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NETAUDIO: Utopian Activism in Intellectual Rights Management

This paper will present a discursive analysis of the cultural politics of the *Netaudio* movement, a decentralized network of digital music producers who produce music for free online distribution, via *net labels*. The movement is connected through international websites and online discussion groups forums, as well as yearly Netaudio conference/festivals that enable the movement to bond. Since the music is freely distributed, the Netaudio movement presents a grey area in rights management. The experiences of music producers and labels within the Netaudio movement thereby manifest contrasting discourses regarding intellectual property and shared culture. The analysis of such discourses will contribute fresh insights to the current debate on digital music distribution (Hesmondhalgh, 2009; McLeod, 2007). The palpable creative and intellectual output generated by the expanding Netaudio network demonstrates that their quest for a shared music culture deserves to be heard and debated.