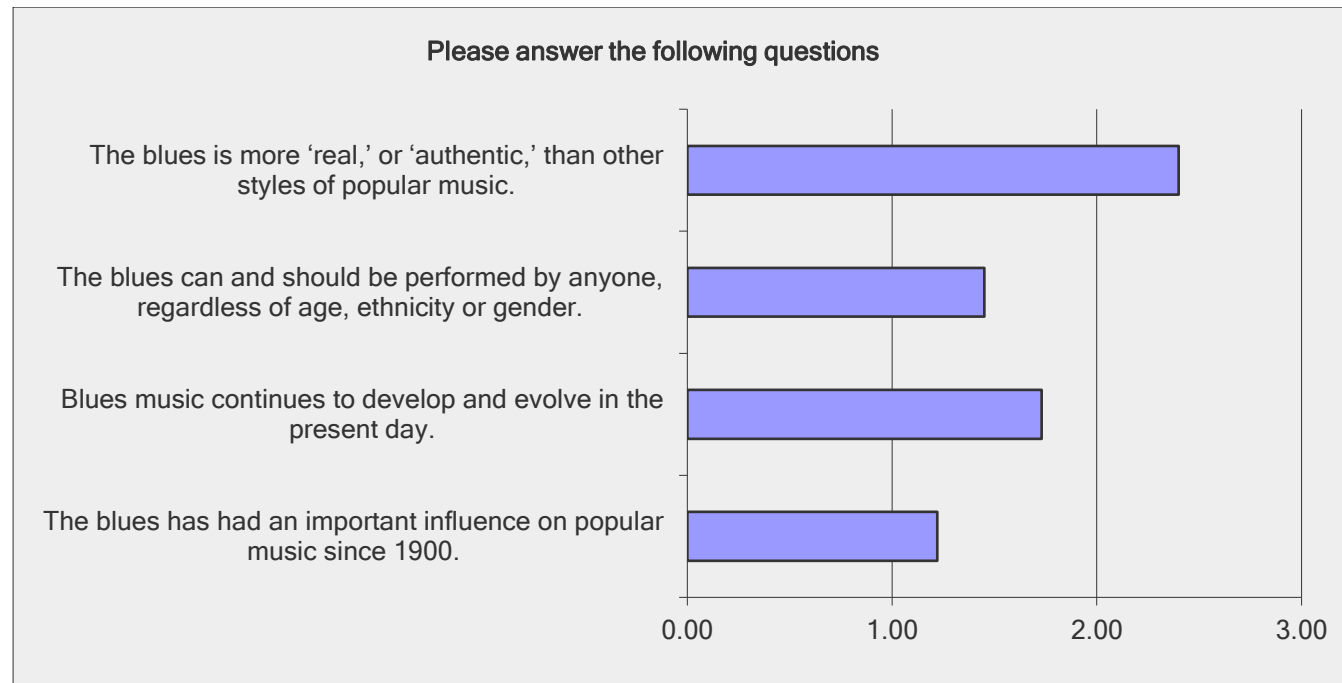


Please answer the following questions

| Overall, do you believe that the internet and social networking has enhanced your experience and understanding of bl | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Strongly agree | agree | neither agree nor disagree | disagree |
| Overall, do you believe that the internet and social networking has enhanced your experience and understanding of blues music and blues culture? | 293 | 105 | 35 | 8 |
| | | | | |

**The FINAL Question!**

Overall, do you believe that the internet and social networking has enhanced your experience and understanding of blues music and blues culture?

0.00  0.20  0.40  0.60  0.80  1.00  1.20  1.40  1.60
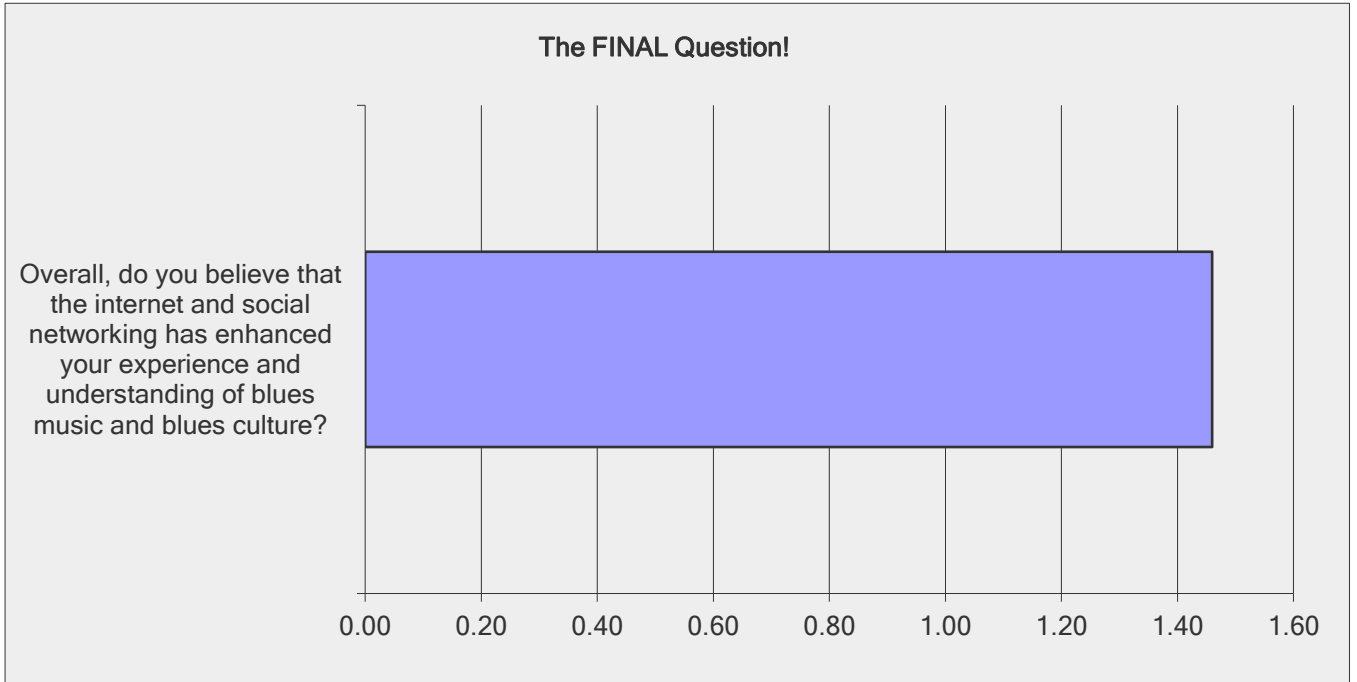
## Appendix 2: Filtered survey results

As indicated in chapter 7,.the above data was further filtered to provide further demographic

insights.

## THE BLUES, YOU and the INTERNET
**Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists? (Tick all that apply. If you are not**

| Answer Options | Answer Options2 | Response Percen | Response Coun |
|---|---|---|---|
| B.B. King | B.B. King | 98.0% | 449 |
| Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | 97.6% | 447 |
| Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | 95.4% | 437 |
| Robert Johnson | Robert Johnson | 94.1% | 431 |
| Buddy Guy | Buddy Guy | 91.5% | 419 |
| Albert King | Albert King | 90.4% | 414 |
| T-Bone Walker | T-Bone Walker | 89.5% | 410 |
| Blind Lemon Jefferson | Blind Lemon Jefferson | 88.9% | 407 |
| Freddie King | Freddie King | 84.1% | 385 |
| Leadbelly | Leadbelly | 81.9% | 375 |
| Son House | Son House | 81.4% | 373 |
| Bessie Smith | Bessie Smith | 79.0% | 362 |
| Big Bill Broonzy | Big Bill Broonzy | 78.8% | 361 |
| Etta James | Etta James | 78.2% | 358 |
| Robert Cray | Robert Cray | 72.5% | 332 |
| Taj Mahal | Taj Mahal | 71.8% | 329 |
| Stevie Ray Vaughan | Stevie Ray Vaughan | 71.6% | 328 |
| Charley Patton | Charley Patton | 68.3% | 313 |
| Johnny Winter | Johnny Winter | 67.7% | 310 |
| Keb' Mo' | Keb' Mo' | 65.9% | 302 |
| Bobby Blue Bland | Bobby Blue Bland | 65.3% | 299 |
| Eric Clapton | Eric Clapton | 61.8% | 283 |
| Lonnie Johnson | Lonnie Johnson | 61.1% | 280 |
| Mud Morganfield | Mud Morganfield | 60.5% | 277 |
| Sister Rosetta Tharpe | Sister Rosetta Tharpe | 58.5% | 268 |
| Bonnie Raitt | Bonnie Raitt | 57.6% | 264 |
| Joe Louis Walker | Joe Louis Walker | 56.8% | 260 |
| Bobby Rush | Bobby Rush | 56.3% | 258 |
| Jimmie Rodgers | Jimmie Rodgers | 54.6% | 250 |
| Susan Tedeschi | Susan Tedeschi | 51.5% | 236 |
| Billie Holliday | Billie Holliday | 50.4% | 231 |
| Mamie Smith | Mamie Smith | 48.7% | 223 |
| Joe Bonamassa | Joe Bonamassa | 46.9% | 215 |
| Jimi Hendrix | Jimi Hendrix | 41.7% | 191 |
| Alvin Youngblood Hart | Alvin Youngblood Hart | 41.5% | 190 |
| Seasick Steve | Seasick Steve | 41.0% | 188 |
| Kenny Wayne Shepherd | Kenny Wayne Shepherd | 40.8% | 187 |
| Gary Clark Junior | Gary Clark Junior | 40.8% | 187 |
| Corey Harris | Corey Harris | 40.0% | 183 |
| Jonny Lang | Jonny Lang | 36.7% | 168 |
| Ian Siegal | Ian Siegal | 30.6% | 140 |
| Ethel Waters | Ethel Waters | 29.7% | 136 |
| Little Milton | Little Milton | 24.9% | 114 |
| Hugh Laurie | Hugh Laurie | 21.2% | 97 |
| Jarekus Singleton | Jarekus Singleton | 21.2% | 97 |
| Jack White | Jack White | 17.5% | 80 |
| Marion Harris | Marion Harris | 12.4% | 57 |
| Bex Marshall | Bex Marshall | 12.4% | 57 |
| Sandie Thom | Sandie Thom | 9.6% | 44 |
| Vasti Jackson | Vasti Jackson | 7.9% | 36 |
| Marvin Sease | Marvin Sease | 7.0% | 32 |
| Mrs Jody | Mrs Jody | 5.9% | 27 |
| O.B. Buchana | O.B. Buchana | 5.2% | 24 |
| Vick Allen | Vick Allen | 3.7% | 17 |
| | | *answered question* | **458** |
| | | *skipped question* | **54** |

## THE BLUES, YOU and the INTERNET

**Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists? (Tick all that apply. If you are not**

| Answer Options | Answer Options2 | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|---|
| B.B. King | B.B. King | 97.7% | 85 |
| Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | 96.6% | 84 |
| Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | 87.4% | 76 |
| Etta James | Etta James | 86.2% | 75 |
| Robert Johnson | Robert Johnson | 85.1% | 74 |
| Buddy Guy | Buddy Guy | 83.9% | 73 |
| T-Bone Walker | T-Bone Walker | 80.5% | 70 |
| Bessie Smith | Bessie Smith | 79.3% | 69 |
| Albert King | Albert King | 79.3% | 69 |
| Blind Lemon Jefferson | Blind Lemon Jefferson | 74.7% | 65 |
| Freddie King | Freddie King | 74.7% | 65 |
| Leadbelly | Leadbelly | 73.6% | 64 |
| Eric Clapton | Eric Clapton | 72.4% | 63 |
| Billie Holliday | Billie Holliday | 72.4% | 63 |
| Robert Cray | Robert Cray | 67.8% | 59 |
| Stevie Ray Vaughan | Stevie Ray Vaughan | 65.5% | 57 |
| Keb' Mo' | Keb' Mo' | 64.4% | 56 |
| Sister Rosetta Tharpe | Sister Rosetta Tharpe | 62.1% | 54 |
| Taj Mahal | Taj Mahal | 60.9% | 53 |
| Johnny Winter | Johnny Winter | 59.8% | 52 |
| Bonnie Raitt | Bonnie Raitt | 59.8% | 52 |
| Bobby Blue Bland | Bobby Blue Bland | 58.6% | 51 |
| Son House | Son House | 57.5% | 50 |
| Big Bill Broonzy | Big Bill Broonzy | 52.9% | 46 |
| Joe Louis Walker | Joe Louis Walker | 52.9% | 46 |
| Mud Morganfield | Mud Morganfield | 52.9% | 46 |
| Susan Tedeschi | Susan Tedeschi | 52.9% | 46 |
| Bobby Rush | Bobby Rush | 49.4% | 43 |
| Joe Bonamassa | Joe Bonamassa | 47.1% | 41 |
| Charley Patton | Charley Patton | 47.1% | 41 |
| Mamie Smith | Mamie Smith | 44.8% | 39 |
| Jimi Hendrix | Jimi Hendrix | 44.8% | 39 |
| Kenny Wayne Shepherd | Kenny Wayne Shepherd | 44.8% | 39 |
| Jonny Lang | Jonny Lang | 43.7% | 38 |
| Jimmie Rodgers | Jimmie Rodgers | 42.5% | 37 |
| Lonnie Johnson | Lonnie Johnson | 42.5% | 37 |
| Alvin Youngblood Hart | Alvin Youngblood Hart | 39.1% | 34 |
| Ethel Waters | Ethel Waters | 36.8% | 32 |
| Seasick Steve | Seasick Steve | 33.3% | 29 |
| Gary Clark Junior | Gary Clark Junior | 32.2% | 28 |
| Ian Siegal | Ian Siegal | 31.0% | 27 |
| Corey Harris | Corey Harris | 27.6% | 24 |
| Little Milton | Little Milton | 26.4% | 23 |
| Hugh Laurie | Hugh Laurie | 25.3% | 22 |
| Jarekus Singleton | Jarekus Singleton | 21.8% | 19 |
| Jack White | Jack White | 20.7% | 18 |
| Sandie Thom | Sandie Thom | 16.1% | 14 |
| Marion Harris | Marion Harris | 12.6% | 11 |
| Bex Marshall | Bex Marshall | 11.5% | 10 |
| Vasti Jackson | Vasti Jackson | 10.3% | 9 |
| Marvin Sease | Marvin Sease | 9.2% | 8 |
| O.B. Buchana | O.B. Buchana | 8.0% | 7 |
| Mrs Jody | Mrs Jody | 5.7% | 5 |
| Vick Allen | Vick Allen | 3.4% | 3 |
| | | answered question | 87 |
| | | skipped question | 12 |

## THE BLUES, YOU and the INTERNET

**Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists? (Tick all that apply. If you are**

| Answer Options | Answer Options2 | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|---|
| B.B. King | B.B. King | 98.1% | 105 |
| Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | 97.2% | 104 |
| Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | 92.5% | 99 |
| Robert Johnson | Robert Johnson | 91.6% | 98 |
| Blind Lemon Jefferson | Blind Lemon Jefferson | 85.0% | 91 |
| Buddy Guy | Buddy Guy | 85.0% | 91 |
| Albert King | Albert King | 83.2% | 89 |
| T-Bone Walker | T-Bone Walker | 79.4% | 85 |
| Freddie King | Freddie King | 77.6% | 83 |
| Son House | Son House | 76.6% | 82 |
| Leadbelly | Leadbelly | 75.7% | 81 |
| Big Bill Broonzy | Big Bill Broonzy | 74.8% | 80 |
| Bessie Smith | Bessie Smith | 72.9% | 78 |
| Stevie Ray Vaughan | Stevie Ray Vaughan | 66.4% | 71 |
| Etta James | Etta James | 65.4% | 70 |
| Charley Patton | Charley Patton | 63.6% | 68 |
| Taj Mahal | Taj Mahal | 62.6% | 67 |
| Sister Rosetta Tharpe | Sister Rosetta Tharpe | 57.9% | 62 |
| Johnny Winter | Johnny Winter | 57.9% | 62 |
| Eric Clapton | Eric Clapton | 56.1% | 60 |
| Lonnie Johnson | Lonnie Johnson | 52.3% | 56 |
| Keb' Mo' | Keb' Mo' | 51.4% | 55 |
| Robert Cray | Robert Cray | 51.4% | 55 |
| Seasick Steve | Seasick Steve | 49.5% | 53 |
| Bobby Blue Bland | Bobby Blue Bland | 47.7% | 51 |
| Mud Morganfield | Mud Morganfield | 46.7% | 50 |
| Mamie Smith | Mamie Smith | 45.8% | 49 |
| Jimmie Rodgers | Jimmie Rodgers | 45.8% | 49 |
| Billie Holliday | Billie Holliday | 42.1% | 45 |
| Bobby Rush | Bobby Rush | 41.1% | 44 |
| Joe Bonamassa | Joe Bonamassa | 39.3% | 42 |
| Joe Louis Walker | Joe Louis Walker | 39.3% | 42 |
| Gary Clark Junior | Gary Clark Junior | 39.3% | 42 |
| Bonnie Raitt | Bonnie Raitt | 37.4% | 40 |
| Corey Harris | Corey Harris | 34.6% | 37 |
| Jimi Hendrix | Jimi Hendrix | 33.6% | 36 |
| Susan Tedeschi | Susan Tedeschi | 31.8% | 34 |
| Alvin Youngblood Hart | Alvin Youngblood Hart | 30.8% | 33 |
| Kenny Wayne Shepherd | Kenny Wayne Shepherd | 29.9% | 32 |
| Ethel Waters | Ethel Waters | 26.2% | 28 |
| Jonny Lang | Jonny Lang | 26.2% | 28 |
| Hugh Laurie | Hugh Laurie | 24.3% | 26 |
| Ian Siegal | Ian Siegal | 23.4% | 25 |
| Jack White | Jack White | 20.6% | 22 |
| Marion Harris | Marion Harris | 15.9% | 17 |
| Jarekus Singleton | Jarekus Singleton | 14.0% | 15 |
| Little Milton | Little Milton | 11.2% | 12 |
| Bex Marshall | Bex Marshall | 8.4% | 9 |
| O.B. Buchana | O.B. Buchana | 4.7% | 5 |
| Marvin Sease | Marvin Sease | 4.7% | 5 |
| Vasti Jackson | Vasti Jackson | 3.7% | 4 |
| Sandie Thom | Sandie Thom | 3.7% | 4 |
| Mrs Jody | Mrs Jody | 2.8% | 3 |
| Vick Allen | Vick Allen | 2.8% | 3 |
| | | *answered question* | 107 |
| | | *skipped question* | 14 |

## THE BLUES, YOU and the INTERNET

Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists? (Tick all that apply. If you

| Answer Options | Answer Options2 | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|---|
| B.B. King | B.B. King | 98.0% | 344 |
| Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | 97.7% | 343 |
| Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | 96.3% | 338 |
| Robert Johnson | Robert Johnson | 94.9% | 333 |
| Buddy Guy | Buddy Guy | 93.4% | 328 |
| T-Bone Walker | T-Bone Walker | 92.6% | 325 |
| Albert King | Albert King | 92.6% | 325 |
| Blind Lemon Jefferson | Blind Lemon Jefferson | 90.0% | 316 |
| Freddie King | Freddie King | 86.0% | 302 |
| Leadbelly | Leadbelly | 83.8% | 294 |
| Son House | Son House | 82.9% | 291 |
| Etta James | Etta James | 82.1% | 288 |
| Bessie Smith | Bessie Smith | 80.9% | 284 |
| Big Bill Broonzy | Big Bill Broonzy | 80.1% | 281 |
| Robert Cray | Robert Cray | 78.9% | 277 |
| Taj Mahal | Taj Mahal | 74.6% | 262 |
| Stevie Ray Vaughan | Stevie Ray Vaughan | 73.2% | 257 |
| Bobby Blue Bland | Bobby Blue Bland | 70.7% | 248 |
| Johnny Winter | Johnny Winter | 70.7% | 248 |
| Keb' Mo' | Keb' Mo' | 70.4% | 247 |
| Charley Patton | Charley Patton | 69.8% | 245 |
| Mud Morganfield | Mud Morganfield | 64.7% | 227 |
| Lonnie Johnson | Lonnie Johnson | 63.8% | 224 |
| Bonnie Raitt | Bonnie Raitt | 63.8% | 224 |
| Eric Clapton | Eric Clapton | 63.5% | 223 |
| Joe Louis Walker | Joe Louis Walker | 62.1% | 218 |
| Bobby Rush | Bobby Rush | 61.0% | 214 |
| Sister Rosetta Tharpe | Sister Rosetta Tharpe | 58.7% | 206 |
| Susan Tedeschi | Susan Tedeschi | 57.5% | 202 |
| Jimmie Rodgers | Jimmie Rodgers | 57.3% | 201 |
| Billie Holliday | Billie Holliday | 53.0% | 186 |
| Mamie Smith | Mamie Smith | 49.6% | 174 |
| Joe Bonamassa | Joe Bonamassa | 49.3% | 173 |
| Alvin Youngblood Hart | Alvin Youngblood Hart | 44.7% | 157 |
| Jimi Hendrix | Jimi Hendrix | 44.2% | 155 |
| Kenny Wayne Shepherd | Kenny Wayne Shepherd | 44.2% | 155 |
| Corey Harris | Corey Harris | 41.6% | 146 |
| Gary Clark Junior | Gary Clark Junior | 41.3% | 145 |
| Jonny Lang | Jonny Lang | 39.9% | 140 |
| Seasick Steve | Seasick Steve | 38.5% | 135 |
| Ian Siegal | Ian Siegal | 32.8% | 115 |
| Ethel Waters | Ethel Waters | 30.8% | 108 |
| Little Milton | Little Milton | 29.1% | 102 |
| Jarekus Singleton | Jarekus Singleton | 23.4% | 82 |
| Hugh Laurie | Hugh Laurie | 20.2% | 71 |
| Jack White | Jack White | 16.5% | 58 |
| Bex Marshall | Bex Marshall | 13.7% | 48 |
| Marion Harris | Marion Harris | 11.4% | 40 |
| Sandie Thom | Sandie Thom | 11.4% | 40 |
| Vasti Jackson | Vasti Jackson | 9.1% | 32 |
| Marvin Sease | Marvin Sease | 7.7% | 27 |
| Mrs Jody | Mrs Jody | 6.8% | 24 |
| O.B. Buchana | O.B. Buchana | 5.4% | 19 |
| Vick Allen | Vick Allen | 4.0% | 14 |
| | | *answered question* | 351 |
| | | *skipped question* | 40 |

## THE BLUES, YOU and the INTERNET
**Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists? (Tick all that apply. If you are not**

| Answer Options | Answer Options2 | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leadbelly | Leadbelly | 100.0% | 3 |
| Blind Lemon Jefferson | Blind Lemon Jefferson | 100.0% | 3 |
| Bessie Smith | Bessie Smith | 100.0% | 3 |
| Big Bill Broonzy | Big Bill Broonzy | 100.0% | 3 |
| Son House | Son House | 100.0% | 3 |
| T-Bone Walker | T-Bone Walker | 100.0% | 3 |
| Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | 100.0% | 3 |
| Robert Johnson | Robert Johnson | 100.0% | 3 |
| Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | 100.0% | 3 |
| Albert King | Albert King | 100.0% | 3 |
| B.B. King | B.B. King | 100.0% | 3 |
| Bobby Blue Bland | Bobby Blue Bland | 100.0% | 3 |
| Freddie King | Freddie King | 100.0% | 3 |
| Buddy Guy | Buddy Guy | 100.0% | 3 |
| Charley Patton | Charley Patton | 66.7% | 2 |
| Ethel Waters | Ethel Waters | 66.7% | 2 |
| Jimmie Rodgers | Jimmie Rodgers | 66.7% | 2 |
| Lonnie Johnson | Lonnie Johnson | 66.7% | 2 |
| Sister Rosetta Tharpe | Sister Rosetta Tharpe | 66.7% | 2 |
| Billie Holliday | Billie Holliday | 66.7% | 2 |
| Etta James | Etta James | 66.7% | 2 |
| Bobby Rush | Bobby Rush | 66.7% | 2 |
| Bonnie Raitt | Bonnie Raitt | 66.7% | 2 |
| Little Milton | Little Milton | 66.7% | 2 |
| Joe Louis Walker | Joe Louis Walker | 66.7% | 2 |
| Keb' Mo' | Keb' Mo' | 66.7% | 2 |
| Mud Morganfield | Mud Morganfield | 66.7% | 2 |
| Alvin Youngblood Hart | Alvin Youngblood Hart | 66.7% | 2 |
| Corey Harris | Corey Harris | 66.7% | 2 |
| Gary Clark Junior | Gary Clark Junior | 66.7% | 2 |
| Eric Clapton | Eric Clapton | 33.3% | 1 |
| Mamie Smith | Mamie Smith | 33.3% | 1 |
| Jimi Hendrix | Jimi Hendrix | 33.3% | 1 |
| Taj Mahal | Taj Mahal | 33.3% | 1 |
| Johnny Winter | Johnny Winter | 33.3% | 1 |
| Robert Cray | Robert Cray | 33.3% | 1 |
| Stevie Ray Vaughan | Stevie Ray Vaughan | 33.3% | 1 |
| Susan Tedeschi | Susan Tedeschi | 33.3% | 1 |
| Ian Siegal | Ian Siegal | 33.3% | 1 |
| Jonny Lang | Jonny Lang | 33.3% | 1 |
| Jarekus Singleton | Jarekus Singleton | 33.3% | 1 |
| Joe Bonamassa | Joe Bonamassa | 0.0% | 0 |
| Marion Harris | Marion Harris | 0.0% | 0 |
| Seasick Steve | Seasick Steve | 0.0% | 0 |
| Vasti Jackson | Vasti Jackson | 0.0% | 0 |
| Hugh Laurie | Hugh Laurie | 0.0% | 0 |
| Bex Marshall | Bex Marshall | 0.0% | 0 |
| Jack White | Jack White | 0.0% | 0 |
| Mrs Jody | Mrs Jody | 0.0% | 0 |
| Kenny Wayne Shepherd | Kenny Wayne Shepherd | 0.0% | 0 |
| Sandie Thom | Sandie Thom | 0.0% | 0 |
| O.B. Buchana | O.B. Buchana | 0.0% | 0 |
| Vick Allen | Vick Allen | 0.0% | 0 |
| Marvin Sease | Marvin Sease | 0.0% | 0 |
| | | *answered question* | 3 |
| | | *skipped question* | 0 |

## THE BLUES, YOU and the INTERNET

**Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists? (Tick all that apply. If you are not**

| Answer Options | Answer Options2 | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|---|
| B.B. King | B.B. King | 97.1% | 237 |
| Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | 95.9% | 234 |
| Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | 93.4% | 228 |
| Robert Johnson | Robert Johnson | 90.6% | 221 |
| Buddy Guy | Buddy Guy | 87.7% | 214 |
| T-Bone Walker | T-Bone Walker | 87.3% | 213 |
| Albert King | Albert King | 86.5% | 211 |
| Blind Lemon Jefferson | Blind Lemon Jefferson | 84.8% | 207 |
| Freddie King | Freddie King | 80.3% | 196 |
| Leadbelly | Leadbelly | 77.5% | 189 |
| Big Bill Broonzy | Big Bill Broonzy | 76.6% | 187 |
| Bessie Smith | Bessie Smith | 76.2% | 186 |
| Etta James | Etta James | 75.8% | 185 |
| Son House | Son House | 75.4% | 184 |
| Charley Patton | Charley Patton | 69.3% | 169 |
| Robert Cray | Robert Cray | 67.6% | 165 |
| Taj Mahal | Taj Mahal | 66.8% | 163 |
| Stevie Ray Vaughan | Stevie Ray Vaughan | 66.8% | 163 |
| Johnny Winter | Johnny Winter | 62.3% | 152 |
| Mud Morganfield | Mud Morganfield | 61.5% | 150 |
| Eric Clapton | Eric Clapton | 61.1% | 149 |
| Seasick Steve | Seasick Steve | 59.0% | 144 |
| Bobby Blue Bland | Bobby Blue Bland | 57.4% | 140 |
| Keb' Mo' | Keb' Mo' | 57.0% | 139 |
| Sister Rosetta Tharpe | Sister Rosetta Tharpe | 56.6% | 138 |
| Lonnie Johnson | Lonnie Johnson | 54.1% | 132 |
| Bonnie Raitt | Bonnie Raitt | 50.8% | 124 |
| Joe Louis Walker | Joe Louis Walker | 50.8% | 124 |
| Bobby Rush | Bobby Rush | 49.2% | 120 |
| Billie Holliday | Billie Holliday | 48.4% | 118 |
| Jimmie Rodgers | Jimmie Rodgers | 47.5% | 116 |
| Joe Bonamassa | Joe Bonamassa | 46.3% | 113 |
| Ian Siegal | Ian Siegal | 45.1% | 110 |
| Mamie Smith | Mamie Smith | 43.4% | 106 |
| Susan Tedeschi | Susan Tedeschi | 42.6% | 104 |
| Jimi Hendrix | Jimi Hendrix | 42.2% | 103 |
| Alvin Youngblood Hart | Alvin Youngblood Hart | 41.4% | 101 |
| Corey Harris | Corey Harris | 38.5% | 94 |
| Kenny Wayne Shepherd | Kenny Wayne Shepherd | 35.2% | 86 |
| Gary Clark Junior | Gary Clark Junior | 32.4% | 79 |
| Hugh Laurie | Hugh Laurie | 27.5% | 67 |
| Ethel Waters | Ethel Waters | 26.2% | 64 |
| Jonny Lang | Jonny Lang | 25.4% | 62 |
| Jack White | Jack White | 20.1% | 49 |
| Bex Marshall | Bex Marshall | 18.4% | 45 |
| Jarekus Singleton | Jarekus Singleton | 17.6% | 43 |
| Little Milton | Little Milton | 16.4% | 40 |
| Sandie Thom | Sandie Thom | 13.1% | 32 |
| Marion Harris | Marion Harris | 11.1% | 27 |
| Mrs Jody | Mrs Jody | 5.3% | 13 |
| Marvin Sease | Marvin Sease | 5.3% | 13 |
| Vasti Jackson | Vasti Jackson | 4.9% | 12 |
| O.B. Buchana | O.B. Buchana | 4.5% | 11 |
| Vick Allen | Vick Allen | 2.9% | 7 |
| | | *answered question* | **244** |
| | | *skipped question* | **37** |

## THE BLUES, YOU and the INTERNET

**Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists?  (Tick all that**

| Answer Options | Answer Options2 | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|---|
| B.B. King | B.B. King | 96.8% | 213 |
| Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | 96.4% | 212 |
| Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | 93.6% | 206 |
| Robert Johnson | Robert Johnson | 90.9% | 200 |
| Buddy Guy | Buddy Guy | 87.7% | 193 |
| T-Bone Walker | T-Bone Walker | 87.3% | 192 |
| Albert King | Albert King | 86.4% | 190 |
| Blind Lemon Jefferson | Blind Lemon Jefferson | 84.1% | 185 |
| Freddie King | Freddie King | 79.5% | 175 |
| Leadbelly | Leadbelly | 76.8% | 169 |
| Big Bill Broonzy | Big Bill Broonzy | 75.9% | 167 |
| Etta James | Etta James | 75.9% | 167 |
| Bessie Smith | Bessie Smith | 75.5% | 166 |
| Son House | Son House | 74.1% | 163 |
| Robert Cray | Robert Cray | 69.5% | 153 |
| Stevie Ray Vaughan | Stevie Ray Vaughan | 68.6% | 151 |
| Charley Patton | Charley Patton | 66.4% | 146 |
| Taj Mahal | Taj Mahal | 65.9% | 145 |
| Johnny Winter | Johnny Winter | 63.2% | 139 |
| Mud Morganfield | Mud Morganfield | 63.2% | 139 |
| Eric Clapton | Eric Clapton | 62.7% | 138 |
| Seasick Steve | Seasick Steve | 61.4% | 135 |
| Keb' Mo' | Keb' Mo' | 57.7% | 127 |
| Sister Rosetta Tharpe | Sister Rosetta Tharpe | 56.8% | 125 |
| Bobby Blue Bland | Bobby Blue Bland | 55.9% | 123 |
| Lonnie Johnson | Lonnie Johnson | 52.3% | 115 |
| Bonnie Raitt | Bonnie Raitt | 52.3% | 115 |
| Joe Louis Walker | Joe Louis Walker | 50.0% | 110 |
| Ian Siegal | Ian Siegal | 48.2% | 106 |
| Joe Bonamassa | Joe Bonamassa | 47.7% | 105 |
| Billie Holliday | Billie Holliday | 47.7% | 105 |
| Bobby Rush | Bobby Rush | 47.3% | 104 |
| Jimmie Rodgers | Jimmie Rodgers | 45.9% | 101 |
| Susan Tedeschi | Susan Tedeschi | 44.5% | 98 |
| Jimi Hendrix | Jimi Hendrix | 43.2% | 95 |
| Alvin Youngblood Hart | Alvin Youngblood Hart | 41.8% | 92 |
| Mamie Smith | Mamie Smith | 41.4% | 91 |
| Corey Harris | Corey Harris | 39.1% | 86 |
| Kenny Wayne Shepherd | Kenny Wayne Shepherd | 36.8% | 81 |
| Gary Clark Junior | Gary Clark Junior | 31.4% | 69 |
| Hugh Laurie | Hugh Laurie | 27.7% | 61 |
| Ethel Waters | Ethel Waters | 26.8% | 59 |
| Jonny Lang | Jonny Lang | 25.9% | 57 |
| Jack White | Jack White | 20.9% | 46 |
| Bex Marshall | Bex Marshall | 19.5% | 43 |
| Jarekus Singleton | Jarekus Singleton | 18.2% | 40 |
| Little Milton | Little Milton | 14.1% | 31 |
| Sandie Thom | Sandie Thom | 14.1% | 31 |
| Marion Harris | Marion Harris | 11.4% | 25 |
| Mrs Jody | Mrs Jody | 5.5% | 12 |
| Marvin Sease | Marvin Sease | 5.5% | 12 |
| Vasti Jackson | Vasti Jackson | 5.0% | 11 |
| O.B. Buchana | O.B. Buchana | 5.0% | 11 |
| Vick Allen | Vick Allen | 2.7% | 6 |
| | | *answered question* | 220 |
| | | *skipped question* | 36 |

## THE BLUES, YOU and the INTERNET

Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists? (Tick all that apply. If you are not

| Answer Options | Answer Options2 | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|---|
| Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | 96.6% | 28 |
| B.B. King | B.B. King | 96.6% | 28 |
| Bessie Smith | Bessie Smith | 93.1% | 27 |
| Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | 93.1% | 27 |
| Robert Johnson | Robert Johnson | 89.7% | 26 |
| Albert King | Albert King | 89.7% | 26 |
| Buddy Guy | Buddy Guy | 89.7% | 26 |
| Leadbelly | Leadbelly | 86.2% | 25 |
| Blind Lemon Jefferson | Blind Lemon Jefferson | 86.2% | 25 |
| Freddie King | Freddie King | 86.2% | 25 |
| T-Bone Walker | T-Bone Walker | 82.8% | 24 |
| Big Bill Broonzy | Big Bill Broonzy | 79.3% | 23 |
| Son House | Son House | 79.3% | 23 |
| Charley Patton | Charley Patton | 75.9% | 22 |
| Etta James | Etta James | 75.9% | 22 |
| Lonnie Johnson | Lonnie Johnson | 69.0% | 20 |
| Bobby Blue Bland | Bobby Blue Bland | 69.0% | 20 |
| Mamie Smith | Mamie Smith | 65.5% | 19 |
| Billie Holliday | Billie Holliday | 65.5% | 19 |
| Sister Rosetta Tharpe | Sister Rosetta Tharpe | 62.1% | 18 |
| Bobby Rush | Bobby Rush | 62.1% | 18 |
| Taj Mahal | Taj Mahal | 62.1% | 18 |
| Robert Cray | Robert Cray | 62.1% | 18 |
| Ethel Waters | Ethel Waters | 51.7% | 15 |
| Jimmie Rodgers | Jimmie Rodgers | 51.7% | 15 |
| Keb' Mo' | Keb' Mo' | 51.7% | 15 |
| Johnny Winter | Johnny Winter | 48.3% | 14 |
| Stevie Ray Vaughan | Stevie Ray Vaughan | 48.3% | 14 |
| Mud Morganfield | Mud Morganfield | 48.3% | 14 |
| Joe Louis Walker | Joe Louis Walker | 44.8% | 13 |
| Little Milton | Little Milton | 37.9% | 11 |
| Gary Clark Junior | Gary Clark Junior | 37.9% | 11 |
| Eric Clapton | Eric Clapton | 34.5% | 10 |
| Corey Harris | Corey Harris | 34.5% | 10 |
| Joe Bonamassa | Joe Bonamassa | 31.0% | 9 |
| Alvin Youngblood Hart | Alvin Youngblood Hart | 31.0% | 9 |
| Bonnie Raitt | Bonnie Raitt | 27.6% | 8 |
| Susan Tedeschi | Susan Tedeschi | 27.6% | 8 |
| Jimi Hendrix | Jimi Hendrix | 24.1% | 7 |
| Seasick Steve | Seasick Steve | 20.7% | 6 |
| Jonny Lang | Jonny Lang | 20.7% | 6 |
| Jarekus Singleton | Jarekus Singleton | 13.8% | 4 |
| Marion Harris | Marion Harris | 10.3% | 3 |
| Hugh Laurie | Hugh Laurie | 10.3% | 3 |
| Jack White | Jack White | 10.3% | 3 |
| Kenny Wayne Shepherd | Kenny Wayne Shepherd | 10.3% | 3 |
| Ian Siegal | Ian Siegal | 6.9% | 2 |
| Mrs Jody | Mrs Jody | 6.9% | 2 |
| O.B. Buchana | O.B. Buchana | 6.9% | 2 |
| Vick Allen | Vick Allen | 6.9% | 2 |
| Marvin Sease | Marvin Sease | 6.9% | 2 |
| Vasti Jackson | Vasti Jackson | 3.4% | 1 |
| Bex Marshall | Bex Marshall | 3.4% | 1 |
| Sandie Thom | Sandie Thom | 3.4% | 1 |
| | | *answered question* | 29 |
| | | *skipped question* | 1 |

## THE BLUES, YOU and the INTERNET

Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists? (Tick all that

| Answer Options | Answer Options2 | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---|---|---|---|
| B.B. King | B.B. King | 100.0% | 24 |
| Charley Patton | Charley Patton | 95.8% | 23 |
| Blind Lemon Jefferson | Blind Lemon Jefferson | 91.7% | 22 |
| Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | 91.7% | 22 |
| Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | 91.7% | 22 |
| Son House | Son House | 87.5% | 21 |
| T-Bone Walker | T-Bone Walker | 87.5% | 21 |
| Robert Johnson | Robert Johnson | 87.5% | 21 |
| Albert King | Albert King | 87.5% | 21 |
| Freddie King | Freddie King | 87.5% | 21 |
| Buddy Guy | Buddy Guy | 87.5% | 21 |
| Leadbelly | Leadbelly | 83.3% | 20 |
| Bessie Smith | Bessie Smith | 83.3% | 20 |
| Big Bill Broonzy | Big Bill Broonzy | 83.3% | 20 |
| Etta James | Etta James | 75.0% | 18 |
| Taj Mahal | Taj Mahal | 75.0% | 18 |
| Lonnie Johnson | Lonnie Johnson | 70.8% | 17 |
| Bobby Blue Bland | Bobby Blue Bland | 70.8% | 17 |
| Bobby Rush | Bobby Rush | 66.7% | 16 |
| Mamie Smith | Mamie Smith | 62.5% | 15 |
| Jimmie Rodgers | Jimmie Rodgers | 62.5% | 15 |
| Joe Louis Walker | Joe Louis Walker | 58.3% | 14 |
| Sister Rosetta Tharpe | Sister Rosetta Tharpe | 54.2% | 13 |
| Billie Holliday | Billie Holliday | 54.2% | 13 |
| Johnny Winter | Johnny Winter | 54.2% | 13 |
| Keb' Mo' | Keb' Mo' | 50.0% | 12 |
| Robert Cray | Robert Cray | 50.0% | 12 |
| Stevie Ray Vaughan | Stevie Ray Vaughan | 50.0% | 12 |
| Eric Clapton | Eric Clapton | 45.8% | 11 |
| Mud Morganfield | Mud Morganfield | 45.8% | 11 |
| Gary Clark Junior | Gary Clark Junior | 41.7% | 10 |
| Seasick Steve | Seasick Steve | 37.5% | 9 |
| Bonnie Raitt | Bonnie Raitt | 37.5% | 9 |
| Little Milton | Little Milton | 37.5% | 9 |
| Alvin Youngblood Hart | Alvin Youngblood Hart | 37.5% | 9 |
| Joe Bonamassa | Joe Bonamassa | 33.3% | 8 |
| Jimi Hendrix | Jimi Hendrix | 33.3% | 8 |
| Corey Harris | Corey Harris | 33.3% | 8 |
| Hugh Laurie | Hugh Laurie | 25.0% | 6 |
| Susan Tedeschi | Susan Tedeschi | 25.0% | 6 |
| Ethel Waters | Ethel Waters | 20.8% | 5 |
| Kenny Wayne Shepherd | Kenny Wayne Shepherd | 20.8% | 5 |
| Jonny Lang | Jonny Lang | 20.8% | 5 |
| Ian Siegal | Ian Siegal | 16.7% | 4 |
| Jack White | Jack White | 12.5% | 3 |
| Jarekus Singleton | Jarekus Singleton | 12.5% | 3 |
| Marion Harris | Marion Harris | 8.3% | 2 |
| Bex Marshall | Bex Marshall | 8.3% | 2 |
| Vasti Jackson | Vasti Jackson | 4.2% | 1 |
| Mrs Jody | Mrs Jody | 4.2% | 1 |
| Sandie Thom | Sandie Thom | 4.2% | 1 |
| Vick Allen | Vick Allen | 4.2% | 1 |
| Marvin Sease | Marvin Sease | 4.2% | 1 |
| O.B. Buchana | O.B. Buchana | 0.0% | 0 |
| | | answered question | 24 |
| | | skipped question | 1 |

## THE BLUES, YOU and the INTERNET

Which of the following would you personally consider to be blues artists?  (Tick all that apply.  If you are

| Answer Options | Answer Options2 | Response Percen ↓ | Response Coun |
|---|---|---|---|
| Muddy Waters | Muddy Waters | 99.5% | 211 |
| B.B. King | B.B. King | 99.1% | 210 |
| Robert Johnson | Robert Johnson | 98.1% | 208 |
| Howlin' Wolf | Howlin' Wolf | 97.6% | 207 |
| Buddy Guy | Buddy Guy | 95.8% | 203 |
| Albert King | Albert King | 94.8% | 201 |
| Blind Lemon Jefferson | Blind Lemon Jefferson | 93.9% | 199 |
| T-Bone Walker | T-Bone Walker | 92.5% | 196 |
| Son House | Son House | 88.2% | 187 |
| Freddie King | Freddie King | 88.2% | 187 |
| Leadbelly | Leadbelly | 86.8% | 184 |
| Bessie Smith | Bessie Smith | 82.1% | 174 |
| Big Bill Broonzy | Big Bill Broonzy | 81.1% | 172 |
| Etta James | Etta James | 80.7% | 171 |
| Taj Mahal | Taj Mahal | 77.8% | 165 |
| Robert Cray | Robert Cray | 77.8% | 165 |
| Stevie Ray Vaughan | Stevie Ray Vaughan | 76.9% | 163 |
| Keb' Mo' | Keb' Mo' | 75.9% | 161 |
| Bobby Blue Bland | Bobby Blue Bland | 74.1% | 157 |
| Johnny Winter | Johnny Winter | 74.1% | 157 |
| Lonnie Johnson | Lonnie Johnson | 69.3% | 147 |
| Charley Patton | Charley Patton | 67.5% | 143 |
| Bonnie Raitt | Bonnie Raitt | 65.1% | 138 |
| Bobby Rush | Bobby Rush | 64.6% | 137 |
| Joe Louis Walker | Joe Louis Walker | 63.7% | 135 |
| Eric Clapton | Eric Clapton | 62.7% | 133 |
| Jimmie Rodgers | Jimmie Rodgers | 62.3% | 132 |
| Susan Tedeschi | Susan Tedeschi | 61.3% | 130 |
| Sister Rosetta Tharpe | Sister Rosetta Tharpe | 60.8% | 129 |
| Mud Morganfield | Mud Morganfield | 59.4% | 126 |
| Mamie Smith | Mamie Smith | 54.7% | 116 |
| Billie Holliday | Billie Holliday | 52.4% | 111 |
| Gary Clark Junior | Gary Clark Junior | 50.9% | 108 |
| Jonny Lang | Jonny Lang | 49.5% | 105 |
| Joe Bonamassa | Joe Bonamassa | 47.6% | 101 |
| Kenny Wayne Shepherd | Kenny Wayne Shepherd | 46.7% | 99 |
| Alvin Youngblood Hart | Alvin Youngblood Hart | 42.0% | 89 |
| Corey Harris | Corey Harris | 41.5% | 88 |
| Jimi Hendrix | Jimi Hendrix | 41.0% | 87 |
| Little Milton | Little Milton | 34.9% | 74 |
| Ethel Waters | Ethel Waters | 33.5% | 71 |
| Jarekus Singleton | Jarekus Singleton | 25.5% | 54 |
| Seasick Steve | Seasick Steve | 20.8% | 44 |
| Jack White | Jack White | 14.6% | 31 |
| Marion Harris | Marion Harris | 14.2% | 30 |
| Hugh Laurie | Hugh Laurie | 14.2% | 30 |
| Ian Siegal | Ian Siegal | 13.7% | 29 |
| Vasti Jackson | Vasti Jackson | 11.3% | 24 |
| Marvin Sease | Marvin Sease | 9.0% | 19 |
| Mrs Jody | Mrs Jody | 6.6% | 14 |
| O.B. Buchana | O.B. Buchana | 6.1% | 13 |
| Bex Marshall | Bex Marshall | 5.7% | 12 |
| Sandie Thom | Sandie Thom | 5.7% | 12 |
| Vick Allen | Vick Allen | 4.7% | 10 |
| | | *answered question* | 212 |
| | | *skipped question* | 17 |

Discography

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Abbott, Lynn, & Seroff, Doug. (2007). *Ragged but right : black traveling shows, "coon songs," and the dark pathway to blues and jazz* (1st ed. ed.). Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

ACE (Producer). (1947, 21/07/2015). New York Blues Interviews 1947. Retrieved from http://research.culturalequity.org/get-audio-ix.do?ix=session&id=BI47&idType=abbrev&sortBy=abc

Adam, Satan and. (1991). Harlem Blues: Flying Fish.

Adam, Satan and. (1993). Mother Mojo: Flying Fish.

Adam, Satan And. (1996). Living On The River RaveOn Productions.

Adelt, Ulrich. (2010). *Blues music in the sixties : a story in Black and White*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

Adelt, Ulrich. (2011). Black, White, and Blue: Racial Politics in B.B. King's Music from the 1960s. *Journal of Popular Culture, 44*(2), 195-216. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-5931.2011.00828.x

AlanLomaxArchive (Producer). (2012a, 20/07/2015). Charles Kuralt interviews Alan Lomax. [YouTube] Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zdj0pmQMTQI

AlanLomaxArchive. (2012b). Charles Kuralt interviews Alan Lomax, part 3 of 4 (1991) Retrieved 9th July, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9r6FxXrWJjI

Albertson, Chris. (2003). *Bessie* (Rev. and expanded ed. ed.). New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press.

Aldin, Mary Katherine. (2016). There were a very few instruction books. If you lived in a major city you could take lessons Retrieved 11th August, 2016, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/163835903692878/permalink/1126669287409530/

AmazingPhil. (2012). Phil learns to sing! . Retrieved 16th August 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5f4_BHlaGY

americanbluesscene.com. (2015, 20th April 2015). Statue of Little Milton Takes Seat in Front of Upcoming Blues Hall of Fame. *American Blues Scene*.

Armitage, Sarah, Barker, Rachel, et al. (2007). *Focus on the Digital Age: a report for the Office of National Statistics*. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.

Arnold, Kokomo. (1934). Old Original Kokomo Blues DECCA.

Attah, Tom. (2013). Feels Like Going Home: Mythologising the Story of the Blues. *A Contratiempo: Revista de Musica en la Cultura*(21).

Auslander, Philip. (1998). Seeing is believing: Live performance and the discourse of authenticity in rock culture. *Literature and Psychology, 44*(4).

Auslander, Philip. (2008). *Liveness : performance in a mediatized culture* (2nd ed. ed.). London: Routledge.

Baker, Houston A. (1984). *Blues, ideology, and Afro-American literature : a vernacular theory*. Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press.

Barker, Martin. (2008). Analysing Discourse. In M. Pickering (Ed.), *Research methods for cultural studies* (pp. 150-172). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Barlow, William. (1989). *"Looking up at down" : the emergence of blues culture*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Barlow, William. (1999). *Voice over : the making of Black radio*. Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press.

Basnight, Jim. (2016). "White rockers should leave the blues alone" Impossible. Retrieved 24th August, 2016, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/163835903692878/permalink/1137977292945396/

Baudrillard, Jean. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Baym, Nancy K. (1999). *Tune in, log on : soaps, fandom, and on-line community*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Discography

Baym, Nancy K. (2002). *Interpersonal Life Online* (L. A. Lievrouw & S. M. Livingstone Eds.). London: SAGE.

Baym, Nancy K. (2010). *Personal connections in the digital age*. Cambridge: Polity.

Baym, Nancy K. (2012). Fans or friends?: Seeing social media audiences as musicians do. *Journal of Audience & Reception Studies, 9*(2), 286-317.

Baym, Nancy K., & Ledbetter, Andrew. (2009). Tunes that Bind? Predicting Friendship Strength in a Music-Based Social Network. *Information, Community & Sciety, 12*(3), 408-427.

bbkingmuseum.org. (n.d.). WELCOME TO THE B.B. KING MUSEUM.  Retrieved 15th October 2015, from http://bbkingmuseum.org/visit/

Beaker, Norman (2016). [PHD Interview].

Bearden, William. (2005). *Cotton : from Southern fields to the Memphis market*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia.

Beatles, The. (1968). The Beatles (White Album). In G. Martin (Ed.). UK: Apple Records.

Beaumont, Daniel E. (2011). *Preachin' the blues : the life and times of Son House*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Becker, Howard S. (1958). Problems of Inference and Proof in Participant Observation. *American Sociological Review, 23*(6), 652-660. doi: 10.2307/2089053

Beer, David. (2008). Making Friends with Jarvis Cocker: Music Culture in the Context of Web 2.0. *Cultural Sociology, 2*(2), 222-241. doi: 10.1177/1749975508091034

Benjamin, Walter. (1936). The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (H. Zorn, Trans.) *Illuminations* (pp. 211-245). London: Pimlico.

Bennett, H. Stith. (1980). *On becoming a rock musician*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

BerkleeOnline. (2006). How to Play Minor Blues Guitar Chord Progressions Retrieved 12th August, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YL_tc2NnK8

Billboard. (2015). Best Selling Blues Albums Month by Month 2015.  Retrieved 31st July, 2016, from http://www.billboard.com/archive/charts/2015/blues-albums

Blesh, Rudi. (1946). *Shining trumpets : a history of jazz* (4th ed, enlarged. ed.): Cassell.

Block, Rory. (2010). Life Story.  Retrieved 12th August, 2016, from http://www.roryblock.com/Pages/HeaderLinks/LifeStory.htm

Blommaert, Jan, & Bulcaen, Chris. (2000). Critical Discourse Analysis. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 29*, 447-466.

Blood, Rebecca. (2000). weblogs: a history and perspective. 2015, from http://www.rebeccablood.net/essays/weblog_history.html

blues.org. (2015). Little Milton Statue Dedication April 9.  Retrieved 26th Septmber, 2015, from http://blues.org/2015/04/little-milton-statue-to-be-dedicated-april-9/

Boas, Franz. (1966). *Race, language and culture*: Free P.; Collier-Macmillan.

Bolter, J. David, & Grusin, Richard A. (1999). *Remediation : understanding new media*. Cambridge, Mass. ; London: MIT Press.

Born, Georgina. (2010). For a Relational Musicology: Music and Interdisciplinarity, Beyond the Practice Turn: The 2007 Dent Medal Address. *Journal of the Royal Musical Association, 135*(2), 205-243.

Born, Georgina, & Hesmondhalgh, David. (2000). *Western music and its others : difference, representation, and appropriation in music*. Berkeley ; London: University of California Press.

Böttcher, Rainer (2015). R.I.P GOD BLESS YOU !!  Retrieved 1st June, 2015, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/bluesrockblues/permalink/840380546039856/

Bourdieu, Pierre. (1984). *The field of cultural production : essays on art and literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). New York: Greenwood Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. (1996). *The rules of art*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. (2010). *Distinction : a social critique of the judgement of taste*. London: Routledge.

Discography

Bourdieu, Pierre, & Nice, Richard. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boyd, Danah. (2006). Friends, Friendsters, and Top 8: Writing community into being on social network sites. *First Monday, 11*(12).

BPI. (2012). Digital Revenues Overtake Physical in UK Recorded Music Market.   Retrieved 01-05-2012, 2012, from http://www.bpi.co.uk/media-centre/digital-revenues-overtake-physical-in-uk-recorded-music-market.aspx

Bracefield, Hilary. (1999). Blackening the Whites: Changing Critical Attitudes to Popular Music in the USA. *Irish Journal of American Studies, 8*, 179-199. doi: 10.2307/30002677

Brooker, Peter. (1999). *A concise glossary of cultural theory*. London: Arnold.

Brooks, Lonnie, Koda, Cub, et al. (1998). *Blues for Dummies*. Chicago: IDG Worldwide.

Brooks, Tim. (2004). *Lost sounds : blacks and the birth of the recording industry, 1890-1919*. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press.

Broonzy, Big Bill, & Bruynoghe, Yannick. (1955). *Big Bill blues*. London: Cassell.

Brynjolfsson, Erik, & Smith, Michael D. (2000). Frictionless Commerce? A Comparison of Internet and Conventional Retailers. *Management Science, 46*(4), 563-585.

Burgess, Jean, & Green, Joshua. (2009). *YouTube : online video and participatory culture*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bychawski, Adam. (2010). The Black Keys: 'We're influenced by hip-hop, not the blues', *NME*. Retrieved from http://www.nme.com/news/the-black-keys/51964#IJ5tmpZkrxiOh1BQ.99

Carlsson, Bo. (2016). The thing - at least for me living in Sweden - was that a few books with tabulature didn't do much.   Retrieved 11th August, 2016, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/163835903692878/permalink/1126669287409530/

Causey, Matthew. (1995). Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance by Philip Auslander (review). [Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance, Philip Auslander]. *Theatre Journal, 47*(1), 155-157. doi: 10.2307/3208824

CBS. (2015). Buddy Guy Says He Was Blocked From Visiting B.B. King In His Final Weeks.   Retrieved 1st August, 2016, from http://chicago.cbslocal.com/2015/05/15/buddy-guy-says-he-wasnt-allowed-to-visit-b-b-king-in-his-final-weeks/

Charters, Samuel Barclay. (1959). *The Country Blues. [With plates.]*. London: Michael Joseph.

Chayko, Mary. (2008). *Portable communities : the social dynamics of online and mobile connectedness*. Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press ; Bristol : University Presses Marketing [distributor].

chicagobluesexperience.com. (n.d.). Chicago Blues Experience - About Us.   Retrieved 18th Octobe, 2015, from http://www.chicagobluesexperience.com/about/

Choice, Harriet. (1973, August 19). No Whites on a Black Background, *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from http://archives.chicagotribune.com/1973/08/19/page/128/article/jazz-by-choice

CirlotAgency. (2006). Mississippi Believe It! .   Retrieved 12th August, 2015, from http://www.mississippibelieveit.com/portfolio-item/no-black-no-white-just-the-blues/

Clapton, Eric. (2015). BB King a dear friend and inspiration to me.   Retrieved 30th November, 2015, from https://www.facebook.com/ericclapton/videos/10152765075432175/

Clapton, Eric, & Sykes, Christopher Simon. (2007). *Eric Clapton : the autobiography* (Large print ed. ed.). [London?]: RNIB, 2008.

Clerc, Susan. (1996). Estrogen Brigades and 'Big Tits' Threads: Media Fandom Online and Off. In L. Cherny & E. Reba-Wise (Eds.), *Wired Women: Gender and New Realities in Cyberspace* (pp. 73-97). Seattle: Seal.

Coleman, Ray. (1985). *Survivor : the authorized biography of Eric Clapton*. London: Futura, 1986.

Community_Statistics. (2014). Blindman's Blues Forum.   Retrieved 24/05/2014, 2014, from http://blindman.fr.yuku.com/

Coursera. (2016a). The Blues: Understanding and Performing an American Art Form.   Retrieved 16th August, 2016, from https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-blues

Discography

Coursera. (2016b). Courses and Specializations: Search for "Blues Music". Retrieved 19th August, 2016, from https://www.coursera.org/courses?languages=en&query=blues+music&start=0

Coursera. (2016c). Music's Big Bang: The Genesis of Rock 'n' Roll. Retrieved 19th August, 2016, from https://www.coursera.org/learn/rock-and-roll-music

Coursera. (2016d). Music of the Beatles. Retrieved 16th August, 2016, from https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-beatles

Coursera. (2016e). The Music of the Rolling Stones, 1962-1974. Retrieved 16th August, 2016, from https://www.coursera.org/learn/rolling-stones

Cuddon, J. A., & Habib, Rafey. (2013). *A dictionary of literary terms and literary theory* (5th ed. / revised by M.A.R. Habib. ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

culturalequity.org. (1996a). Association for Cultural Equity - Mission Statement. Retrieved 30th September, 2015, from http://www.culturalequity.org/ace/ce_ace_index.php

culturalequity.org. (1996b). Association for Cultural Equity - The Archive. Retrieved 30th September, 2015, from http://www.culturalequity.org/ace/ce_ace_archive.php

Cutler, Chris. (1989). *File under popular : theoretical and critical writings on music* (2nd ed. ed.). London: November.

Dalançon, Catherine (2015). R.I.P B.B KING en Live Paris 2009 avec sa guitare Lucille. Retrieved 16th May, 2015, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/bluesrockblues/permalink/833460803398497/

Danaher, Geoff, Schirato, Tony, et al. (2000). *Understanding Foucault*. London: SAGE.

DarioCorteseSongs. (2011). Johnny Cash - Folsom Prison Blues (Country Guitar Lesson) Retrieved 16th August, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rGr3uwSANU

Davis, Angela Y. (1998). *Blues legacies and Black feminism : Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Davis, Francis. (1995). *The history of the blues*. London: Secker & Warburg.

Dawbarn, Bob. (1960, April 2nd). This Could have been THE book on the Blues, *Melody maker*.

Deakin, N.D. (1967). Book Reviews : Urban Blues. By CHARLES KEIL (London, Chicago, University of Chicago University Press, 1966). 231 pp. $4.95; 37s. *Race & Class, 9*(1), 122-123. doi: 10.1177/030639686700900123

deltabluesmuseum.org. (n.d.). Delta Blues Museum: Mission Statement, History and Museum Sites. Retrieved 18th October, 2015, from https://www.deltabluesmuseum.org/about.asp

Denscombe, Martyn. (2010). *The good research guide : for small-scale social research projects* (4th ed. ed.). Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press.

Derrida, Jacques. (1994). *Specters of Marx : the state of the debt, the work of mourning, and the New international*. New York ; London: Routledge.

Derrida, Jacques. (1995). *Archive fever : a Freudian impression*. Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press.

Dixon, Robert M. W., Godrich, John, et al. (1997). *Blues & gospel records 1890-1943* (4th ed. / compiled by Robert M.W. Dixon, John Godrich and Howard Rye. ed.). Oxford: Clarendon.

Dixon, Robert Malcolm Ward, & Godrich, William John. (1970). *Recording the blues*. London: Studio Vista.

Dixon, Willie, & Snowden, Don. (1989). *I am the blues : the Willie Dixon story*. London: Quartet.

Dodge, Bernadine. (2002). Across the Great Divide: Archival Discourse and the (Re)presentations of the Past in Late-Modern Society. *Archivaria, 53*, 16-30.

Dougan, John. (2001). *Two steps from the blues: creating discourse and constructing canon in blues criticism*. Doctoral Thesis Dissertation. The College of William and Mary in Virginia.

Downs, Steve. (2016). Kool & The Gang - Ladies Night. from https://www.facebook.com/groups/bluesrockblues/permalink/1093816590696249/

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1903). *The Souls of Black Folk. Essays and sketches ... Second edition*. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co.

Discography

Duffett, Mark. (2015). Why I didn't go down to the Delta: The cultural politics of blues tourism. In S. Cohen, R. Knifton, M. Leonard & L. Roberts (Eds.), *Sites of popular music heritage; memories, histories, places* (pp. 239). Abingdon: Routledge.

Dupont, Christian. (2007). Libraries, Archives, and Museums in the Twenty-First Century: Intersecting Missions, Converging Futures? *RBM:  A Journal of rare Books, Manuscripts and Cultural Heritage, 8*(1), 13-19.

Dutton, William H., & Peltu, Malcolm. (1999). *Society on the line : information politics in the digital age*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dyer, Richard. (2004). *Heavenly bodies : film stars and society* (2nd ed. ed.). London: Routledge.

Dyer, Richard, & McDonald, Paul. (1997). *Stars* (New ed. / with a supplementary chapter and bibliography by Paul McDonald. ed.). London: British Film Institute.

Eastman, Ralph. (1988). Country Blues Performance and the Oral Tradition. *Black Music Research Journal, 8*(2), 161-176. doi: 10.2307/779350

eBay.com. (2013). RARE! TOMMY JOHNSON "ALCOHOL AND JAKE BLUES/RIDIN' HORSE" PARAMOUNT 1250 VG++.   Retrieved 25-09, 2013, from http://www.ebay.com/itm/RARE-TOMMY-JOHNSON-ALCOHOL-AND-JAKE-BLUES-RIDIN-HORSE-PARAMOUNT-1250-VG-/300969625287?rmvSB=true&nma=true&si=SgTjmvMziT9wts2f%252BrF55T3RI8I%253D&orig_cvip=true&rt=nc&_trksid=p2047675.l2557

Edgar, Andrew, & Sedgwick, Peter R. (1999). *Key concepts in cultural theory*. London: Routledge.

Edgar, Andrew, & Sedgwick, Peter R. (2008). *Cultural theory : the key concepts* (2nd ed. ed.). London: Routledge.

Education, Department of. (1965). *Higher Education Act of 1965*.

Edwards, Honeyboy, & Frank, Michael Robert. (1997). *The world don't owe me nothing : the life and times of Delta bluesman Honeyboy Edwards*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press.

Eliot, T. S. (1920). *The Sacred Wood. Essays on poetry and criticism*. London: Methuen & Co.

Ellison, Nicole B., Steinfield, Charles, et al. (2007). The Benefits of Facebook "Friends:" Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 12*(4), 1143-1168. doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00367.x

Ernst, Wolfgang. (2013). *Digital Memory and the Archive* (Vol. 39). minneapolis: university of minnesota press.

Evans, David. (1982). *Big road blues : tradition and creativity in the folk blues*. Berkeley ; London: University of California Press.

Evans, David. (1999). The reinterpretation of African Musical instruments in the United States. In I. Okpewho, C. Boyce Davies & A. A. Mazrui (Eds.), *The African diaspora : African origins and new world identities*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press ; [Chesham : Combined Academic], 2001.

Evans, David. (2008). *Ramblin' on my mind : new perspectives on the blues*. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press ; Chesham : Combined Academic [distributor].

Evans, David. (2011). Blues Music in the Sixties: A Story in Black and White. By Ulrich Adelt. *American Music, 29*(2), 271-273. doi: 10.5406/americanmusic.29.2.0271

Evans, David. (2016). David Evans I subscribe to the idea of a "blues revival," but I've never understood or subscribed to the "keep the blues alive" mentality.   Retrieved 7th November, 2016, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/163835903692878/permalink/1213696395373485/

Exeter, University. (2014). A History of the Blues Retrieved 18th August, 2016, from http://education.exeter.ac.uk/dll/details.php?code=dlm01

Fabbri, Franco, & Chambers, Iain. (1982). What kind of Music? *Popular Music, 2*, 131-143.

Facebook. (2016a). Blues But Rock, Rock But Blues!   , from https://www.facebook.com/groups/bluesrockblues/

Facebook. (2016b). The Chicago Blues Society. 2016, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/chicagobluessociety/

Discography

Facebook. (n.d.). Verified Page or profile.   Retrieved 30th October, 2016, from
        https://www.facebook.com/help/196050490547892?helpref=uf_permalink

Fairclough, Norman. (1989). *Language and power*. Harlow: Longman.

Fairclough, Norman. (1992). *Discourse and social change*: Polity Press.

Fairclough, Norman. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis : papers in the critical study of language*:
        Longman.

Fairclough, Norman. (2003). *Analysing discourse : textual analysis for social research*. London:
        Routledge.

Fanon, Frantz. (2008). *Black skin, white masks*. London: Pluto.

Farber, Jim. (2015). 'Muddy Waters 100' review: A good but experimental tribute to the late blues
        pioneer review, *New York Daily News*. Retrieved from
        http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/music/muddy-waters-100-review-good-
        experimental-tribute-article-1.2300614

Ferreira-Buckley, Linda. (1999). Rescuing the Archives from Foucault. *College English, 61*(5), 577-583.
        doi: 10.2307/378975

Filene, Benjamin. (2000). *Romancing the folk : public memory & American roots music*. Chapel Hill ;
        London: University of North Carolina Press.

Förnas, Johan. (1995). The Future of Rock: Discourses That Struggle to Define a Genre. *Popular
        Music, 14*(1), 111-125.

Foucault, Michel. (1976). La fonction politique de l'intellectuel. In D. Defert & F. Ewald (Eds.), *Dits et
        ecrits (1976-1988)* (pp. 109-114). Paris: Gallimard.

Foucault, Michel. (1977). *Madness and Civilization*. London: Social Science Paperback.

Foucault, Michel. (1978). *The history of sexuality*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981.

Foucault, Michel. (1984). Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias. *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*(5),
        46-49.

Foucault, Michel. (1989). *Archaeology of knowledge*. London Routledge, .

Foucault, Michel, Fitzpatrick, James Percy Sir K. C. M. G., et al. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge
        ... Translated ... by A. M. Sheridan Smith*. London: Tavistock Publications.

Foucault, Michel, Fontana, Alessandro, et al. (1980). Truth and Power. In C. Gordon (Ed.),
        *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* (pp. 109-133). New
        York: Pantheon Books.

Garon, Paul. (1973). Editorial. *Living Blues*.

Garon, Paul. (1995). White Blues. *Race Traitor, 4*(1).

Garton, Laura , Haythornthwaite, Caroline , et al. (2012). Studying On-Line Social Networks In S.
        Jones (Ed.), *Doing Internet Research: Critical Issues and Methods for Examining the Net* (pp.
        75-105). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. (1988). *The signifying monkey : a theory of Afro-American literary criticism*.
        New York: Oxford University Press.

Geertz, Clifford. (1973). Thick description: Toward and Interpretive Theory of Culture. In C. Geertz
        (Ed.), *The interpretation of cultures : selected essays*. London: Fontana, 1993.

Gellert, Lawrence, & Siegmeister, Elie. (1936). *Negro songs of protest*. New York: American Music
        League.

Gennari, John. (2006). *Blowin' hot and cool : jazz and its critics*. Chicago, Ill. ; London: University of
        Chicago Press.

Giddens, Anthony. (1990). *The consequences of modernity*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University
        Press.

Gilroy, Paul. (2002). *There ain't no black in the Union Jack : the cultural politics of race and nation*.
        London: Routledge.

Gioia, Ted. (2008). *Delta blues : the life and times of the Mississippi masters who revolutionized
        American music*. New York ; London: W. W. Norton.

Gleason, Ralph J. (1960). Can the White Man Sing the Blues? *Jazz and Pop,* 28-29.

Goffman, Erving. (1956). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*: Edinburgh.

Gordon, Robert. (2003). *Can't be satisfied : the life and times of Muddy Waters*. London: Pimlico.

Gracyk, Theodore. (1996). *Rhythm and noise : an aesthetics of rock*. London: I. B. Tauris.

Gracyk, Theodore. (2008). The Aesthetics of Popular Music.  Retrieved 23/05/2015, 2015, from http://www.iep.utm.edu/music-po/#H2

Grainger, Mitch. (2012). Step by Step Harmonica Lessons - Lesson 1. .  Retrieved 12th August, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddM5RlWSJ4E

Gramsci, Antonio, Hoare, Quintin, et al. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Graves, Bill. (2006). Recording: Digital Era, 1982-Present. In E. M. Komara (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of the blues* (pp. 810-811). New York ; London: Routledge.

Grazian, David. (2003). *Blue Chicago : the search for authenticity in urban blues clubs*. Chicago, Ill. ; London: University of Chicago Press.

Grazian, David. (2004). The Production of Popular Music as a Confidence Game: The Case of the Chicago Blues. *Qualitative Sociology, 27*(2), 137-158.

Green, Lucy. (2001). *How popular musicians learn : a way ahead for music education*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Grimes, William. (2015). Mack McCormick, Student of Texas Blues, Dies at 85, *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/26/arts/music/mack-mccormick-student-of-texas-blues-dies-at-85.html

Grossman, Stefan. (1968). *The country blues guitar*. New York,: Oak Publications.

Grossman, Stefan. (1969). *Delta blues guitar*. New York,: Oak Publications.

Grossman, Stefan, & Block, Aurora. (1971). How to play blues guitar. [Sound recording]. n.p.: Kicking Mule Record Co. KM 109. p1974.

Grossman, Stefan, Calt, Stephen, et al. (1973). *Country blues songbook*. New York: Oak Publications.

Guest, Greg, Namey, Emily E., et al. (2013). *Collecting qualitative data : a field manual for applied research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Guralnick, Peter. (1990). *Searching for Robert Johnson*. London: Secker & Warburg.

Gussow, Adam. (1998). *Mister Satan's apprentice : a blues memoir* (1st ed.). New York: Pantheon Books.

Gussow, Adam. (2002). *Seems like murder here : southern violence and the blues tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gussow, Adam. (2007). *Journeyman's road : modern blues lives from Faulkner's Mississippi to post-9/11 New York*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

Gussow, Adam. (2012). Blues Talk: conversations about the history, culture, and meanings of the music.  Retrieved 18th August, 2016, from http://www.modernbluesharmonica.com/blues-talk.html

Gussow, Adam. (2013). I used the phrase "a virgin bluesman" when I wrote a magazine article about, among other things, Brody Buster many years ago, and his mother wrote an angry letter to the magazine.  Retrieved 31st October, 2015, from http://www.modernbluesharmonica.com/board/board_topic/5560960/5162534.htm

Gussow, Adam. (2014). Modern blues harmonica.  Retrieved 1st May, 2014, from https://www.youtube.com/user/KudzuRunner/about

Gussow, Adam. (2015). Open Letter to Corey Harris Retrieved 26/05/2015, 2015, from https://www.facebook.com/adam.gussow/posts/10152883507203061?pnref=story

Gussow, Adam. (2016). *Keynote Lecture: "Giving It All Away:  Race, Locale, and the Transformations of Blues Harmonica Education in the Digital Age"*. Paper presented at the 24th Annual Midwestern Conference on Literature, Language and Media, Northern Illinois University. http://www.niu.edu/clasep/conferences/mcllm/

Guy, Buddy. (2014). A birthday message to my dear friend BB King. - BG.  Retrieved 31st July, 2016, from https://www.facebook.com/therealbuddyguy/videos/

Discography

Guy, Buddy, & Ritz, David (2012). *When I left home : my story*.

Hall, Bob (2016a). [Blues and the Internet].

Hall, Bob. (2016b). While touring the UK Howlin' Wolf would show young people how to play things on the guitar. .   Retrieved 11th August, 2016, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/163835903692878/permalink/1126669287409530/

Hall, Katy. (2014). How Venues Are Fighting Back Against Annoying Smartphone Behavior. *Huffington Post, 2015*(20th October). http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/11/10/smartphones-at-concerts_n_6123606.html

Hall, Michael. (2002). Mack McCormick Still Has the Blues. *Texas Monthly*.

Hamilton, Marybeth. (2007). *In Search of the Blues : Black Voices, White Visions*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Handy, William Christopher. (1941). *Father of the Blues. An autobiography ... Edited by Arna Bontemps, etc. [With plates, including portraits.]* (A. Bontemps Ed.). New York: Macmillan Co.

Hanson, Ward. (2008). Discovering a Role Online

Brick-and-Mortar Retailers and the Internet *The Internet and American Business* (pp. 233-258): MIT Press.

Harcourt, Amanda, Edwards, Andy , et al. (2015). Dissecting the Digital Dollar (pp. 76). London: Music Managers Forum.

Harris, Corey. (2015a, 23/5/2015). Can Black People Write About the Blues?  Retrieved from http://bluesisblackmusic.blogspot.co.uk/2015/05/can-black-people-write-about-blues.html

Harris, Corey. (2015b, 10/5/2015). Can White People Play the Blues?  Retrieved from http://bluesisblackmusic.blogspot.co.uk/2015/05/can-white-people-play-blues.html

Harrison, Ann. (2014). *Music - the business : the essential guide to the law and the deals (6th edition)* (Fully rev. and updated 5th ed. ed.). London: Virgin.

Harrison, Daphne Duval. (1988). *Black pearls : blues queens of the 1920s*. New Brunswick, [N.J.]: Rutgers University Press.

Hebdige, Dick. (1979). *Subculture : the meaning of style*. London: Methuen.

Helmore, Edward. (2016). 'This is the pop culture legacy business': JAM Inc manages artists after death Retrieved 5th June, 2016, from https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/may/06/jeffrey-jampol-los-angeles-jam-inc-rock-legacy

Hermes, Will. (2015, 14/08/2015). Various Artists: Muddy Waters 100 - Centennial tribute to a blues legend and rock & roll godfather. *Rolling Stone*.

Herskovits, Melville J. (1948). *Man and his works; the science of cultural anthropology* (1st ed.). New York,: A.A. Knopf.

Hill, Walter (Writer). (1986). Crossroads. In M. Carliner & M. Woods (Producer).

Hine, Christine. (2000). *Virtual ethnography*. London: SAGE.

Hobbs, Frank, & Stoops, Nicole. (2002). *Demographic Trends in the 20th Century: Census 2000 special reports*.  Washington DC: US Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration.

Hobsbawm, E. J., & Ranger, T. O. (1983). *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Hoffman, Lawrence. (1990 August, 1990). At The Crossroads. *Guitar Player*.

Holt, Fabian. (2007). *Genre in popular music*. Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press.

HomespunSamples. (2010). Learn to Sing the Blues By Gaye Adegbalola.   Retrieved 16th August, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xom_bNuHUvA

Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. (1992). *Museums and the shaping of knowledge*. London: Routledge.

Horner, Bruce. (1999). Discourse. In B. Horner & T. Swiss (Eds.), *Key Terms in popular music and culture* (pp. 18-34). Malden, Mass. ; Oxford: Blackwell.

Discography

Horowitz, Hal. (2015). Various Artists: Muddy Waters 100.   Retrieved 5th September, 2015, from http://americansongwriter.com/2015/07/various-artists-muddy-waters-100/

House, White. (2012). Remarks by the President at "In Performance at the White House" Blues Event.   Retrieved 8th December, 2015, from https://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2012/02/21/president-obama-welcomes-guests-performance-white-house-red-white-#transcript

Huq, Rupa. (2006). *Beyond subculture : pop, youth and identity in a postcolonial world*. London: Routledge.

Janks, H. (1999). Critical Discourse Analysis as a Research Tool. In J. Marshall & M. Peters (Eds.), *Education Policy. The International Library of Comparative Public Policy.* (pp. 49-62). Cheltenham: Elgar.

jbonamassa.com. (2014). Joe Bonamassa remembers opening for B.B King in 1989 The guitarist recalls supporting the King of Blues at just twelve years old.   Retrieved 25th February, 2016, from https://jbonamassa.com/features/2014/bonamassa-bb-king-the-telegraph/

JoeOliverIsStillKing. (2010). Vick Myers' Atlanta Melody Artists - Sweet Man Blues (1925 Okeh)   Retrieved 3rd December, 2013, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXjGmjOLCCo

Johnson, Robert. (1990a). Robert Johnson, the complete recordings. *Roots n' blues* [sound recording .]. New York, NY: Columbia,.

Johnson, Robert. (1990b). Sweet Home Chicago *The Complete recordings*: CBS.

Jones, Le Roi. (1963). *Blues people : Negro music in white America*. N.Y.: Morrow.

Jones, Toni Stokes, & Copeland, Nancy. (2010). Access to Technology in the Twenty-first Century

IMPLICATIONS OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES *The State of the African American Male* (pp. 65-84): Michigan State University Press.

Jonsson, John, & Voigt, Gerhard E. . (1984). Homicidal intoxications by lye- and parachlorcresol-containing disinfectants. *American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology, 5*(1), 57-63.

Jørgensen, Marianne, & Phillips, Louise. (2002). *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. London: Sage.

JustinGuitarSongs. (2011). Folsom Prison Blues - Johnny Cash (Easy Songs Beginner Guitar Lesson BS-502) How to play Retrieved 16th August, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etYciOKiPUQ

Kaplan, Andreas M., & Haenlein, Michael. (2016). Higher education and the digital revolution: About MOOCs, SPOCs, social media, and the Cookie Monster. *Business Horizons, 59*(4), 441-450. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2016.03.008

Kassel, Matthew. (2014a). Robert McCormick's Daughter 'Appalled' by NYT Magazine Cover Story, *New York Observer*. Retrieved from http://observer.com/2014/04/robert-mccormicks-daughter-responds-to-nyt-magazine-cover-story/

Kassel, Matthew. (2014b). The Story Behind John Jeremiah Sullivan's Times Magazine Cover Story, *New York Observer*. Retrieved from http://observer.com/2014/04/the-story-behind-john-jeremiah-sullivans-times-cover-story/

Kassel, Matthew. (2015, 25/11/2015). Remembering Mack McCormick, *New York Observer*. Retrieved from http://observer.com/2015/11/remembering-mack-mccormick/

Katz, Mark. (2010). *Capturing sound : how technology has changed music* (Rev. ed. ed.). Berkeley, Calif. ; London: University of California Press.

Kear, Karen Lesley. (2011). *Online and social networking communities : a best practice guide for educators*. New York ; London: Routledge.

Keil, Charles. (1965). Review - Blues People. *Ethnomusicology, 9*(1), 60-64. doi: 10.2307/850421

Keil, Charles. (1966). *Urban blues*. Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press.

King, B.B., & Conforti, Joseph M. (1969, July, 1969). "A Sociologist Talks To B.B. King". *Blues Unlimited*.

King, Stephen A. (2004). Blues Tourism in the Mississippi Delta: The Functions of Blues Festivals. *Popular Music & Society, 27*(4), 455-475. doi: 10.1080/0300776042000264667

Discography

King, Stephen A. (2011). *I'm Feeling the Blues Right Now: Blues Tourism and the Mississippi Delta*: University Press of Mississippi

Kittler, Franz A. (1990). *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*: Stanford University Press.

Knopper, Steve. (2009). *Appetite for self-destruction : the spectacular crash of the record industry in the digital age*. London: Simon & Schuster.

Komara, Edward. (1998). Blues and Gospel Records, 1890-1943. 4th ed. [review]. [Blues and Gospel Records, 1890-1943, Robert M. W. Dixon, John Godrich, Howard Rye]. *Notes, 55*(2), 361-363. doi: 10.2307/900176

Komara, Edward M. (2006). *Encyclopedia of the blues*. New York ; London: Routledge.

Kornfeld, Michael. (2011). Mary Katherine Aldin Ends Long-Running Radio Show in LA. *AcousticMusicScene.com.* Retrieved 28th September, 2015, from http://acousticmusicscene.com/2011/12/26/mary-katherine-aldin-ends-long-running-radio-show-in-la/

Kotarba, Joseph A., Merrill, Bryce, et al. (2013). *Understanding society through popular music* (2nd ed. ed.). New York: Routledge.

Kozinets, Robert V. (2010). *Netnography : doing ethnographic research online*. London: SAGE.

Kraus, Michael. (2016). Johannes Brahms - Hungarian Dance No. 5. Retrieved 02-09-2016, 2016, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/bluesrockblues/permalink/1093792090698699/

Kreiss, Daniel. (2009). Blogging - by Jill Walker Rettberg. *Journal of Communication, 59*(2), E17-E21. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2009.01430.x

Kreps, Daniel. (2016). Eric Clapton Sued by Bluesman's Estate Over Mistaken 'Unplugged' Credit. *Rolling Stone*.

Kruse, Nathan B., & Veblen, Kari K. (2012). Music teaching and learning online: Considering YouTube instructional videos. *Journal of Music technology and Education 5*(1), 14. doi: 10.1386/jmte.5.1.77_1

Kyrnin, Mark. (2016, 17/03/2016). Death of the Computer Optical Drive. *about tech.* Retrieved 23rd July, 2016, from http://compreviews.about.com/od/cddvd/a/Death-of-PC-Optical-Drives.htm

La Rue, Jan. (1970). *Guidelines for style analysis*. [S.l.]: Norton.

Leadbitter, Mike. (1971). *Nothing but the Blues : an illustrated documentary*. [S.l.]: [s.n.].

Leahey. (2011). The Black Keys: Brothers In Arms. Retrieved 12th July, 2015, from http://americansongwriter.com/2011/11/the-black-keys-brothers-in-arms/

Leight, Elias. (2016, August 23rd). Black Keys' Dan Auerbach Sued Over Howlin' Wolf Documentary. *Rolling Stone*.

Levine, Lawrence W. (2007). *Black culture and Black consciousness : Afro-American folk thought from slavery to freedom* (30th anniversary ed. ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Library, British. (2016). Get a Reader Pass. Retrieved 15-07-2016, 2016, from http://www.bl.uk/help/how-to-get-a-reader-pass

Lieb, Sandra R. (1981). *Mother of the blues : a study of Ma Rainey*. [Amherst, Mass.]: University of Massachusetts Press.

Limnios, Michalis. (2016). Jontavious Willis: True Blues Prodigy. Retrieved April 13th, 2016, from http://blues.gr/profiles/blogs/q-a-with-southern-bluesman-jontavious-willis-a-natural-musician

List, George. (1964). Acculturation and Musical Tradition. *Journal of the International Folk Music Council, 16*, 18-21. doi: 10.2307/835061

Liyanagunawardena, Tharindu Rekha, Adams, Andrew Alexandar, et al. (2013). MOOCs: A systematic study of the published literature 2008-2012. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning; Vol 14, No 3 (2013)*.

Lomax-Wood, Anna. (2016). Archive Samples used in Beyoncé's "Freedom". Retrieved 12/07, 2016, from http://www.culturalequity.org/news/?p=976

Lomax, Alan. (1993). *The land where the blues began*. London: Methuen.

Discography

Lovink, Geert. (2013). An Interview with Wolfgang Ernst. In J. Parrika (Ed.), *Digital memory and the archive* (Vol. 39). minneapolis: university of minnesota press.

Lysloff, Rene T. A. (2003). Musical Community on the Internet: An On-Line Ethnography. *Cultural Anthropology, 18*(2), 233-263.

MacDonald, Ian. (2008). *Revolution in the head : the Beatles' records and the sixties* (2nd rev. ed. ed.). London: Vintage.

Machin, David, & Mayr, Andrea. (2012). *How to do critical discourse analysis : a multimodal introduction*. London: SAGE.

Magness, Janiva (2016, 29th July 2016). [Interview].

Manoff, Marlene. (2004). Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines. *Libraries and the Academy 4*(1), 9-25.

Marvin, Carolyn. (1988). *When old technologies were new : thinking about electric communication in the late nineteenth century*: Oxford University Press.

Marwick, Alice, & Boyd, Danah. (2011). To See and Be Seen: Celebrity Practice on Twitter. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies, 17*(2), 139-158. doi: 10.1177/1354856510394539

Matheis, Frank. (2016). Artist Profile: Jontavious Willis. *Living Blues 47*.

McCoogan, Cara. (2016, 1st February 2016). YouTube is now more popular than Google.com on desktop computers *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2016/02/01/youtube-is-now-more-popular-than-googlecom-on-desktop-computers/

McGee, ALan. (2009). The Black Keys have reignited the spirit of the blues, *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2009/feb/04/the-black-keys-dan-auerbach

McKune, James. (1960). The Great Country Blues Singers. In M. Hamilton (Ed.), *In search of the blues* (pp. 182-183). London: Cape.

McLuhan, Marshall. (1962). *The Gutenberg Galaxy. The making of typographic man*. London; printed in Canada: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

McLuhan, Marshall. (1964). *Understanding media : the extensions of man*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

McLuhan, Marshall, McLuhan, Eric, et al. (1995). *Essential McLuhan*. London: Routledge, 1997.

McLuhan, Marshall, Molinaro, Matie Ed, et al. (1987). *Letters of Marshall McLuhan*: Oxford University Press.

Merriam, Alan P. (1964). *The anthropology of music*: Northwestern University Press.

Mezzrow, Mezz, & Wolfe, Bernard. (1946). *Really the blues*. London: Souvenir, 2009.

Miller, Karl Hagstrom. (2010). *Segregating sound : inventing folk and pop music in the age of Jim Crow*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

ModernBluesHarmonica. (2007a). Blues Harmonica Secrets Revealed.  Retrieved 12th August, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkqmXP9IVyg

ModernBluesHarmonica. (2007b). Modern Blues Harmonica Channel Home. from https://www.youtube.com/user/KudzuRunner

ModernBluesHarmonica. (2011). Instant Naked Raw Brutal Blues Harmonica - your first lesson  Retrieved 30th June, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsW0Zhc4fnw

ModernBluesHarmonica. (2012a). Blues Talk DOCUMENTS: syllabi, handouts, and more.  Retrieved 17th August, 2016, from http://www.modernbluesharmonica.com/blues-talk-documents.html

ModernBluesHarmonica. (2012b). Blues Talk forum: a place to talk about "Blues Talk".  Retrieved 17th August, 2016, from http://www.modernbluesharmonica.com/blues-talk-forum.html?page=1

Moore, Allan F. (2001). *Rock, the primary text : developing a musicology of rock* (2nd ed. ed.). Aldershot: Ashgate.

Discography

Moore, Allan F. (2002). Authenticity as Authentication. *Popular Music, 21*(2), 209-223.

Moore, Allan F. (2012). *Song means : analysing and interpreting recorded popular song*. Farnham,
Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Morrison, Toni. (1992). *Playing in the dark : whiteness and the literary imagination*. Cambridge, Ma. ;
London: Harvard University Press.

msbluestrail.org. (n.d.). Blue Front Cafe - Bentonia.   Retrieved 30th August, 2016, from
http://www.msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/blue-front-cafe

muddywaters100.com. (2015). Muddy Waters 100.   Retrieved 5th September, 2016, from
http://www.muddywaters100.com/

Muir, Peter C. (2010). *Long lost blues : popular blues in America, 1850-1920*. Urbana, Ill.: University
of Illinois Press.

Murphy, Dudley (Writer). (1929). St Louis Blues [film]: RKO Pictures.

Murray, Albert. (1978). *Stomping the Blues*. London: Quartet Books.

MusicGurus. (2015). Your on-demand music tutor.   Retrieved 12th April 2016, 2016, from
https://www.musicgurus.com/about

Napier, Simon A. (1964, July 1964). "Back in Our Own Back Yard-Birds". *Blues Unlimited*.

nationalbluesmuseum.org. (n.d.). National Blues Museum.   Retrieved 18th October, 2015, from
https://www.nationalbluesmuseum.org/about/faq/

O'Connell, Christian. (2014). A History of the Blues Retrieved 17th August 2016, from
http://education.exeter.ac.uk/dll/details.php?code=DLM01

O'Connell, Christian (2016, 18th July 2016). [Interview with Christian O'Connell].

O'Neal, Jim, & Van Singel, Amy. (2002). *The voice of the blues : classic interviews from Living blues
magazine*. New York ; London: Routledge.

Oakley, Giles. (1983). *The devil's music : a history of the blues* (Rev. ed. ed.). London: British
Broadcasting Corporation.

OCCUK. (2012). The Top 20 blues albums of 2011 revealed.   Retrieved 20th Januuary, 2012, from
http://www.officialcharts.com/chart-news/the-top-20-blues-albums-of-2011-revealed/

Odum, Howard W. (1909). Religious Folk-Songs of the Southern Negro. *American Journal of Religious
Psychology and Education, 3*, 265-365.

Odum, Howard W. (1911). Folk-Song and Folk-Poetry as Found in the Secular Songs of the Southern
Negroes. *The Journal of American Folklore, 24*(93), 255-294. doi: 10.2307/534456

Office for National Statistics, ONS. (2013). Full Report - Graduates in the UK Labour Market 2013.

Oldenburg, Ray. (1989). *The great good place : cafes, coffee shops, community centers, beauty
parlors, general stores, bars, hangouts, and how they get you through the day* (1st ed. ed.).
New York: Paragon House.

Oliver, Paul. (1960). *Blues fell this morning : the meaning of the blues*. London: Jazz Book Club by
arrangement with Cassell.

Oliver, Paul. (1965). *Conversation with the Blues ... Illustrated with photographs by the author*.
London: Cassell.

Oliver, Paul. (1970). *Savahnah Syncopators : African retentions in the blues*. [S.l.]: Stein and Day.

Oliver, Paul. (1983). Can't Even Write: The Blues and Ethnic Literature. *MELUS, 10*(1), 7-14. doi:
10.2307/467484

Oliver, Paul. (1984). *Blues off the record : Thirty years of blues commentary*. Tunbridge Wells: Baton
Press.

Oliver, Paul. (1989). Overseas Blues: Europeans And The Blues. In D. W. Patterson (Ed.), *Sounds of
the South : a report and selected papers from a Conference on the Collecting and Collections
of Southern Traditional Music, held in Chapel Hill, April 6-8, 1989, to celebrate the opening of
the Southern Folklife Collection with the John Edwards Memorial Collection in the
Manuscripts Department of the Academic Affairs Library, University of North Carolina*.
Chapel Hill: Southern Folklife Collection.

Discography

Oliver, Paul. (2001). *Yonder come the blues : the evolution of a genre*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ong, Walter J. (1971). *Rhetoric, romance, and technology: studies in the interaction of expression and culture*. Ithaca ; London: Cornell University Press.

Ong, Walter J. (1977). *Interfaces of the word : studies in the evolution of consciousness and culture*. Ithaca ; London: Cornell University Press.

Ong, Walter J. (1982). *Orality and literacy : the technologizing of the word*. London: Methuen.

ONS. (2015). *Population and ethnicity statistics*. Retrieved from https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/transparencyandgovernance/freedomofinformationfoi/populationandethnicitystatistics

Opler, Morris Edward, & French, David Heath. (1945). *Myths and Tales of the Chiricahua Apache Indians ... With an appendix of Apache and Navaho comparative references, by David French*: [Boston].

Orwell, George. (1949). *Nineteen Eighty-Four. A novel*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co.

Oscher, Paul. (2016). actually Live ar Mr Kellys was the album and the gig that turned muddys career around it followed electric mud Retrieved 2nd September, 2016, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/163835903692878/permalink/1145475462195579/?comment_id=1145513472191778&reply_comment_id=1146414195435039&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R9%22%7D

Owsinski, Bobby. (2014). *Music 4.0 : a survival guide for making music in the Internet age*.

Owsinski, Bobby. (2016). *Music 4.1 : a survival guide for making music in the Internet age*: Hal Leonard

Palmer, R. (1981). Deep Blues: A Musical and Cultural History from the Mississippi Delta to Chicago's South Side to the World: New York: Penguin Books.

Parikka, Jussi (Producer). (2011, 15-03-2014). Zombie Media, Media Archaeology as Circuit Bending. *Coventry University Podcasts*. Retrieved from http://coventryuniversity.podbean.com/2011/02/14/zombie-media-media-archaeology-as-circuit-bending-jussi-parikka/

Parikka, Jussi. (2013). Archival Media Theory: An Introduction to Wolfgang Ernst's Media Archaeology. In J. Parikka (Ed.), *Digital Memory and the Archive* (Vol. 39). Minneapolis: University of Minesota Press.

Parsons, Talcott. (1951). *The Social System*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul ltd.

Passman, Donald S. (2011). *All you need to know about the music business* (7th Uk ed., rev. and updated. ed.). London: Penguin.

PBS.org. (2012). In Performance at the White House - Red White and Blues. online.

Peabody, Charles. (1903). Notes on Negro Music. *The Journal of American Folklore, 16*(62), 148-152. doi: 10.2307/533498

Pearse, John. (1972). *Blues guitar method*. [S.l.]: Stratchwood Music/EMI.

Pearson, Barry Lee. (1992). Standing at the Crossroads between Vinyl and Compact Discs: Reissue Blues Recordings in the 1990s. *The Journal of American Folklore, 105*(416), 215-226. doi: 10.2307/541089

Peters, John Durham. (1999). *Speaking into the air : a history of the idea of communication*. Chicago, Ill. ; London: University of Chicago Press.

Petrusich, Amanda. (2009, 08-07). They've Got Those Old, Hard-to-Find Blues, *The New York Times*, p. 15. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/12/arts/music/12petr.html?_r=2&scp=4&sq=tefteller&st=cse

Petrusich, Amanda. (2015). *Do not sell at any price : the wild, obsessive hunt for the world's rarest 78rpm records* (First Scribner hardcover edition. ed.).

Pew Research Center, PRC. (2010). Internet Gains on Television as Public's Main News Source. In S. Keeter (Ed.).

Discography

Pickering, Michael. (2008). Experience and the Social World. In M. Pickering (Ed.), *Research methods for cultural studies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Piekut, Benjamin. (2014). Actor-Networks in Music History: Clarifications and Critiques. *Twentieth-Century Music, 11*(02), 191-215. doi: doi:10.1017/S147857221400005X

Pieterse, Jan P. Nederveen. (1992). *White on black : images of Africa and blacks in western popular culture*: Yale U. P.

Poole, Hilary W., Lambert, Laura, et al. (2005). *The Internet : a historical encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, Calif ; Oxford: ABC-Clio.

Posey, Reid. (2016). Preserving the blues, *The Oxford Eagle*. Retrieved from http://www.oxfordeagle.com/2016/05/29/preserving-the-blues/

Potter, Russell A. (1999). Race. In T. Swiss & B. Horner (Eds.), *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture* (pp. 71-84). Malden, Mass. ; Oxford: Blackwell.

pqarchiver.com. (n.d.). Chicago Defender.  Retrieved 23rd July, 2016, from http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/chicagodefender/advancedsearch.html

Preece, Jenny, Nonnecke, Blair, et al. (2004). The top five reasons for lurking: improving community experiences for everyone. *Computers in Human Behavior, 20*, 201-223.

Press, Associated. (2014). Woman released from hospital after drinking iced tea mixed with chemicals, *New York Daily News*. Retrieved from http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/woman-released-hospital-drinking-chemical-laced-iced-tea-article-1.1915195

Prime, Richard. (2016). Why e-commerce won't kill brick-and-mortar retail. from http://www.information-age.com/why-e-commerce-wont-kill-brick-and-mortar-retail-123461104/

Randle, William. (1962). Toward a Better Understanding of the Blues. *Phylon (1960-), 23*(1), 99-103. doi: 10.2307/274152

Records, World's Rarest. (2013). John Tefteller buys the world's MOST EXPENSIVE 78!  Retrieved 01-11-2013, 2013, from http://tefteller.com/html/rarest_78_record.html

Rettberg, Jill Walker. (2008). *Blogging*. Cambridge: Polity.

Reynolds, Simon. (2011). *Retromania : pop culture's addiction to its own past* ([1st American ed.] ed.). London: Faber.

Rheingold, Howard. (1993). *The virtual community : homesteading on the electronic frontier*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.

Rheingold, Howard. (2000). *The virtual community : homesteading on the electronic frontier* (Rev. ed. ed.). Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

RIAA. (2014). What the Law Says and What it Means.  Retrieved 5th May 2014, 2014, from http://www.riaa.com/physicalpiracy.php?content_selector=piracy_online_the_law

Richards, Keith, & Fox, James. (2011). *Life*. London: Phoenix.

Ripani, Richard J. (2006). *The new blue music : changes in rhythm & blues, 1950-1999* (1st ed.). Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Ro, Tano. (2013). Sorry Folks ! I removed 600 photos because some people don;t understand what is the diffrence between "PUBLIC DOMAIN" and not !  Retrieved 1st November, 2013, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/503225556440490/permalink/514312298665149/

rockongoodpeople. (2007). Learn to Play Slide Guitar from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIueIIoupjY

rockongoodpeople (Producer). (2008a, 12th August 2016). Acoustic Blues guitar lesson spice up that bluesy playing Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmIeah8K1cE

rockongoodpeople (Producer). (2008b, 12th August 2016). Hello and please know the this video is the property of Next Level Guitar - we only post our own content. Marty used for work for next level guitar as an instructor many years ago before going out on his own. We only post our own videos and if you notice in the beginning of the video we state "next level guitar presents". Hope that clears things up. Take care and keep on rocking on that guitar and have

a great day! -David T, NLG. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmIeah8K1cE

rockongoodpeople. (2008c). How to play lead electric blues guitar solo skills lesson Retrieved 12th August, 2016, from How to play lead electric blues guitar solo skills lesson

rockongoodpeople. (2008d). Learn the Funk electric guitar lesson rhythm and strumming Retrieved 12th August, 2016, from How to play lead electric blues guitar solo skills lesson

rockongoodpeople. (2008e). Learn to play Lead Blues Guitar licks and phrasing lesson Retrieved 12th August, 2016, from How to play lead electric blues guitar solo skills lesson

Rose, Joel. (2012). Alan Lomax's Massive Archive Goes Online. *The Record.* Retrieved 7th May, 2014

Rothenbuhler, Eric W. (2007). For-the-Record Aesthetics and Robert Johnson's Blues Style as a Product of Recorded Culture. *Popular Music, 26*(1), 65-81. doi: 10.2307/4500300

Rudinow, Joel. (1994). Race, Ethnicity, Expressive Authenticity: Can White People Sing the Blues? *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 52*(1), 127-137.

Rudinow, Joel. (1995). Reply to Taylor. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 53*(3), 316-318.

Rudolph, Thomas E., & Frankel, James. (2009). *YouTube in music education*. New York: Hal Leonard Books.

Russell, Tony. (1997). *The blues : from Robert Johnson to Robert Cray*. London: Aurum.

Ryan, Jennifer. (2011). Beale Street Blues? Tourism, Musical Labor, and the Fetishization of Poverty in Blues. *Ethnomusicology, 55*(3), 473-503.

Sanjek, David. (1999). Institutions. In B. Horner & T. Swiss (Eds.), *Key terms in popular music and culture*. Malden, Mass. ; Oxford: Blackwell.

Sanjek, David. (2009). *Following Harry's Footsteps: Contemporary Strategies of Reissue and Reassessment of American Vernacular Music*. Paper presented at the Experience Music Project Pop Music Conference, Seattle, Washington.

Savage, Jon. (2001). *England's dreaming : Sex Pistols and punk rock* ([New ed.] ed.). London: Faber.

Scarborough, Dorothy, & Gulledge, Ola Lee. (1925). *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs. By D. Scarborough, assisted by Ola Lee Gulledge*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Scene, The Liverpool. (1969). Bread On The Night. UK: RCA Victor

Schackman, Daniel. (2008). *World fusion? Global communication about music videos on YouTube.* Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Conference Division for Global Communication and Social Change, Montreal, Quebec.

Schafer, R. Murray. (1969). *The new soundscape: a handbook for the modern music teacher [by] R. Murray Schafer*: BMI Canada.

Schneider, Marc. (2016). Eric Clapton Sued for Crediting 'Unplugged' Song to Wrong Blues Singer, *Billboard*. Retrieved from http://www.billboard.com/biz/articles/news/legal-and-management/7557685/eric-clapton-sued-for-crediting-unplugged-song-to

Schneider, Mitch, & Nelson, Lathum. (2005). STEVEN SEAGAL GATHERS LAST OF THE LIVING BLUES LEGENDS TOGETHER TO RECORD ALL-STAR ALBUM IN MEMPHIS. Retrieved July 30th, 2006, from http://www.msopr.com/press-releases/steven-seagal-gathers-last-of-the-living-blues-legends-together-to-record-all-star-album-in-memphis/

Schroeder, Patricia R. (2004). *Robert Johnson, mythmaking, and contemporary American culture*. Urbana, Ill. ; [Great Britain]: University of Illinois Press.

Schwartz, Roberta Freund. (2007). *How Britain got the blues : the transmission and reception of American blues style in the United Kingdom*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Scorsese, Martin, Johnson, Robert, et al. (2003). Feel like going home a film by Martin Scorsese [sound recording]. New York, NY: Columbia/Legacy,.

Searle, John R. (1995). *The construction of social reality*. London: Allen Lane.

Segrest, James, & Hoffman, Mark. (2005). *Moanin' at midnight : the life and times of Howlin' Wolf* (1st rev. ed.). New York: Thunder's Mouth Press.

Shaw, Arnold. (1979). *Honkers and shouters : The golden years of rhythm and blues*. New York: Collier.

# Discography

Shu, Les. (2013). 7 musicians who want you to put away the camera (or they'll do it for you) Retrieved 20th October 2015, from http://www.digitaltrends.com/photography/7-musicians-who-would-like-you-to-put-away-the-camera-or-else-theyll-do-it-for-you/

Shuker, Roy. (2012). *Understanding popular music culture* (4th ed. ed.). London: Routledge.

Silverman, Jerry. (1964a). *The art of the folk-blues guitar*. New York,: Oak Publications.

Silverman, Jerry. (1964b). The art of the folk blues guitar. [Sound recording]. n.p.: Folkways Records FI 8355. 1964.

Simpson, Paul, & Mayr, Andrea. (2010). *Language and power : a resource book for students*. London: Routledge.

Sisario, Ben. (2015, 18th March). Sales of Streaming Music Top CDs in Flat Year for Industry *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/25/business/media/music-sales-remain-steady-but-lucrative-cd-sales-decline.html

Sisario, Ben, & Russell, Karl. (2016, 24th March). In Shift to Streaming, Music Business Has Lost Billions, *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/25/business/media/music-sales-remain-steady-but-lucrative-cd-sales-decline.html

Small, Christopher. (1987). *Music of the common tongue : survival and celebration in Afro-American music*. London: Calder.

Smedley, Audrey. (2007). *The History of the Idea Of Race…and Why it Matters*. Paper presented at the Race, Human Variation and Disease: Consensus and Frontiers, Warrenton, Virginia.

Smith, Aaron. (2000). Why Are Blacks Less Likely Than Whites to Use the Internet? *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*(30), 40-41. doi: 10.2307/2679074

SonicJunction. (2011). Catfish Blues - Corey Harris Retrieved 15th August, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUXCjgHMcZU

SonicJunction. (2012). 44 Blues Guitar Lesson by Corey Harris Retrieved 15th August, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xp3zCAyvdZM

SonicJunction. (2013). Highway 61 - Corey Harris Retrieved 15th August, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QH2D4fn-GMY

SonicJunction. (2016). Acoustic Legend Corey Harris. from http://www.sonicjunction.com/corey-harris

Spieker, Klaas (2016). Metallica - Orion (Studio Version). Retrieved 02-09-2106, 2016, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/bluesrockblues/permalink/1093803780697530/

Spight, Fontaina. (1990, December, 1990). "Letters to the Editor". *Ebony*.

Spradley, James P. (1980). *Participant observation*. New York ; London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Stanyek, Jason, & Piekut, Benjamin. (2010). Deadness: Technologies of the Intermundane. *The Drama Review, 54*(1), 14-38.

Statista. (2016). Number of monthly active Facebook users worldwide as of 2nd quarter 2016 (in millions) Retrieved 25th September, 2016, from https://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/

Sterne, Jonathan. (2003). *The audible past : cultural origins of sound reproduction*. Durham, N.C. ; London: Duke University Press.

Sterne, Jonathan. (2012). *Mp3 : the meaning of a format*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Stevenson, Angus, & Waite, Maurice. (2011). *Concise Oxford English dictionary* (12th ed. ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stewart-Baxter, Derrick. (1960). 'Blues Fell This Morning' review. *Jazz Journal, 13*(4), 18-19.

Stivale, C. (1997). Spam: heteroglossia and harassment in cyberspace. In D. Porter (Ed.), *Internet culture* (pp. 133-144). London: Routledge.

Straw, Will. (1997). Sizing up Record Collections; Gender and Conoisseurship in Rock Music Culture. In S. Whiteley (Ed.), *Sexing the groove : popular music and gender*. London: Routledge.

Discography

Sullivan, John Jeremiah. (2014). The Ballad of Geeshie and Elvie. *The New York Times.*  Retrieved 13th April, 2014, from http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/04/13/magazine/blues.html

Tagg, Philip. (1987). Open Letter about 'Black Music', 'Afro-American Music' and 'European Music'. *Popular Music, 8*(3), 285-298.

Tagg, Philip. (2012). *Music's Meanings: a modern musicology for non-musos* (pp. 691).

Taylor, Paul Christopher. (1995). ... So Black and Blue: Response to Rudinow. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 53*(3), 313-316.

Tedlock, Barbara. (1991). From Participant Observation to the Observation of Participation: The Emergence of Narrative Ethnography. *Journal of Anthropological Research, 47*(1), 69-94.

Terry, Sonny, & McGhee, Brownie. (1959). Folk Songs Of Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee: Roulette.

Titon, Jeff Todd. (1993). Reconstructing the blues: reflections on the 1960s blues revival. In N. V. Rosenberg (Ed.), *Transforming tradition : folk music revivals examined*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Titon, Jeff Todd. (1994). *Early downhome blues : a musical and cultural analysis* (2nd ed. / with a new foreword by Alan Trachtenberg and a new afterword by the author. ed.). Chapel Hill ; London: University of North Carolina Press.

University_of_Mississippi_Libraries. (n.d.). The Blues Archive: Introduction.  Retrieved 18th October, 2015, from http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/general_library/archives/blues/

US_Census_Bureau. (2015). *United States Census Bureau QuickFacts*.  United States:  Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/00

Usherwood, Bob, Wilson, Kerry, et al. (2005). Perceptions of archives, libraries, and museums in modern Britain. *Library and Information Research (LIR), 29*(93).

Various_Artists. (1961). Really! The Country Blues.

Origin Jazz Library.

Velody, Irving. (1998). "The archive and the human sciences: notes towards a theory of the archive". *History of the Human Sciences, 11*(4), 1.

Vernon, Paul. (2011a). The RBF Exchange.  Retrieved 20th October, 2012, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/425357817487687/

Vernon, Paul. (2011b). Real Blues Forum Mission Statement.  Retrieved 17th September, 2013, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/163835903692878/

Vernon, Paul (2016, 20th July 2016). [When is the 5th edition of Blues and Gospel Records being released?].

Wald, Elijah. (2000). *Josh White : society blues*. Amherst ; [Great Britain]: University of Massachusetts Press.

Wald, Elijah. (2004). *Escaping the delta : Robert Johnson and the invention of the blues* (1st ed. ed.). New York: Amistad.

Wald, Elijah. (2009). *How the Beatles destroyed rock 'n' roll : an alternative history of American popular music*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wald, Elijah. (2010). *The blues : a very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Waldron, Janice. (2012). Conceptual frameworks, theoretical models and the role of YouTube: Investigating informal music learning and teaching in online music community. *Journal of Music, Technology and Education 4*(2-3). doi: 10.1386/jmte.4.2-3.189_1

Waldron, Janice. (2013). User-generated content, YouTube and participatory culture on the Web: Music learning an teaching in two contrasting online communities. *Music Education Research, 15*(3), 28. doi: DOI: 10.1080/14613808.2013.772131

Walker, Jill. (2005). Weblog. In D. Herman, M. Jahn & M.-L. Ryan (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of narrative theory*. London: Routledge.

Walther, Joseph B. (1994). Anticipated Ongoing Interaction Versus Channel Effects on Relational Communication in Computer-Mediated Interaction. *Human Communication Research, 20*(4), 473-501. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2958.1994.tb00332.x

Discography

Walther, Joseph B. (1996). Computer-Mediated Communication: Impersonal, Interpersonal, and Hyperpersonal Interaction. *Communication Research, 23*(1), 3-43. doi: 10.1177/009365096023001001

Wang, Ning. (1999). Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience. *Annals of Tourism Research, 26*(2), 349-370. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(98)00103-0

Wardlow, Gayle, & Komara, Edward M. (1998). *Chasin' that devil music : searching for the blues*. San Francisco, Calif.: Miller Freeman Books.

Warhurst, Myf. (2015). No mobiles or selfie sticks? Live music has always had its distractions, *The guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/feb/25/the-eagles-fly-too-close-to-the-sun-by-banning-mobile-phones-at-their-concerts

weeniecampbell.com. (2015). Weenie Campbell.com - super electrical web pages!  Retrieved 31st August, 2015, from http://weeniecampbell.com/yabbse/index.php?PHPSESSID=b2f0883678538800ed008e82898c1b5f&action=forum

Wellman, Barry, & Gulia, M. (1999). Virtual communities as communities: net surfers don't ride alone. In M. A. Smith & P. Kollock (Eds.), *Communities in cyberspace*. London: Routledge.

Wellman, Barry, Quan-Haase, Anabel, et al. (2003). The Social Affordances of the Internet for Networked Individualism. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 8*(3), 0-0. doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2003.tb00216.x

Welser, Howard T, Gleave, Eric, et al. (2007). Visualizing the Signatures of Social Roles in Online Discussion Groups. *Journal of Social Structure, 8*(2).

Wenger, Beck. (2008). how to play harmonica (the blues).  Retrieved 16th August, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FEafi_NYOc

Wenger, Etienne. (1998). *Communities of practice : learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, Etienne, McDermott, Richard, et al. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice : a guide to managing knowledge*. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School ; London : McGraw-Hill.

WETA. (2015). In Performance at the White House - about.  Retrieved 22nd May 2015, 2015, from http://www.pbs.org/inperformanceatthewhitehouse/about/

Whitaker, Charles. (1990, October, 1990). "Are Blacks Giving Away The Blues?". *Ebony,* 3.

White, Josh, & Mairants, Ivor. (1956). *The Josh White guitar method*. London, New York,: Boosey & Hawkes.

Whiteley, Sheila. (2005). *Too much too young : popular music, age and gender*. London: Routledge.

Widdowson, H. G. (2004). *Text, context, and pretext : critical issues in discourse analysis*. Malden, MA ; Oxford: Blackwell.

Widdowson, H.G. (1995). Discourse analysis: a critical view. *Language and Literature, 4*(3), 157-172. doi: 10.1177/096394709500400301

Willis, Jontavious "Quon". (2016). This was the album that turned me on to the blues.  Retrieved 1st September, 2016, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/163835903692878/permalink/1145475462195579/?comment_id=1145497078860084&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R9%22%7D

Wilson, Tony. (1968). Can White Men Sing The Blues?, *Meldoy Maker,* p. 2.

Wirz, Stefan. (2012a). The Real Caucasian Blues Forum.  Retrieved 02-09-2016, 2016, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/realcaucblues/

Wirz, Stefan. (2012b). The Real Miscellaneous Music Forum.  Retrieved 02-09-2016, 2016, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/realmiscmusic/

Wirz, Stefan. (2012c). The Real Traditional Ethnic & Vernacular Music Forum.  Retrieved 02-09-2016, 2016, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/212522158813611/

Wodak, R, & Meyer, Michael (2009). *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis* (Second Edition ed.).

Wold, Steven (2008). Biography, Press release.  Retrieved 8th September, 2016, from https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0ahUKEwiy

Discography

2pnHt57QAhWGIcAKHcuNDgMQFggjMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.media.wmg-
is.com%2Fmedia%2Fportal%2Fmedia%2Fcms%2Fdocs%2F200911%2Fseasick-steve-
bio_1258506222857.doc&usg=AFQjCNHk3VoBA_cqezlhz1ldXmWAncTJBA&sig2=5gLhXtWNI
pctyQ9FAs_xhw

Wolfe, Arnold S., Miller, Chuck, et al. (1999). On the Enduring Popularity of Cream's 'Sunshine of
Your Love': Sonic Synecdoche of the 'Psychedelic 60s'. *Popular Music, 18*(2), 259-276. doi:
10.2307/853605

Wolfe, Charles K., & Lornell, Kip. (1992). *The Life And Legend Of Leadbelly*. London: Secker &
Warburg, 1993.

World Development Indicators, WDI. (2015). Internet Users Per 100. from
http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.P2

Wright, David. (2005). Mediating Production and Consumption: Cultural Capital and 'Cultural
Workers'. *The British Journal of Sociology, 56*(1), 105-121. doi: 10.2307/3698429

Wright, Kevin B. (2005). Researching Internet-Based Populations: Advantages and Disadvantages of
Online Survey Research, Online Questionnaire Authoring Software Packages, and Web
Survey Services. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 10*(3), 00-00. doi:
10.1111/j.1083-6101.2005.tb00259.x

Wright, Phil. (2016). …in the 60s the BBC ran a TV series where a Brit folkie guitarist of some repute
but I can't recall his name.   Retrieved 11th August, 2016, from
https://www.facebook.com/groups/163835903692878/permalink/1126669287409530/

www.blindman.fr.yuku.com. (2016). Blindman's Blues Forum.   Retrieved 31st January, 2016, from
http://blindman.fr.yuku.com/

www.BluesTalk.com. (2016). BluesTalk.com.   Retrieved 31st January, 2016, from
http://www.bluestalk.com/forum/forum.php

www.earlyblues.com. (2016). Early Blues.   Retrieved 31st January 2016, 2016, from
http://www.earlyblues.com/

www.groups.yahoo.com. (2016a). Yahoo Post-war blues group.   Retrieved 31st January 2016, from
https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/post-war-blues/conversations/messages

www.groups.yahoo.com. (2016b). Yahoo Pre-war blues group.   Retrieved 31st January 2016, from
https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/pre-war-blues/conversations/messages/22891

www.well.com. (1985). The WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link).   Retrieved 30th July, 2015, from
http://www.well.com/

xodusattack. (2008). Leroy Carr - How long Blues part III vocalion 78 Early Blues Record Retrieved 3rd
December, 2012, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KNpLtkZNzZs

Young, James O. (2010). *Cultural appropriation and the arts*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

YouTube. (2016a). Search for "How to sing the blues" filtered by most views.   Retrieved 16th
August, 2016, from https://goo.gl/6KzRbC

YouTube (Producer). (2016b, 12th August 2016). Top 10 Blues Instrument tutoral videos "Learn to
play blues music" filtered by number of views. Retrieved from
https://www.youtube.com/results?sp=CAM%253D&q=learn+to+play+blues