

Proposal to Arts Vic - Strategic Music Industry Partnerships Fund
to support Digital Pill website in 09/10

While this written proposal aims to explain the plans, audience and processes of the Digital Pill website, it is strongly urged that the panel look at the website in detail - www.digitalpill.tv

By its very nature, Digital Pill is a new form of communication for musicians and their audiences and is best explored in the interactive way that the web works, rather than several pages of text.

In the same way, it was thought best to set up a fully working pilot version of the site and watch the growth of its audience over several months to enable potential backers to easily grasp the model for publicity, that Digital Pill represents. The attached statistics chart the growth of the audience over several months.

Assistance is being sought from this specific fund - Strategic Music Industry Partnerships - at the suggestion of Jonathan Williamson.

THE MODEL

Digital Pill is a website about working professional Melbourne musicians - the people who gig regularly and have a strong creative practice and a long standing career - releasing albums, doing shows and promoting their own work.

The site is not just for one band, it is a site for the whole Melbourne music scene. In this way, it is best thought of as seeking funding for a whole new media outlet devoted to the arts practice and lives of these musicians. We have print, radio, television and now video presentation on the web as forms of media.

Each Digital Pill episode is a brief video presentation by a Melbourne musician sharing ideas, a performance, lessons or proposing ways for the "scene" to move forward creatively. These videos are posted on youtube and then embedded in the site digitalpill.tv for broadcast.

You can think of it as a video podcast/blog about Melbourne music as related by the musicians themselves. The site enables people to subscribe, thereby

receiving an automated email every time a new episode is posted. Subscribers can also comment on the videos, make requests and generally interact.

Can't users subscribe and comment on the videos on youtube, why build a separate site and embed youtube clips in that?

Youtube doesn't currently allow links from individual videos. Part of the attraction for the musicians who post on Digital Pill is that they can post any number of links and files to their work on the site. You will notice when you look at any of the music lessons on the site that there is the offer of free sheet music of the lesson. If they are viewing the site on youtube, this drives traffic to digitalpill.tv. Indeed, youtube views are already driving a lot of traffic to Digital Pill. Once there, people are downloading the free sheet music and they are clicking on the musician's links. (see stats in the accompanying support material)

THE TEAM - BIOS AND THEIR ROLES IN DIGITAL PILL

Leo Dale - <http://www.leodale.com/>

Executive Producer, musician liaison, videographer,

Leo is in touch with many musicians across all genres through his job as co-programmer of the Quiet Music Festival and also through his work over decades in the genres of jazz, dance, rock and folk. He is also a trained camera operator and worked for three and a half years filming horse races for the stewards at every Melbourne metropolitan race meeting.

Leo's role is to source interested musicians to appear in each episode/post of Digital Pill. He explains how to write a video script and coaches them on appearing in front of the camera. Leo also shoots the video at his studio in West Footscray and does the work editing the footage, posting the result on youtube and embedding the clip on the Digital Pill website.

Phil Greenwood - <http://bigtrousers.com.au/>

Website developer, blog software consultant, internet marketing researcher, image / lighting and set design consultant.

Phil has been involved with Digital Pill from the start, helping to form the ideas that make the site work. He has extensive experience as a podcaster having set up and run the show photogeek.tv on a weekly basis over the last two years. He lives in the same suburb as Leo and they hatched the idea for Digital Pill after filming some segments for photogeek. He also runs marketinggeek.tv a podcast for those interested in online technology as it relates to marketing.

Phil's role is as consultant on the software 'Wordpress' used to run the Digital Pill site. He specifically manages the website database. He works as a professional photographer and gives advice on lighting, image, clothing and presentation to Digital Pill.

Kim Lynch - <http://www.thereef.com.au/>

Illustrator, website developer, graphic artist.

Kim Lynch is also a member of the creative ideas team behind Digital Pill. He is a very experienced website developer having created scores of sites for major corporations, government bodies and various creative enterprises since the inception of the web in 94. He also has an inherent understanding of musicians from his former career in the sixties in the influential bands the Red Onions and the Loved Ones.

Kim's role on Digital Pill is as illustrator and graphic artist. He is responsible for the overall look and feel of the site. He also offers general advice on internet marketing.

THE PROCESS

The process of building upon Digital Pill begins with finding interested musicians who have something they are passionate to convey about their world. As the pilot version has grown, more musicians have been able to see that it is based on a web 2.0 idea - *give away your greatest secret and everyone on the site benefits from web traffic and associated links traffic*. In this way there is now a long list of people who want to be involved.

The subject of each episode then has to write their own script. They are helped through this process by Leo and eventually coached by him how to appear their best on camera. A date for filming is arranged. The shoot takes 45-90 minutes. The episode is then edited and posted on youtube and embedded in the Digital Pill website.

Musicians interested in posting an episode in 09/10 include
Kavisha Mazella - folk music songstress and master songwriter
Ray Pereira - master Sri Lankan percussionist
Peter Knight - cool jazz trumpet specialist
Nicola Eveleigh - vocalist in Coco's lunch
Tony Hicks - saxophonist with Art Orchestra
Arch Larizza - bass player with the Saints
Karen Kyriakou - violinist from Kaz Band

Mal Webb - Vocal gymnast, multi instrumentalist and singer songwriter
Valanga Khoza - Sth African singer songwriter and instrumentalist
Amy Valent-Curlis - percussionist, marimba specialist

THE STRATEGY

Digital Pill has a well designed strategy for the site. The first phase has been to build a running pilot version of the site to generate initial traffic and statistics as a proof of the concept for anyone who might want to back the project. Currently backing is being sought to develop the site and to double the number of video posts from one per month to twenty in the 09/10 financial year. During this period the site graphics will get a makeover. It is also proposed that into the 09/10 year sponsorship will be sought from Music Festivals and businesses for the further development of the site, looking forward. In early 2010 the site will be launched with publicity in the mainstream press. Specifically it is proposed that some challenges to the print press will be presented with the site running weekly statistics on the percentages of local versus overseas content in their music lift-outs. Other avenues will also be explored to monetize the site with targeted web based ads.

THE OUTCOMES

Digital Pill is drawing worldwide attention to the incredible Melbourne music scene with 38,800 video views on youtube (see stats) in a short amount of time with absolutely no promotion. This figure is currently increasing at 300-400 views per day. It has won awards on youtube including rating in the top 20 Australian music channels (see stats). Every musician who is involved benefits every other musician who is involved. They generate traffic for each other in a co-operative rather than competitive environment. This way the better known help generate traffic for the up and coming and the up and coming generate a new audience for the well known. People find the videos on youtube and are drawn to the Digital Pill website where they in turn following the links to buy product. The artists who appear on the site can embed the videos in their own site as can any of their fans, with each video pointing the way back to Digital Pill. This process of embedding Digital Pill episodes is already happening all around the world. This process will have a multiplying effect over time, to promote the world of music, that emanates from Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

THE TIMELINE

(08/09 Pilot phase - pre grant - set up completed)

July 2009 - June 2010 increase the number of video posts to 20 episodes

July 09 to December 09 - Site graphics makeover, broaden the scope of topics covered from lessons to ideas and small performance, seek sponsorship for 10/11.

January 2010 to June 2010 - Explore opportunities to monetize the site, launch the site in and challenge the mainstream press.

THE PROJECT'S UNIQUENESS

Digital Pill is a website not just devoted to one band but to the whole Melbourne music scene. It is a site not just full of stories told by publicists, journalists, commentators, DJs or TV presenters but the musicians themselves telling the story of their own lives, creative processes and plans, via video, direct to camera - served on the web. All of the video is served up by youtube and so does not require a dedicated server for Digital Pill with the associated costs and bandwidth issues.

MEASURING THE PROJECTS SUCCESS

Ultimately the success of this project is measured by the interest it generates. This is directly quantifiable by the amount of traffic the site receives, whether people follow the associated links and how much comment it generates. (see support material). Ultimately its success is also defined by whether or not it is able to cross over into mainstream awareness. By these measures Digital Pill is already enjoying success in its current pilot form, it now needs the assistance to bring this initiative forward and cross over into the mainstream.

LeoDale's management skills

The applicant Leo Dale has a long history of well managed and successful creative projects spanning decades. Currently these include his soon to be released album with Ray Pereira and Doug DeVries, Co-programmer Quiet Music Festival, touring in Jan 09 with the SAINTS horn section, several album projects in his studio and playing in scores of bands.

From the ABOUT page on the website

In my town (Melbourne, Australia) the major daily newspapers put out an entertainment lift-out once a week. They are always full of the latest music genius from somewhere else. Then 6 months later, I don't hear anything else about them. Or, if I am still hearing about them, it's often about their drug habit, their relationship breakdown, their weight gain / weight loss, or their underwear line. Where is music in all this ?

The press don't write about working musicians - the people I know - my colleagues, the musos - except to reprint the stuff in the press releases we send them, a trick we learned from the major labels. Its such a tired old model.

The musicians on Digital Pill are not waiting to be discovered - they have discovered themselves and go about doing their job of telling people what they have discovered through their music. Digital Pill is about these musicians; its about their music and about the stories of their lives because, call me crazy, but I reckon that YOU may just want to know about THEM and what they are up to.

You'll notice that with each post there are a set of links - the musicians website, their work on iTunes, CDs or perhaps the music lesson they are giving in PDF format. Go and check these people out and listen to the incredible music they make.

www.digitalpill.tv