



A PEEP INTO THE CHALLENGES BARRING THE GROWTH OF DIGITAL MUSIC IN NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, the digital revolution in the music industry has reshaped how music is created, shared, and enjoyed. This transformation has brought about both opportunities and challenges. Platforms like Spotify, YouTube Music, Apple Music, and local services such as Boomplay are revolutionizing music discovery and consumption in the nation. For example, Burna Boy's fifth studio album, "Twice as Tall," garnered over 5 million streams in less than an hour after its release on various streaming services, including Spotify, YouTube, SoundCloud, Amazon Music, Tidal, Pandora, iTunes Store, and Deezer. This signifies a significant increase in revenue generation, propelling Nigerian music to new heights within the digital music landscape. The significant economic impact of digital music in

Nigeria is evident, with Statista projecting a revenue of US\$122.10 million from the digital music market in 2024. However, alongside this growth come obstacles that hinder the industry's progress. Issues such as copyright infringement, stream farming, monetization complexities, cybersecurity risks, and inadequate digital infrastructure are increasingly prevalent, posing challenges to the industry's expansion. This article explores these challenges hindering Nigeria's digital music landscape and offers potential solutions to promote further growth in the digital sphere.

OVERVIEW OF THE DIGITAL GROWTH OF MUSIC IN NIGERIA AND THE IMPACTS OF DIGITAL MUSIC

The digital revolution has opened up new opportunities for Nigerian music. Streaming services, social media, and online stores have propelled Nigerian music onto the global stage, benefiting both artists and fans. These digital platforms have had positive impacts on the Nigerian music industry, including.

1. Global Reach and Unprecedented Accessibility

In this digital era, Nigerian artists are reaching a global audience like never before. For example, Rema's "Calm Down" gathered over a billion streams on Spotify, demonstrating the immense global reach of Nigerian music. International collaborations are flourishing, solidifying Nigeria's influence in the music industry.

2. Empowering Independent Artists in the Nigerian Music Industry:

The emergence of digital platforms has

transformed the Nigerian music industry, giving independent artists more autonomy and opportunities to release their music directly to their audience. Platforms like DistroKid, Fresible Music, Dapper Music, Boomkit, TuneCore, LANDR, CD Baby, and others have empowered Nigerian artists.

3. Bolstered Economic Growth and Investments:

The rise of digital music in Nigeria has led to significant economic growth and investment opportunities, making the country an attractive destination for streaming companies. Spotify's launch of a dedicated Afrobeats website in 2023 highlights the exponential growth of Afrobeats streams, which surged from 2 billion in 2017 to 13.5 billion in 2022. The digital music market in Nigeria is projected to generate revenue of US\$122.10 million in 2024.

ISSUES CHALLENGING THE DIGITAL GROWTH OF MUSIC IN NIGERIA

The digital revolution has ignited a vibrant new chapter for Nigerian music, but several hurdles threaten to stall its progress.

A. Infrastructure Challenges

Fueled by the digital revolution, Nigeria's music industry is experiencing growth in

popularity and market domination. However, one of the most significant challenges lies in the realm of infrastructure. This is explored below:

i. Limited Access to High-Speed Internet:

The widespread availability of high-speed Internet is crucial for music consumption and distribution. Unfortunately, many Nigerians lack reliable and affordable internet access, especially in rural areas. This digital divide limits music streaming for fans and presents challenges for artists trying to reach a wider audience.

ii. Inadequate Digital Payment Systems:

Inadequate digital payment systems and government restrictions on international transfers pose significant challenges in Nigeria's music industry, limiting access to global streaming services and hindering music purchases from international platforms. Recent collaborations, like MTN and Apple Music charging subscription fees from users' airtime balances, offer hope for a more accessible music landscape in Nigeria.

B. Copyright and Piracy Issues

The digital revolution has unlocked a wealth of opportunities for Nigerian music, yet a pressing challenge remains copyright infringement and widespread piracy.

i. Copyright Infringement due to Ignorance of Existing Laws

The issue of copyright infringement in Nigeria is a major concern for the music industry. Copyright infringement in Nigeria persists partly due to a lack of awareness of the laws, which aim to protect authors' rights and ensure fair recognition and rewards for their work.¹ Lawsuits, such as Ewa Cole's case against filmmaker Funke Akindele highlight the need for creators to be compensated for the use of their work.

The Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) advises businesses to obtain licenses from Collective Management Organizations (CMOs) to ensure that creators receive royalties.

ii. Piracy Infringement as a Result of Digital Streaming Platforms

The issue of copyright infringement and piracy in digital music is still prevalent due to illegal uploading and downloading from websites.² The Copyright Act 2022 ("Act") provides provisions to combat these infringements and criminalize and provide necessary punishment.³ The Act also address these issues and allows copyright holders to issue takedown notices to websites hosting infringing content.⁴ Artists and record labels should utilize these provisions to prevent illegal online uploads and downloads of copyrighted music.

C. Stream Farming and Monetization Issues

Stream farming and monetization issues are significant obstacles to Nigeria's digital music industry. Stream farming, exemplified by practices such as bot-driven streaming, distorts streaming data and undermines artist credibility. Monetization hurdles, including convoluted royalty structures and opaque payout mechanisms, leave artists uncertain about their earnings and rights. Addressing these challenges requires regulatory frameworks, transparent monetization processes, artist education, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders and digital platforms to ensure fair practices and sustainable growth.

¹ Section 1 of the Copyright Act 2022.

² websites like www.waploaded.com and www.naijasound.com are still in operation and host illegal uploads and allow for illegal downloading of copyrighted music works.

³ 44 of the Act

⁴ 48-52 of the Act

D. Collective Management Organisation and Non-Functional Royalty Collections:

CMOs⁵ play a crucial role in copyright protection by representing copyright owners, negotiating and granting licenses, and collecting and distributing royalties. In Nigeria, CMOs face challenges in the digital era, such as ineffective royalty collection and lagging technology deployment. The NCC issued directives to address these issues, but challenges persist, including limitations on the number of approved CMOs per genre of copyrighted work.

E. Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity concerns are a major obstacle to the digital advancement of music in Nigeria. The industry's reliance on digital platforms has made it vulnerable to piracy, data breaches, and hacking. To address these issues, stakeholders need to prioritize cybersecurity initiatives, such as implementing encryption technologies, conducting regular security audits, and launching user education campaigns. Collaborative efforts among artists, digital platforms, regulatory bodies, and cybersecurity experts are crucial to mitigate these risks and ensure the continued evolution of Nigeria's digital music ecosystem.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DIGITAL MUSIC PROTECTION AND GROWTH IN NIGERIA

To navigate the challenges hindering the digital growth of music in Nigeria, the following recommendations are instructive:

A. Strengthen Collective Management Organizations:

To enhance the functionality and accountability of CMOs in Nigeria, the regulatory framework should be reformed. Collaboration and transparency among CMOs must be encouraged to improve royalty collection, distribution, and technology deployment. Also, measures should be introduced to ensure that CMOs effectively represent the interests of all

stakeholders.

B. Invest in Digital Infrastructure:

Investing in digital infrastructure is crucial for advancing the accessibility and affordability of digital music services, especially in rural areas. To achieve this, the Government and Stakeholders should prioritize developing high-speed internet in rural areas, foster partnerships between the government, telecom companies, and private sector stakeholders, and encourage the adoption of digital payment systems for online music purchases and royalty transactions.

⁵ 88(7) of the Act

C. Combat Copyright Infringement and Piracy:

To combat copyright infringement and piracy, it's important to strengthen enforcement mechanisms like the courts and law enforcement agencies. Enhanced collaboration between law enforcement, internet service providers, and digital platforms is essential. Public awareness campaigns to educate consumers about the negative impacts of piracy are also crucial.

D. Adopt Technology Solutions:

Encouraging the adoption of DRM technologies is essential to protect copyrighted music. Investing in content identification systems and anti-piracy tools will help detect and mitigate unauthorized distribution. Supporting research and innovation in cybersecurity is crucial for safeguarding digital music platforms.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria's digital music industry has significant growth potential, but it faces challenges such as infrastructure limitations, copyright infringement, and cybersecurity concerns. By improving digital infrastructure, strengthening copyright protection, addressing

monetization complexities, and enhancing cybersecurity measures, Nigeria can unlock the full potential of its music industry.



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