

When Hits Hurt: Cross-Artist Spillovers and the Attention Economy in Streaming Music

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Abstract

We investigate how streaming platforms reshape information spillovers in the recorded music industry. Using U.S. daily streaming data (2015–2024) and thousands of quasi-experiments generated by new Billboard 200 album debuts, we estimate how such these releases affect demand for stylistically similar artists. A stacked difference-in-differences model at the song–day level compares pre- and post-release streams for artists linked by playlist co-occurrence. We find that new albums reduce daily streams of similar artists by about .2%, and by roughly 1% for chart-topping releases or when artists are highly similar. Spillovers are weaker for lower-ranked albums, less similar artists, and songs with higher pre-release streams. Overall, the results indicate that spillovers are shaped by the attention economy: new releases primarily divert attention rather than expand total listening.

Track: Methods, Modelling & Marketing Analytics