

ABSTRACT for AEME Forum 2022 (for Growth & Innovation sub theme)

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Gatekeeper perceptions on adopting environmentally sound Information and Communication Technology enhanced live performances to improve the sustainability of music festivals

This paper considers perceptions of sustainability, ICT enhanced performances, authenticity, COVID-19 and performance futures in relation to digital content for use on-site and off-site at music festivals/events. It responds to the UN Sustainable Development Goal 9 - Industries, Innovation & Infrastructure. The research analyses existing literature to inform a dialogue music festival organisers, consultants and performers. It addresses the thesis that: **Industry gatekeepers' opinions on the authenticity of environmentally sound ICT generated live content will influence it's adoption at music festivals.**

Primary research was carried out using purposive sampling of 50 live music industry professionals to collect and interpret expert empirical evidence through informed narrative. Using a mixed methods approach, respondents completed a structured e-mail questionnaire comprising closed questions, a five-point Likert scale and additional qualitative open questions.

Predominantly positive quantitative responses relating to the live music industry's role in advocating sustainability contrasted with negative responses to virtual festivals. Responses adopting and rejecting environmentally sound ICT for live content were evident in qualitative results, with significant proportions of undecided or uncertain respondents. The prevalence of postponement and rejection responses around authenticity may prevent adoption at some music festivals.

The 'snapshot' of digital aspects of sustainability at music festivals within this research is of particular value due to the paucity of research in this area, rapid change in virtual music festival provision prompted by COVID-19 and its narrative from varied industry professionals. The paper makes recommendations to artists, music festival organisers, consultants, academics and public funders; to attempt to advance sustainability.