"The Sound of Tomorrow"
From Underground to Mainstream

An exploration of evolving genres **(Future Bass)** and electronic music trends

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Abstract

This research project is intended to document the rise of an **Underground Genre** as it evolves and becomes a **Mainstream** attraction. The aim is to create a roadmap of the scene, and determine the underlying drivers of success (what factors are causing high levels of growth across the spectrum). The genre selected for this task is entitled **"Future Bass"**, a relatively new phenomenon that has become increasingly popular in America, Europe, and in the world of Electronic music. The sound is best described as a global melting pot of styles combining hip-hop, jazz & soul, and electronic music with signature EDM melodies, bass and synths.

To provide a manuscript of its growth, a database was created measuring a multitude of social media metrics over a 6-month period (SoundCloud, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and Instagram Followers). Almost 200 artists/labels were selected from 6 regions including: UK, USA, France, Australia, Canada, and Holland. Due to the heavy quantitative nature of this research, I used a quantitative inductive approach (where data are used to develop theory) in order to comment on the growth of this evolving sound.

At the end of the 6-month period a **combined growth index** was built to test the artists with the highest growth across all platforms. Based on the index model, these are the top 10 highest growing artists. The collectives and record labels that posted the highest growth are also listed.

San Holo, Arman Cekin (NL), Oshi, Mura Masa, Troyboi (UK), Carmada (AUS), Ekali (CAN). and KRNE, Gravez, Ark Patrol (USA),

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Record Record (FR), Soda Island (CAN), Bitbird, Heroic (NL), Hebinimochi, Moving Castle, and Hegemon (World)

It's very interesting to note every region had at least one artist or collective experience extreme growth (> 200%), which highlights that Future Bass is not a localized movement, but rather a global phenomenon driven by the Internet.

Moreover, based on the many averages per platform and per country, there is an overall positive growth trend, with Australia and USA performing above average. Conversely, Canada and France performed below average, while UK and Holland yielded neutral results. Lastly, two interesting drivers of growth have been found to increase success & inclusion amongst the Top 20%. These are the usage of **like-gating technology**, and being a member of an **Artist collective**/label.

This information about emerging Artists and Gatekeepers (labels, groups, media companies) is sensitive information that can be valuable to brands, music companies, booking agencies, advertisers, bloggers, big labels, and publishers that want to find the next crop of superstars while they are still affordable. This research will give those stakeholders an edge, and the ability to find top electronic talent before they reach their prime.

General Introduction

This research paper delves deep into the current world of electronic music. It's no secret that EDM is becoming a powerful force in the music industry, yet behind the whole façade there are noteworthy trends actively changing the underbelly of electronic music in 2015. Whether it's new ways to create, new techniques to market, or novel ways to consume, electronic music has always had an embedded symbiotic relationship with technology. This link has accelerated EDM to the forefront of society and culture.

In electronic music, culture plays such a strong role, especially given its breadth and depth, catering to audiences from the most mainstream profile – to the most niche, underground aesthetic. However, with the current rate of technology, even the underground sectors can now experience high growth and success. More importantly, this can be achieved in a relatively small time span thanks to blogs, business partnerships, SoundCloud, and a plethora of software and plug ins. For reference, Flume, Cashmere Cat, and Martin Garrix are poignant examples.

In short, today's underground music scene is more spoiled than ever in terms of reach, engagement, and access to fans. It has been empowered by digital and democratic forces, giving rise to countless success stories – be they upcoming producers, new labels, or emerging genres. At the beginning of this research phase, I encountered one such story that laid the groundwork for this paper. In Early Fall 2014, I discovered an artist called San Holo, who was making a very experimental & melodic type of music (Future Bass style). After some early buzz, he had garnered a following of around **4000** people on SoundCloud. A few months and releases later, he had surpassed the 30,000 mark. At the end of my research (at the last recorded interval), he had more than **140,000** followers. His journey is the perfect depiction of what I'm trying to share. It's almost a **425% monthly growth rate** over 8 months time, and just an illustration of the extreme movements happening in the underground world of electronic music. New fads come out every season, new styles are fused everyday, and new creative uses of technology disrupt the playing field daily – and this is not only on the creative end, but also on the business front.

Digital improvements have fashioned a suite of marketing tools/strategies just waiting to be explored/exploited by anyone from the tech-savvy bedroom producer – to an artist management team. Three of these trends will be stressed in this paper, and have been an integral part of Future Bass's claim to fame. They are some of the underlying currents that have propelled artists and labels to the position they are in now.

1.) The rise of **artist collectives** and group marketing strategies
2.) **Like-gating** tool and its recent prevalence on SoundCloud
3.) **Direct-to-fan** relationships & new media (Live Streaming, Instagram)

Research Questions

With this research paper I am trying to address two main areas of intrigue.

- **The first** is to determine which individual artists/labels have performed the best in the selected sub-genre of electronic music. This entails examining the cases that posted the highest growth rates/metrics.

- **The second** part is to try and explain why such high growth levels are happening. How can an underground movement attain mainstream appeal so quickly?

My analysis will thus have two corresponding parts to match both these areas of investigation:

1.) **Description:** dedicated to describing the results and the data
   a. Visuals, graphs, superlatives
   b. Averages for platforms, countries, and clusters
   c. Top 20% and Growth Index Model

2.) **Findings:** dedicated to assessing the underlying causes of growth
   a. Does being on a Collective give you higher growth percentage?
   b. Does utilizing like-gating software produce better social results?
   c. Does the use of new media drive new fan growth?

By breaking it down into a descriptive and an analytical side, I will have a good viewpoint to answer the overarching question of this research. Namely – **Is Future Bass the next big sound in contemporary electronic music?** This will be tackled in the "Wrap Up" section found in the conclusion.

To put it in a more elaborate way, this research project is intended to investigate the growth of 150+ artists and labels that are part of the next wave of EDM. After a 6-month collection period my objective is to get a better understanding of the scenes brightest talent, the best regions, and the best gatekeepers (labels, media outlets, and artists collectives). This means ranking the top 20% and figuring out all the notable outliers, averages, superlatives to be able to paint a picture of the scene's growth trend. This essentially is the creation of a **roadmap or framework** of Future Bass.

After this has been recorded, described, and framed – my next aim is to discuss the **underlying drivers** that have asserted Future Bass's dominance. I'm very interested in the infrastructure and mechanics behind the rise of this new sound. My goal is to magnify the relevant discoveries, trends, and patterns that are unique to this genre's newfound success. In turn, these insights will let me comment on the electronic music landscape in 2015, and if Future Bass has the potential to be the next big thing in EDM.

Literature Review

Background:

To trace back a few steps, a working definition of **'Genre'** should be established. In an earlier research paper on "Browsing Music Spaces: Categories and the Musical Mind" (1999), Franco Fabbri attempts to define a genre as "a kind of music that is acknowledged by a community for any reason or purpose or criteria, i.e., a set of musical events whose course is governed by rules (of any kind) accepted by a community" (Fabbri, 1999).

He further states that "in music, genres emerge as names to define similarities & recurrences that members of a community made pertinent to identify musical events" (Fabbri, 1999). The paper furthermore questions the structure that genres have with their inherent codes and hierarchies. "Rules that define a genre can be related to any of the codes involved in a musical event, which act as a compass […] Genres, then, can be seen as short-cuts to speed up communication within a musical community" (Fabbri, 1999).

In the world of electronic music, this is very applicable. Listeners need information of what they are consuming, and artists & managers need to know how to label, package, categorize, and market effectively. Thus, labels like "Acid House" or "Dubstep" or "Trap" have been bestowed on cultural movements to accelerate the communication/commercialization process, resulting in 100s of sub-genres. In the digital age, this communication process is reflected in a very short time frame, however this was not always the case – as this interactive map detailing the evolution of western dance music shows.

**Figure 1**. Evolution of Dance Music
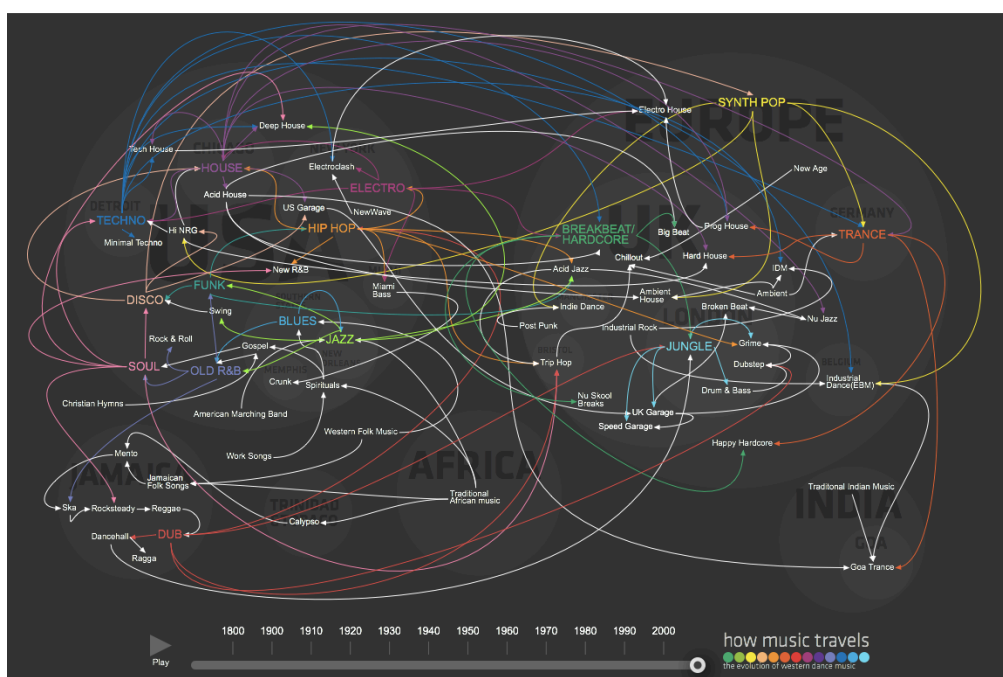
This interactive visual shows the "time and place where each of the music styles were born and which blend of genres influenced the next" (Thomson, 2011). The graphic demonstrates that even from a birds-eye view of larger genres, the interrelations and ongoing transformation of music is dynamic, complex, and inter-connected (Kirn, 2011). That process is really what's on display here, as we move from our vintage Rhythm & Blues to Funk into Disco and all the way to the current spell of genres (Techno, House, Drum & Bass). I think it's fascinating to see the geographic connections and chain of events occur (bear in mind in a time before internet existed). Hence, it was a good starting point to reflect on the hybridization of genres and the cross-pollination of creativity. It became the basis for selecting 6 global regions for my study, which will be explained more fully in the methodology.

Although the Figure 1. (Evolution of Dance Music) is a neat visualization, it only extends to the early 2000's. This research paper is more rooted in the current sphere of electronic music – especially focusing on the period of 2014 and 2015.

To get a better examination of this gap between 2005 and 2014, the following visual published by MixMag about Beatport Sales is fitting.

Figure 2. Top-Selling Genres based on Beatport
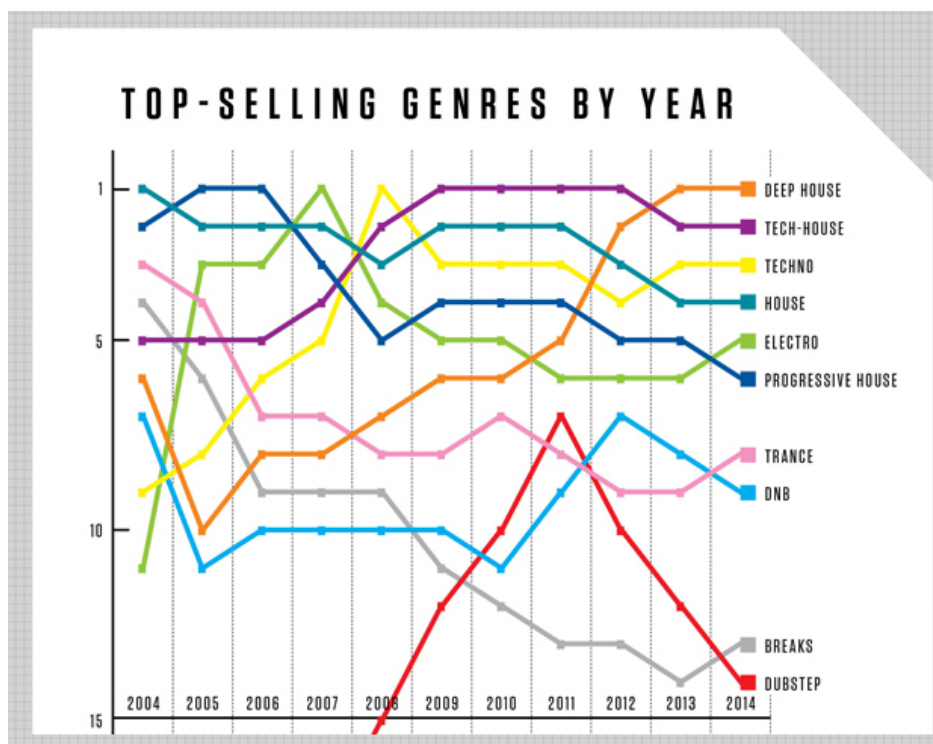
From 2005 onwards, this graph gives a simple delineation of sales by genres as they each battle for the spotlight. For this research paper, the red curve of "Dubstep" is the most relevant. It shows the movement of an underground Genre skyrocket and reach a popular level - only to sharply drop into the

abyss. This cycle shows a very interesting trajectory at first, yet soon after reaching its apex in 2011, the trend shows a mirroring downfall. This is the story of Dubstep, a genre that started small in the UK, evolved into a mainstream phenomenon with Skrillex in America, and then imploded on a worldwide scale. This is almost the same exact story that could happen to Future Bass in 2 years. Right now it is experiencing viral growth. But who is to say once this movement reaches a critical mass that the Genre can sustain itself? Is there any longevity, or will the innovation and momentum stifle at some point? Will there be a similar implosion a la dubstep – or more of a plateau?

These Genre lifecycles are the real backstory to why I am conducting this research to begin with. In just a manner of time, one of the most trending movements (Dubstep) simply fizzled, which goes to show the fickle nature of today's electronic music fan. These sharp drops didn't happen in times before Internet … well except for that one time that Disco infamously died overnight in 1979. But the disco demolition night digression aside, the heart of this paper is to figure out the direction of Future Bass, and if it will suffer a similar fate? If so, does that mean that we consume only fashionable music for 2 years and then simply dispose of it – is this what the industry of music has become … a fashion industry that's only about trends?

In any case, it's really hard to predict the future of an animal that is so likely to evolve, given the pace of technology and resources available. That's why I am passionate about documenting the evolving sound while it's still an embryo. It's key to note as well that because of the recency of these trends, most of these emerging genres have very limited published information. This means most of the available data comes from sources such as music blogs, popular culture magazines, and from within the artist community itself. This lack of published material is a fact that needs to be highlighted.

Context

After absorbing this general background about genre evolution, sales trends, and drawing parallels to the Dubstep movement – the next part shifts gears and focuses more on the developments in the 6-month research period from 2014 to June 2015. It is intended to inform individuals about specific themes and topics unique to Future Bass. These are necessary bits of terminology that need to be digested in order to better grasp the results and findings.

I guess the main question on everyone's mind right now is what exactly is Future Bass?

Well to impart my own definition, Future Bass is a global melting pot of today's popular styles (hip hop, trap, EDM, R&B) that has morphed into a unified cultural movement. The style embodies a very melodic aesthetic, and is characterized by synths and bass-heavy sound design. It is often described

as forward-thinking, frequently layered with sample based hip-hop elements. The notorious blog in the EDM world 'Run The Trap' similarly articulates that "as genres continue to merge and become unclassified, this forward thinking style of production has continued to break on to the scene and take music production into a whole new world of sounds. From Wave Racer, ODESZA, Lido and Flume taking over 2014 with unique production styles, and artists like GANZ, Louis Futon, Mura Masa and Mr. Carmack making serious waves; these forwarding thinking artists are forging a refreshing new path in the dance music community" (Mayeri, Jan. 2015)

Before expanding on the stylistic elements, first a working definition of "Style" is in order. "Style is a recurring arrangement of features in musical events which is typical of an individual (composer, performer), a group of musicians, a genre, a place, a period of time" (Fabbri, 1999). He further elaborates, "as a codified way of making music, style is related to genre, and is often used as its synonym, more regularly in languages where style is a more common-sense word and genre is felt to be more technical" (Fabbri, 1999).

The main features of the future bass style would definitely be the electronic sounding elements (synths, melodies, drops, fx), as well as the soulful and jazzy vibes (harmonies, progressions), along with a clear hip hop influence (drums, 808, bass, samples). These are the main characteristics that are coded inside the DNA of the genre (were we to refer to another one of Fabbri's studies – " a hierarchy of codes always defines the ideology of a genre" (Eco 1975, Fabbri 1996). Figure 3 is a simple Venn diagram to explain the trifecta that lies at the foundation of Future Bass. These are the roots of the sound.

Figure 3. Venn Diagram
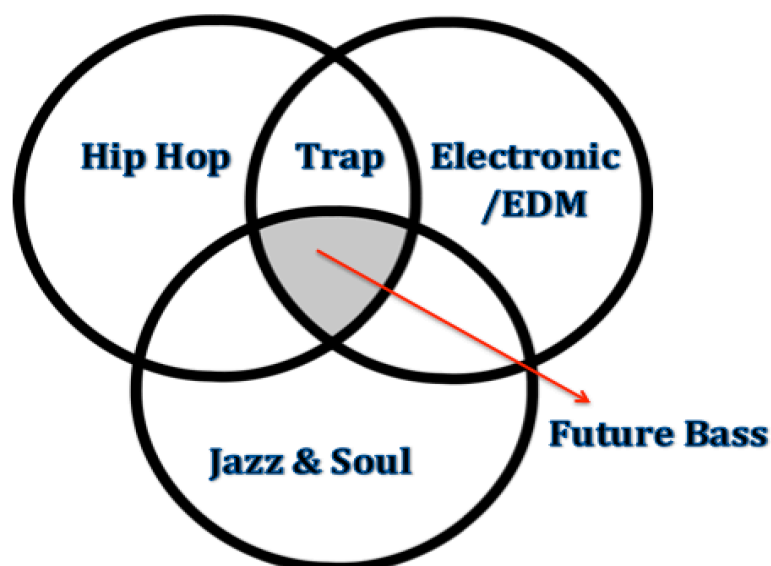
Less Than 3, another prominent blog, has this to say about the emerging style. "When you think of bass music, the sound of glass-shattering beats typically comes to mind. However, there has been a major spin-off toward upbeat synths and playful melodies in recent times. This style sprang out of hip-hop/trap, and it became loosely referred to as future bass as time went on. While it's still often debated which artists and tracks constitute future bass, the genre really took over the blogosphere this year and continues to evolve rapidly" (Downar, 2015).

In short, Future Bass as a phenomenon is still very much an enigma. However, there have been some very encouraging trends happening inside this cultural crusade that should be briefly mentioned for context.

Artist Collectives:

"Artist collectives have become a dominant force in dance music's flourishing underbelly and they're fast replacing the traditional record label model with a more DIY, collaborative approach to releasing music. A bevy of crews have already risen to the surface: Hegemon, Team Supreme, Moving Castle, Flow-Fi, Soulection, the list goes on" (Calvano, 2015). Since 2014, there have been around a dozen more competitive players spring onto the scene. Interestingly, they are stemming from all corners of the world, including France (Cosmonostro, Record Record, Point Point) to Australia (Pile Rats, Future Classic) – as well as the UK (Trapdoor, Future Beats) and America.

The unifying trait is that they're embracing a community-influenced delivery to slingshot producers to the next level. The mentality is a team mentality. No individual artist is more important than the next, and everyone in the collective simultaneously benefits from the success of others. "These producers collaborate and support one another, opening themselves up to all new levels of previously untapped exposure. London's own TroyBoi understands the importance of this, noting that being part of a collective such as Hegemon has given us another platform to connect our music with a wider audience and share our music with each other's fan bases, therefore allowing a continuous organic growth" (Calvano, 2015)

Jordan Calvano adds that "for example: An artist releases a song, and within moments it can be shared, reposted, and retweeted on the socials of every other producer in the collective. The result is a wildfire-like spread, allowing tracks to rack up massive plays". Want Electronic also confirms the promising role of collectives in the underground. "They are revolutionizing the way people approach genres like hip-hop, dance music, R&B, and soul, reinventing the wheel so to speak and birthing new genres and styles with ease. As the previous method of the major label fails, these newcomers have shaped the idea of the artist collective. Not only do these crews release music, they also provide a platform for their artists to grow. These collectives double as blogs, clothing companies, radio shows, and really just about anything you could imagine" (Wantickets, 2014).

"In many ways, the function of a collective is similar to that of a label. The main difference is that their ultra-grassroots mentality puts financial gain on the backburner in the immediate, freeing them to organically grow and assume roles without the bottom line of red and black. Take, for example, Soulection giving away their entire discography for free. This, in addition to the feverish synergy of many of these groups, has shifted the creative energy of the underground away from labels and towards collectives" (Thump, 2015).

Like-gating:

Another development that has paved the way for additional marketing strategies is the technique of like-gating. Like artist collectives and their special commands, like-gating software, in the right hands, can also prove to be a powerful tool. "For years, the technology has allowed artists to translate free track downloads into a visible following, helping those artists book shows and afford the ability to continue giving music away for free" (Greenfield, 2014).

"At first it was simple. You "Liked" an artist on Facebook, and next thing you know you were downloading free music. This was often done through email, but was always pretty quick and painless. Flash forward to 2015 where the obsession with social numbers has skyrocketed, and now people are getting way too demanding when giving out free downloads, asking consumers to follow on every network, like and comment on all their networks, share the post on Facebook, and sign up for an email list where you will be blasted with updates" (Magnetic Mag, 2015).

Today, this is becoming a common type of exchange. There's a catch to receiving free content though. The consumer has to either like on Facebook, or follow on SoundCloud, or a combination of any other platform(s). Essentially the new currency is to follow for a download (and this can be bundled with other names and platforms, as this figure 4 clarifies)

Figure 4. Sarcastic Tweet

Recently, this like-gating software has become a basic part of an independent artist's arsenal of self-marketing tools – boosting the profiles of many musicians. In my selection, there are over 50 artists who utilize the gating technology; their high growth on some platforms is sometimes directly attributable to this method. Although Like-Gating is nothing new, and was shut down by Facebook back in 2014, it is still alive and well on other platforms.

There are already a few companies that have set up shop in the music sector, including: ToneDen.io, Dropify, Click.DJ, FanBridge. Unlock This, Unlock FM and a few more. In the contemporary electronic music bubble, like-gating practices have moved away from Facebook end users (thanks to their new policy) and now target the SoundCloud community instead.

New Media and Direct-To-Fan:

"SoundCloud is one of the biggest success stories of the online music world. The music streaming and audio sharing platform has been growing exponentially—it now boasts about 250 million users, and values itself at $700 million" (Thump, 2014). In terms of digital music, SoundCloud has arguably surpassed YouTube as the main electronic music destination. This holds particularly true for the younger demographic, since SoundCloud is geared towards more mobile markets.

Regarding my database and research process, SoundCloud is one of the main sources of data that I've been observing. Every artist and label that I'm monitoring has their own SoundCloud profile; that's a stunning 100%! This shows the essential role the platform has amongst creators in the EDM realm.

Less popular among the artists I'm covering – but equally noteworthy is Instagram. "According to research […] Instagram is growing the fastest of all social media sites worldwide, increasing its active user base by 23% in the last six months" (Lunden 2014). In my research pool, more than 60 artists out of 150 have an active instagram account. This emphasizes that even musicians are using the platform to interact with fans; especially the younger fan base. To back this up, "Instagram has found success with young people. For the first time, more than half (53 percent) of young adults – that is (ages 18 – 29) – are on Instagram" (Wagner, 2015).

After Instagram, there are a handful of other media platforms shaking up the underground EDM playing field. These include live streaming solutions offered by the likes of Twitch, Ustream, Periscope, and even Snapchat. Increasingly, these new platforms are being used by the younger waves of producers to enhance their direct-to-fan relationship. In order to be ahead of the curve, this direct access to the fan is an important link to embrace.

Methodology

Materials:

The methodology of this thesis is heavily based on a quantitative inductive approach (concerned with the generation of new theory emerging from data). In order to evaluate this new scene and its fundamental building blocks, I have constructed a database complete with artist-centric variables and information. This is in the form of an Excel file, which has been updated monthly with current social media metrics. In addition to this manually

recorded database, there is the Next Big Sound database, which was used to cross-reference some of the numbers and dates. This database also contains extra variables such as Soundcloud downloads, Youtube views, Facebook 'talking about this', and many more to deepen the scope of information. Sadly, this data was not available to all artists and was used sparingly.

Collection Process:

With the goal to document an underground genre over a period of time, the first task was to select an appropriate Genre to use as a case study. Based on the many current trends in EDM, (Deep House, Jersey Club, Chill Trap, Tech-House, Grime etc.) I felt Future Bass had the largest mysteries to unravel. It also had a strong presence on blogs in 2014, and thus outbid other emerging sounds like Trap and Dubstep. The approach of selecting and analyzing one genre, instead of 2 or more was also a decision to address. This was due to avoid too large of a data set, because following an extra 100 artists would introduce a drove of new variables.

The next hurdle was the artist selection process. In my opinion, the best way to gage an exploding genre is to investigate it at the artist level. After sifting through the Internet, music blogs, and SoundCloud, I realized that a coherent way to categorize the artists was by country. 6 countries were chosen, based on three factors.
    1.) At least 1 label/collective deeply rooted in the scene.
    2.) 10 or more relevant artists with 5000 followers on SoundCloud
    3.) History/ Ties to electronic music industry

Thus, the regions that all satisfied these criteria were (in alphabetical order): **Australia, Canada, France, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, and USA.**

Australia doesn't have the best historic reputation for EDM, however has managed to turn this around in 2 years. It has recently exploded onto the worldwide scene, contributing greatly with artist like Flume and labels like Future Classic. Canada is well known for its EDM exports, which include Deadmau5, and recently Kaytranada; it also houses the powerhouse label Monstercat. France has often been associated with electronic music, thanks to pioneers like Daft Punk and Justice. It looks as though this legacy will be furthered thanks to emerging players like Cosmonostro, Point Point, and Record Record. Holland has always been an epicenter for EDM and electronic music styles. Today it boasts some top performers like San Holo and Ganz, and gatekeepers such as Heroic and BitBird. The UK is blessed with talent, and has a very important historic place in bass culture. With labels like Trapdoor and Terrorhythm, it continues to be a very relevant destination for Future Bass. Lastly, the USA is brimming with future bass artists and collectives. Arguably some of the largest movements, which include Soulection, HW&W, and Hegemon spawned here – therefore it's a no brainer that the US region was picked out.

There were a few notable countries such as Norway, Belgium, and Japan that didn't make the cut. This was because even though they each boast established Future Bass artists (Lido, Cashmere Cat, Starro, Luca Lush), they simply didn't have enough of these artists above the 5000-follower mark (second criteria). The Artist selection criteria were based on reputation in music blogs (specifically Want Electronic rankings and other compiled lists), a starting point of at least 1000 followers (there were exceptions in the case of a new projects), and the type of genre/style an artist claimed (which was often experimental, forward-thinking, future bass). They also had to be based in one of the 6 regions above, selected for that purpose.

Measurements and Calculations:

Now that the countries and artists had been finalized, the next step was to figure out "what" to measure. I ended up looking at all the metrics and found that more than 75% of all the artists had an active SoundCloud, Facebook, and Twitter account (the holy trio for an electronic musician). The other two platforms that were regularly used in the community were Instagram, and even less frequently YouTube. Thus, these became the 5 main data sources to track for each artist starting December 1st, 2014. In terms of the time frame, I began collecting data in December, and had a 6-month period to find trends and explore various sorts of growth. I collected and journalized the data for each platform, and every artist the first week of each month. This way I could see the incremental growth across all forms of media over time. Bear in mind that because the scene was constantly evolving, there were many new players that surfaced during the collection period. Thus, the list of 100+ artists and labels was continually updated, with the last injection of artists on March 1.

Part 1:
At the end of the 6 months, I decided the best way to measure or rank the artists would be to create a **combined growth index** that took into account the complete growth across all platforms. This would help me answer the first part of my research questions. 1.) **Determine which individual artists/labels have performed the best in the selected sub-genre of electronic music, based on highest growth.**

The arbitrary benchmark of adequate growth selected prior was set at 50%. Attractive growth begins at a 100% increase. 200% is the threshold for "extreme" growth. I am defining the barometer of success as the combined growth %. Which means the higher the growth rate across all social mediums, the greater the success. The equation I used measures the sum of all platform growth rates, with each platform receiving a preselected weight. The result is expressed as a percentage (100%). The weights placed on the platforms are 50 % for SoundCloud, 20% for Facebook, 20% for Twitter, 5% each for and YouTube and Instagram. The 50% SoundCloud weight is further broken down into full growth, and recent growth (to account for recent effects). This full period is 6 months, whereas the recent period is 3.

0.40 (SC % Full Growth) + 0.10 (SC % Recent Growth) + 0.2 (FB Full %) + 0.2 (Twitter Full %) + 0.05 (YT Full %) + 0.05 (IG Full %) = N %

These weights have been selected based on the popularity of platforms with artists and labels. SoundCloud is the most common, with every single artist and label represented. It thus dictates half the index. The fact that a recent growth factor was added was because there are volatile fluctuations that need to be taken into account (such as Like-Gating). More than 90% of individuals have an active Facebook or Twitter, thus they equally receive 1/5 or 20%. Many artists did not however have a YouTube and Instagram account, and thus these weights (5%) are significantly lower than the other platforms.

In any case, the growth index will be used to find the highest growers, and break them down into two tiers of artist. The first is a top 10. The second is a top 20%, which includes some underground prospects as well. Other measurements that will feature in the descriptive results include:
- Platform Averages
- Country Averages
- Top 10 Labels (based on the index model)
- Top 10 Artist Collectives
- Top 15 Total SoundCloud Growth

Part 2:

To answer the second part of my research, these are the methods to analyze the underlying drivers of growth. I have highlighted 3 main possible drivers of growth and will test them for their effectiveness:
1.) The rise of **artist collectives** and group marketing strategies
2.) **The use of Like-gating** technology
3.) **Direct-to-fan** relationships & new media (Live Streaming, Instagram)

For the **first** test, I will categorize each member of the study into 2 groups (part of collective roster? – yes/no). I will get a mean result for both and compare. For the **second** test, a similar approach will be employed (does the artist use Like-Gate technology – yes/no). Averages for both categories will be calculated and then contrasted. For the **third** test, my criteria for measuring if an artist takes the effort to create Direct-to-fan relationship would be to assess how digitally fluent an artist is. Do they use new media well? This will be determined by noting if the artist has an Instagram account (Active Instagram? – yes/no). For this inquiry I will resort to an updated combined growth index, that doesn't take into account YouTube or instagram metrics. Thus, it will test if having an instagram account (which shows signs of being technologically sophisticated and knowledgeable of trends) translates into higher overall growth index.

0.40 (SC % Full Growth) + 0.10 (SC % Recent Growth) + 0.25 (FB Full %) + 0.25 (Twitter Full %) = N %

Analysis
1.) Descriptive Results:

Averages by Platform (Figure 5)
Above the 50% benchmark is considered a successful result.

Totals	Avg. % Growth	Avg. Total Change
SoundCloud	71.4%	15216
Recent SC	27.9%	-
Facebook	38.67%	4941
Twitter	58.29%	1588

Over the 6-month time period, I had anticipated a 50% growth increase per platform. For Soundcloud, the mean percentage was 71.4%, and the benchmark was thus hit. Soundcloud was also the platform that experienced the highest growth average when we compare it to Facebook and Twitter, which again accentuates the crucial role of the platform in the underground. Facebook did not hit this mark, while all the average twitter followers reached almost 60% increase over the half year period. Soundcloud also boasted the highest average increase per follower, with each artist growing their base by around 15216 fans.

Averages by Country A (Figure 6)
Above the Platform average is considered successful result.

Soundcloud	80.4%	23236	
Facebook	42.7%	12282	
Twitter	85.67%	3068	
Soundcloud	82.4%	16569	
Facebook	39.49%	3542	
Twitter	63.03%	1816	
Soundcloud	42.1%	9538	
Facebook	16.39%	3519	
Twitter	26.23%	723	

Looking at the above visual, we can clearly deduce which countries are more proficient with social media. Australia has a very strong base of artists that utilizes all facets of today's digital tools and offerings. Out of the 20 Australian artists that were tracked, 16 had Instragram (80% success rate). Their twitter average is also the highest among all countries, which underlines the tech-savvy group of artists and well-linked local scene. There might however be a few outliers that are skewing the twitter figures. In any case, the 80.4% growth on SoundCloud is second only to the USA (82.4%), which also had a pretty good social media prowess.

On the other side of the scale, we have the French community of artists who did not perform as strongly (based on mean results). The combined Facebook growth posted by French artists ranked the lowest of all regions; same story with SoundCloud results. Also, the French, along with the Dutch, only had 6 out of 20 selected artists active on Instagram (30%). This shows a lack of digital fluency, and perhaps means France doesn't hold the same influence in the Future Bass genre as its American and Australian counterparts.

Averages by Country B (Figure 7)

Above the Platform average is considered successful result.
Within +/- 10% of platform average is considered neutral.

Soundcloud	73.4%	11458
Facebook	22.94%	3905
Twitter	26.2%	1432
Soundcloud	66.2%	15608
Facebook	58.0%	3698
Twitter	55.36%	1294
Soundcloud	78.4%	13205
Facebook	52.31%	3124
Twitter	52.09%	841

Concerning the other 3 regions, Canada measured the lowest twitter growth mean, and also struggled with their Facebook average. For the rest, both Holland and the United Kingdom witnessed neutral growth across the spectrum, though both had significantly high Facebook averages. This is likely

due to the strong influence of artists like Troy Boi, Mura Masa, and Oshi in the UK, and San Holo and Arman Cekin (NL), whose stats will all be dissected in the artist metrics (next section). However, it's key to note that the 78.4% percent average for Holland is likely impacted by the two aforementioned super producers.

Artists by Country – Australia (Figure 8)

The following section is a summary of all the artist-centric variables that were calculated by country. It also includes the labels and collectives for each region on the rightmost column. The combined growth metric is the first data column, followed by the total growth across all platforms, and ending with the SoundCloud growth rate. The key visible below applies to all tables.

(Key)
Top 20%
Bottom 20%

(Key)
Low Growth
Medium
High

Country	Artists	Combined Growth Index	Total Growth All Platforms	Full Growth %	Labels/ Collectives
		19.41%	157211	22.0%	Future Classic
		18.61%	17558	10.56%	Pilerats
		12.75%	3433	22.1%	Die High Records
AUS	Flume	17.43%	451217	18.2%	
AUS	What So Not	23.48%	94775	26.8%	
AUS	Ta-ku	25.85%	146502	25.7%	
AUS	Wave Racer	17.73%	28072	18.4%	
AUS	Just A Gent	40.16%	34719	52.7%	
AUS	Alison Wonderland	62.44%	141141	65.6%	
AUS	Basenji	23.06%	9707	21.3%	
AUS	Nehzuil	18.67%	6817	21.0%	
AUS	aywy	33.14%	10653	40.4%	
AUS	Sable	43.22%	14856	46.9%	
AUS	Slumberjack	97.00%	29033	137.0%	
AUS	GRMM	67.49%	13836	90.9%	
AUS	Two Can	18.58%	4006	18.3%	
AUS	Chiefs	17.23%	3294	17.3%	
AUS	Cln	34.81%	4530	51.8%	
AUS	Paces	36.49%	5982	53.9%	
AUS	Herzeloyde	198.39%	13813	216.1%	
AUS	Jawz	69.85%	4449	101.9%	
AUS	Jia Lih	94.97%	4962	184.0%	
AUS	Carmada	308.75%	39815	297.4%	
AUS	Feki	147.18%	14553	234.6%	

In Australia, we can observe some very encouraging numbers, highlighted in green. The artists at the bottom of the table show a very high growth amount across platforms, which ranks them accordingly in the Top 20%. 5 artists are represented in the top 20% for Australia; 3 are in the top 15. These are Herzeloyde, Feki, Slumberjack, Jia Lih, and Carmada taking number one spot.

In terms of Total growth, Flume is the clear winner, however Alison Wonderland (one of the only female producers in the whole selection of artists) has managed to not only post a growth rate above 50%, but also a total increase of 141,141 across her socials. Carmada nevertheless remains the most interesting prospect from Down Under, with a growth of almost 40,000 in 6 months. They only started with around 7,000 SoundCloud fans, so that growth of almost 300% is very impressive.

Artists by Country – Canada (Figure 9)

Country	Artists	Combined Growth Index	Total Growth All Platforms	Full Growth %	Labels/ Collectives
		31.08%	950495	34.3%	Monstercat
		111.91%	3171	181.8%	Secret Songs
					?
CAN	Kaytranada	25.97%	132914	28.9%	
CAN	Ryan Hemsworth	14.42%	41398	18.4%	
CAN	Pomo	34.62%	28236	44.7%	
CAN	Tennyson	35.28%	14315	37.1%	
CAN	Elaquent	6.46%	4526	10.9%	
CAN	Obesøn	19.95%	7279	20.7%	
CAN	Andru	9.89%	4951	17.4%	
CAN	High Klassified	20.43%	9073	32.3%	
CAN	Pusher	74.70%	18194	88.6%	
CAN	Tommy Kruise	19.26%	6143	25.5%	
CAN	Da-P dabeatX	19.53%	6796	23.3%	
CAN	Ekali	113.35%	34408	182.3%	
CAN	Tails	85.98%	8518	176.1%	
CAN	James Deen	23.30%	1184	50.3%	
CAN	Falcxne	69.78%	1677	116.7%	
CAN	Ramzoid	97.67%	8442	203.9%	
CAN	Syre	84.72%	5889	161.2%	

In Canada, the numbers aren't as consistently spread out as in Australia, with a few cases of high growth, and a few bad eggs. Nonetheless, there are 5 artists in the Top 20% - these are Ekali, Ramzoid, Tails, Syre and Pusher. Ekali is the leader of the pack, posting a 113.5 percent increase on the combined scale, and 182.3% rise on SoundCloud.

In terms of Total growth, we can see that the Monster Cat label has one of the largest bars. However, the Secret Songs group has a significantly higher growth rate (111.91% vs. 31.8%). The artist with the largest total change also happens to be the greatest influencer of the Great White North – none other than Kaytranada of course.

Artists by Country – Netherlands (Figure 10)

Country	Artists	Combined Growth Index	Total Growth All Platforms	Full Growth %	Labels/ Collectives
		93.11%	23395	132.8%	Heroic
		38.62%	30118	62.8%	Juizify
		565.32%	76417	440.8%	Bitbird
		21.16%	1302	33.4%	Dogg Town
		15.83%	2321	35.9%	Rockforce
NL	Ganz	26.03%	21688	28.9%	
NL	Jeftuz	12.45%	7831	17.9%	
NL	Apex Rise	34.23%	25957	69.0%	
NL	FS Green	5.26%	3115	9.1%	
NL	San Holo	460.72%	158238	387.9%	
NL	Moods	12.57%	8882	21.9%	
NL	Jarreau Vandal	28.94%	7253	38.6%	
NL	Boe Boe	7.20%	1709	11.6%	
NL	Wantigga	13.97%	4382	23.1%	
NL	Zes	76.31%	8689	104.5%	
NL	Wrld	82.94%	14371	112.1%	
NL	Singularis	26.26%	3587	33.8%	
NL	Kappa Kavi	22.16%	1897	23.4%	
NL	Jailo	34.13%	3419	35.6%	
NL	Arman Cekin	211.35%	35151	312.9%	
NL	Deon Custom	49.88%	5140	85.4%	

In Holland, we see a similar pattern as in Canada, almost a bimodal distribution with many success stories and a few sloths. Nevertheless, Holland

is home to two artists in the Top 10, which have propelled it in the country rankings. San Holo is ranked #1 artist according to the growth index, and is the winner of the 150+ artists that were picked. A congratulation is in order, as he shows an imposing 460% increase on the growth index percentage. Even more impressive is the almost 160,000 new followers he has amassed on his socials (quite astonishing given that this all happened in the span of 6 months). Arman Cekin is the other Top 10 member, and also displayed promise with a 312.9% SoundCloud surge.

In terms of labels and collectives, the Dutch also prove their worth. Both Heroic and Bitbird (San Holo's Label) feature in the top 20%, with Bitbird recording a 565.32% upswing. It's Interesting to note that two of Holland's established exports (Ganz and Apex Rise) were clearly outshined by the paths of newcomers San Holo & Arman Cekin.

Artists by Country – France (Figure 11)

Country	Artists	Combined Growth Index	Total Growth All Platforms	Full Growth %	Labels/ Collectives
		16.50%	6582	19.3%	Cosmonostro
		10.47%	9524	11.6%	DiscoThrill
		42.25%	13891	54.1%	Point Point
		825.76%	6667	1292.4%	Record Record
FRANCE	Stwo	22.05%	51113	27.8%	
FRANCE	Darius	25.43%	40908	25.8%	
FRANCE	Cherokee	13.96%	15815	20.2%	
FRANCE	Evil Needle	17.28%	15579	22.9%	
FRANCE	20syl	22.04%	72920	31.4%	
FRANCE	Kartell	15.07%	16457	19.8%	
FRANCE	123mrk	6.56%	3508	11.3%	
FRANCE	Phazz	17.15%	8533	21.1%	
FRANCE	Canblaster	10.83%	8592	19.7%	
FRANCE	Alesia	15.54%	13653	23.4%	
FRANCE	Le Marquis	43.91%	17980	62.9%	
FRANCE	Aazar	40.49%	8749	48.7%	
FRANCE	L'Homme Aux 4 Lettres	20.77%	2585	24.8%	
FRANCE	Nömak	17.83%	2344	27.6%	
FRANCE	Kource	23.64%	2740	35.5%	
FRANCE	Rusty Hook	82.23%	13448	145.3%	
FRANCE	Marlin	23.64%	1790	44.3%	
FRANCE	Nebbra	52.03%	10108	89.4%	
FRANCE	Noï	46.29%	8372	66.1%	
FRANCE	Mincha	4.77%	274	6.5%	
FRANCE	Katuchat	75.17%	4772	108.7%	

In the French domain, the results were less equally distributed. According to the Combined Growth Index, France had more artists in the bottom 20% than in the top 20%. Only 2 artists from France featured in the top 20, and none in the Top 15. Rusty Hook and Katuchat post the only real positive trending figures among artists.

Among labels however, France rightly has one of the most promising candidates by the name of Record Record. They have a experienced a 825.76% rise, gaining almost 7000 followers in the span of 4 months. This more than makes up for the fact that France has performed weaker as a whole in relation to the other 5 regions (Australia, Canada, Holland, UK, US).

Artists by Country – United States (Figure 12)

Country	Artists	Combined Growth Index	Total Growth All Platforms	Full Growth %	Labels/ Collectives
		33.03%	111557	39.1%	Soulection
		17.29%	26197	21.5%	HW&W
		71.46%	68596	78.2%	Hegemon
		15.95%	8498	20.2%	Team Supreme
USA	Mr. Carmack	23.73%	62424	27.0%	
USA	Sango	27.31%	55321	34.9%	
USA	Giraffage	15.62%	30287	21.4%	
USA	Sweater Beats	32.70%	42756	30.3%	
USA	Djemba Djemba	24.80%	34861	27.5%	
USA	Goldlink	42.40%	39759	56.2%	
USA	Lakim	14.01%	10341	18.7%	
USA	Falcons	17.99%	15187	23.0%	
USA	Hoodboi	23.92%	15523	37.7%	
USA	Louis Futon	53.15%	35622	88.9%	
USA	Diversa	39.86%	14008	39.0%	
USA	Saturn	27.07%	15282	39.2%	
USA	Sevnth Wonder	26.16%	13795	41.3%	
USA	Awe	35.96%	15243	50.0%	
USA	Geotheory	50.00%	11038	71.0%	
USA	Gravez	165.56%	27010	124.2%	
USA	Father Dude	54.58%	10112	62.3%	
USA	Stélouse	95.13%	21799	143.7%	
USA	Dirty Chocolate	65.93%	14969	105.9%	
USA	KRNE	291.50%	45030	353.8%	
USA	Tasty Treat	49.24%	6991	73.3%	
USA	Ark Patrol	243.64%	14481	377.3%	
	Cavalier	35.24%	16316	44.1%	
	Promnite	9.15%	3737	12.5%	
	Lindsay Lowend	8.95%	8772	17.6%	
	Yung Bae	25.15%	10468	36.5%	
	Fortune	15.41%	4923	27.2%	
	Y2K	29.44%	10020	46.2%	
	Alexander Lewis	102.21%	15280	159.0%	
	Aobeats	17.31%	5683	20.9%	
	Brasstracks	68.17%	13176	96.4%	
	Marshmello	105.86%	40405	159.6%	
	Louis The Child	102.94%	40223	171.8%	
	Jai Wolf	67.15%	27635	100.4%	
	Prince Fox	91.39%	31858	146.7%	

In the United States, the trends indicate a very positive picture of growth. There were 8 artists that made it into the top 20%, and only 4 in the bottom 20%. The US was also the largest region in terms of artists selected. The real winners include KRNE, Ark Patrol, and Gravez if we judge them by rate of growth. They also feature in the Top 15. By total change, established players Carmack and Sango lead the pack.

Other artists that did surprisingly well at both gaining followers and growing quickly include: Alexander Lewis, Marshmello, Louis the Child, and Stélouse. None however come close to the mastery of KRNE, who is putting out more music than almost anyone in the scene – and getting rewarded big time.

The last things to bring up about the American electronic landscape are its infamous artist collectives. These massive cultural movements have shaped electronic music for the better, and none other as much as the Soulection tribe. Although it only posted a growth of 33% (below the benchmark of 50%), this collective still managed to find 111,000 more digital followers in the 6 month time frame. In terms of growth however, the Hegemon collective is the clear winner in the US, with 71.46% combined growth, and almost 70,000 new followers. Most of these stem from the SoundCloud platform.

Artists by Country – United Kingdom (Figure 13)

Country	Artists	Combined Growth Index	Total Growth All Platforms	Full Growth %	Labels/ Collectives
		30.35%	8727	53.4%	Terrorhythm
		17.00%	32673	16.7%	Trapdoor
		2.86%	1367	6.0%	Cream Collective
		10.87%	1143	19.9%	Youtellme
UK	Rustie	9.98%	21237	16.2%	
UK	Snakehips	55.15%	72598	34.4%	
UK	TroyBoi	108.32%	122045	148.1%	
UK	Sam Gellaitry	93.96%	59177	92.7%	
UK	Mura Masa	133.52%	74923	155.0%	
UK	Joker	14.69%	18847	22.4%	
UK	Plastician	8.80%	7434	16.4%	
UK	Daktyl	55.34%	23422	63.9%	
UK	fwdslxsh	23.06%	10295	31.2%	
UK	Sh?m	23.46%	7158	34.3%	
UK	Maxx Baer	18.35%	7167	35.8%	
UK	Salute	21.31%	5082	23.9%	
UK	Oshi	374.14%	45890	338.8%	
UK	Swindle	11.93%	5249	16.6%	
UK	Capsun	19.31%	2051	29.5%	
UK	Sivey	14.31%	3777	23.8%	
UK	Kaos	15.96%	1616	29.1%	
UK	JD. Reid	31.18%	2586	44.2%	
UK	Daffy	21.14%	908	23.2%	
UK	Curious Control/Oliverse	7.02%	-2632	56.6%	
UK	Kyle Cook/Glacci	53.96%	1697	22.8%	
UK	Joss Ryan?	36.37%	831	62.3%	
UK	Opal City	105.71%	1575	200.4%	

The United Kingdom, similar to France and Holland, also has a slightly bimodal distribution of talent. This can be seen by the green and red shades, and the fact that it has 5 artists in the Full Top 20%, and 5 artists in the bottom 20% of the growth index. However, the UK does place with 3 artists in the Top 15 (TroyBoi, Oshi, and Mura Masa). Troyboi is a very interesting subject because not only is his growth rate above the 100% threshold, he also grew his fanbase by 122,045 followers. Lastly, Oshi is also noteworthy due to his 374.14% on the index.

Top 15 Artists List (Tier 1)

1. San Holo – 460.72% (158283)
2. Oshi – 374.14% (45890)
3. Carmada – 308% (39815)
4. KRNE – 291.5% (45030)
5. Ark Patrol – 243.64% (14481)
6. Arman Cekin – 211.35% (35151)
7. Herzeloyde – 198.39% (13813)
8. Gravez – 165.56% (27010)
9. Feki – 147.18% (14553)
10. Mura Masa – 133.52% (74923)
11. Ekali – 113% (34408)
12. Troyboi – 108.32% (122045)
13. Marshmello – 105.86%(40405)
14. Louis the Child – 102.9 (40223)
15. Alexander Lewis – 102.2(15280)

Top 20% (Tier 2)

16. Ramzoid – 97.67% (8442)
17. Slumberjack – 97% (29033)
18. Stélouse – 95.13% (21799)
19. Sam Gellaitry – 93.9% (59177)
20. Prince Fox – 91.39% (31858)
21. Tails – 85.98% (8518)
22. Syre – 84.72 (5889)
23. WRLD – 82.94% (14371)
24. Rusty Hook – 82.23% (13448)
25. Zes – 76.31% (8689)
26. Pusher – 74.7% (18194)
27. Katuchat – 75% (4772)
28. Brass Tracks – 68.87 (13176)
29. Dirty Chocolate – 65.93 (14969)
30. Alison Wonderland – 62.44% (141141)

**Top 10 Collectives/Labels –
Growth Percentage**

1. Record Record – 825.76%
2. Bitbird – 565.32%
3. Soda Island – 225.9%
4. Hebinomichi – 178%
5. Moving Castle – 148%
6. Heroic – 93.11%
7. Hegemon – 71.46%
8. Flow-fi – 40%
9. Soulection – 33%
10. Future Beats – 30.1%

**Top 10 Collectives –
Total Change**

1. Future Classic – 157211
2. Soulection – 111557
3. Bitbird – 76417
4. Hegemon – 68596
5. Trapdoor – 32673
6. Juizify – 30118
7. Moving Castle – 29614
8. HW&W – 26197
9. Heroic – 23395
10. Hebinomichi - 16447

Findings:

After processing this wealth of artist/label data, it's very reassuring to see that many artists surpassed the growth benchmark of 50%. Another great sign is that in every region that was selected, there was at least one case of extreme growth (which in the methodology was stated to be > 200%).

In Australia, Carmada was this individual. In Canada, the collective Soda Island reached this level. In France, the newly established Record Record took this honor. In Holland, both San Holo and his label Bitbird witnessed extreme levels of growth. In the UK, Oshi was the prime example of viral growth. In the US, KRNE led the way. This finding is very relevant, as it means that Future Bass isn't only an American or Australian phenomenon. It's not a localized movement at all, but instead a global trend that is being fueled by the Internet. By being a global trend, Future Bass has more points of connection to experience both organic and viral growth.

To find further proof of the genre's suitability to become the sound of tomorrow, I have run three tests to find the underlying drivers of high growth. These measure the effectiveness of three marketing strategies/tools that have been outlined in the first half of this paper.

1.) The rise of **artist collectives** and group marketing strategies
2.) **The use of Like-gating** technology
3.) **Direct-to-fan** relationships & new media (Live Streaming, Instagram)

1.) On the note of artist collectives, I have looked to see if being on a highly sought after collective increases the growth rate. Going back to the combined growth index, the mean results show that for artists that are part of a collective the average figure is 63.7%. For artists that are not part of a collective the results are significantly lower, reaching only an average of 40.3. To back up this distinction, 25 artists in the top 30 were part of a collective (83%). In the bottom 20%, 9 out of 30 (70%) have not enjoyed this luxury of being on a roster. All these stats

together corroborate that Artist Collectives are an underlying driver of success. There is indeed a powerful movement and strategy in working together under a collective umbrella. The 'power in numbers' philosophy is definitely paying off based on this 6-month trend.

2.) Regarding Like-gating and if it's also a possible underlying driver of success, a similar test was completed. For those artists that used like-gating, the average growth level on the index was 88.2%. For artists that did not used like-gating, the average was 38.1%. That means that artist who utilize the follow-for-free download mechanism have more than doubled the naysayers. In addition to the large disparity in averages, the Top 20% had 22 out of 30 individuals on their like-gate game (73.3%). In the bottom 20%, only 2 members used like gating – which means that almost 94% of those ranked in the last 30 failed to take advantage. This underscores that Like-Gating is a sure way to attain higher levels of growth (which is exactly what it's intended to do)

3.) To test the digital fluency of artists, another test was designed. It was to determine if being technologically savvy was also a factor that contributed to individual growth (in this case measured by the presence of instagram or not) For artists that had an instagram, the group average was 68.38%, whereas the non-instagram group average was 42.6%. Again, in the top 30 artists, 23 had instagram (a strong 76.7%). In the bottom 20%, only 6/30 or 20% had an account. Thus, being smart about your socials and knowing your audience definitely plays a role in your growth rate. Especially if you want to connect with younger audiences on instagram, snap chat, or on live streaming platforms like Twitch, Periscope, and Ustream.

Here is a summary of the Test Findings:

1.) **Artist collectives** 63.7% **(Yes)**   VS.   40.3% **(No)**
2.) **Like-gating** technology 88.2% **(Yes)**   VS.   38.1% **(No)**
3.) **Digital Fluency & Instagram**   68.38% **(Yes)**   VS   42.6% **(No)**

Thus it is concluded that they are all underlying drivers that contribute to higher growth levels (and higher % chance of inclusion in the top 20%).

Conclusion & Wrap Up

It's apparent that the winning formula for the music industry has changed since the previous decade, especially from an artist perspective. Digital and democratic influences have paved the way for independent and self-released success, an area that electronic music has had the pleasure to exploit. It has opened the doors for electronic musicians to aggregate more fans via social media, reaching more digital outlets and consumers than ever before. For example "artist collectives have been using sites like Soundcloud, Bandcamp, and social media to their advantage while spreading their message across"

(Calvano, 2015). This ability to be nimble makes the collective idea well suited for the digital arena.

Along with like-gating and the new suite of social mediums from instagram to snapchat, a certain digital fluency has become key to maneuver the electronic music cosmos. After measuring all these marketing strategies and tools for their effectiveness, it was confirmed that they led to higher levels of growth (on average). Because these three underlying currents directly influence higher growth levels (since all the averages are greater than the non-averages), it can be said that Future Bass has the potential to reach a critical state very soon.

Additionally, it's reaffirming to see that the Future Bass sound has reached all parts of the world. More importantly though, it's a good sign that it can grow exponentially in each of these areas, as the cases of extreme growth (>200%) reinforce. To chronicle its history over the last half year, Future Bass has become a global movement, with creative hubs trending all over the world – allowing for organic and viral growth. All the artist-centric data collected and conveyed in the results bolster this claim, remember San Holo and Oshi?

Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the movement is that artist are embracing the DIY approach. They are bypassing the middle-men and connecting directly with their audience. Whether this is through like-gating, engaging on Instagram, or using the marketing engine of a group – they are all creative solutions to releasing music. In an Interview on Huffington Post Live, key panelists shared that it's really positive to see "that new blood is pumping into the music industry and it isn't going the traditional route. More young talent is choosing to form a collective rather than join a mainstream label. This allows them to "cultivate a fan base without a label's backing." (Huffpost Live 2015).

A common thread in all of these tactics is the DIY (Do-It-Yourself) nature that seemingly fits very well with the plight of an independent electronic musician. The same goes for those nimble digital labels, collectives and media start-ups, where these DIY strategies can be harnessed relatively cost-effectively – while still yielding solid growth and activity. Soulection's Director of Global Communications Jacqueline Schneider acknowledges this, adding that "Having a collective increases visibility for the individuals within it and reinforces a message as a group. With this Swiss Army Knife mentality and structure, the ability to create change on a global scale can increase exponentially."

It's because of these new trends, which are very unique to the Future Bass ecosystem, that the evolving Genre has made important strides in this 6-month term. My concluding remark is that Future Bass has leveled up, and has left phase 1 of the early adopters, and is entering phase 2, the early majority. Soon, it will have completed its full metamorphosis into the mainstream. Today however, it still holds on to some of its underground roots.

Limitations

Although the research process conveyed some fruitful results, there is definitely room for improvement in the research design. The first aspect to consider is the fact that the Data has been recorded only for a period of 6 months, which does not reflect the growth of every artist equally (especially small-profile, underground producers). A longer period of at least 1 year would be more appropriate.

Another issue is that only 6 regions were selected for this study, which means there were other viable producers that were omitted from the data set. Moreover, the artist selection process and criteria can be more rigid, eradicating some of the bias stemming from my own personal music tastes. Latecomers and significant outliers to the data also need to be addressed, as some key players emerged during the logging of data after the initial December interval.

I also feel that I am missing a good chunk of data as my calculations and analysis revolves largely around social media numbers. It lacks sufficient data about downloads, hard sales data, and doesn't incorporate the offline world / prominence in live sector. Unfortunately, much of this data is often private and very difficult to find, and although Next Big Sound has extra layers of data, they are not available to all artists.

The final issue is that there is no other genre for a comparison or benchmarking purposes. Most of the data is internally about Future Bass, which makes it tricky to comment on external factors and compare it to other movements. I also lacked the resources to conduct a statistical analysis for testing the root causes of growth (artist collectives, like-gating, and new media fluency). I could not get access to SPSS software to calculate correlation and regression, and thus was limited to only calculating averages & percentages.

Further Research

To address these framework issues in the design, there are a few Future recommendations I would make. I stated that examining another genre simultaneously would create a data set too large to properly synthesize – however, this might have to be overturned to give some kind of benchmark / reference value to the Future Bass growth numbers. Conducting a side-study with a small sample of another genre can alleviate this design flaw. I would consider picking another sub-genre and a sample size of maybe 40 - 50 artists. I would repeat a similar methodology measuring the 5 data sources, maybe with different countries, and possibly with alternative variables. The end result would give me another axis to compare Future Bass's evolution to, rather than talking internally about the progression from a narrow perspective of only 1 genre.

As mentioned prior, the elapsed period of 6 months is too short to flawlessly portray the artistic trajectories coming from all sides and spectrums. A longer period of time is needed to more adequately capture the evolution of this Genre, and stabilize the artist-centric data points. Thus, I will extend the current database from June all the way to December 2015, maintaining a similar recording process as stated in the methodology. This will in turn result in 1 full year's worth of data about all the key players in the scene, which will likely prove more comprehensive than a short 6-month investigation.

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