Digital Music Observatory
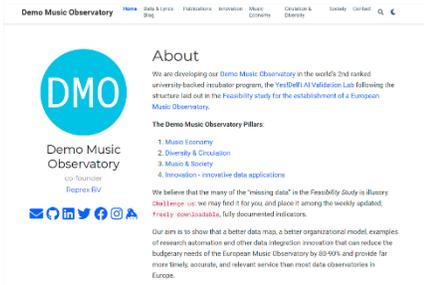

Our flagship product is the Digital Music Observatory, which grew out of the 12-country CEEMID project originally started with collective management organizations. It is a practical, decentralized, open-source, open data solution that follows the data and functional requirements of *the Feasibility Study on the European Music Observatory*. It has the additional feature that it can perform tasks on non-public data in innovative ways; for example, for private copying damage, royalty tariff setting, and regulatory impact assessment.

How does it differ from the European Audiovisual Observatory?

- It is a private initiative, and its focus has been to fulfil the business needs and research needs of its partners, not to produce only publicly available or buyable data.
- Instead of buying market research data, it mainly aims at pooling, reusing existing industry data, and reusing open governmental and open scientific data.
- It is decentralized, like most of the 80 observatories we have reviewed, but unlike the one suggested by consultants of the European Commission.
- It uses modern statistical production techniques and data science: it has a modern API which makes data available with higher documentation standards, sooner and in higher quality than most observatories.

Is this an alternative to the European Music Observatory?

Our Digital Music Observatory has been operational for over a year now, while the European Music Observatory is a highly abstract plan only, without clear data governance, service plan or budget. While the Feasibility Study on an EU-recognized music observatory mainly draws conclusions on the analogy with the audiovisual sector's observatory (which is by far the oldest, costliest, and most complicated to replicate), we are validating a more inclusive and decentralized working model that draws on experience with about 80 EU, OECD, and UNESCO recognized observatories, including failed, defunct ones.

We envision our observatory as a solid building block of the future European Music Observatory. Our chosen working method, the agile 'open collaboration method', draws inspiration from open knowledge projects and open-source software development, allowing alignment with any governance and organizational solutions we found during our review of existing, officially recognized observatories. In addition to the suggestions of the "Feasibility Study", we are also complying with the requirements to include academic organizations into the building of our observatory, and rely on the latest achievements of scientific research, and the reuse of open science data sources.

Check out our website, the authoritative copies of our open data on CERN's Zenodo open repository, and our experimental API that we develop further based on the feedback of our users.

Use cases
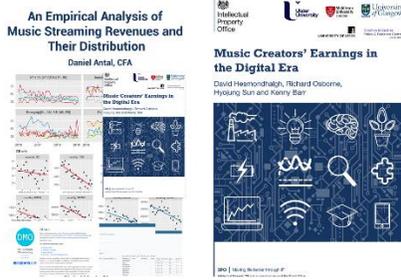
Music Creators' Earnings' Project in the Digital Era: We teamed up with the four-university consortium working for the UK Intellectual Property Office to provide new evidence on the changing economics of streaming as well as placing the Consortium's data on a historic and international perspective. Our main contribution was a novel streaming price and volume index which showed the economic factors contributing to the devaluations of music streaming in the United Kingdom and 19 other European markets. (See the report.)

Trustwothy AI: With the support of the Slovak Arts Council, we worked with the Slovak Performing & Mechanical Rights Socitety (SOZA) to understand the reasons that hinder Slovak music from being recommended and played in streaming platforms and radio broadcasting. One of our objectives was to show the ways in which music curation and recommendation differ in radio and broadcasting. This started our research with other partners into trustworthy AI, with special regard to upholding child protection and cultural and media policy goals. (See Feasibility Study on Promoting Slovak Music in Slovakia & Abroad.)

Music Industry Reports: We have created national music industry reports in Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, and Czechia to engage the governments and industry players in a constructive dialogue. These book-form research reports include evidence-based policy advocacy using our data and valuation, projection, and other econometric models. In Hungary, we highlighted the importance of taxation; in Slovakia, the problems of autonomous recommendation systems and taxation; and in Croatia the ever-evolving problem of private copying. (See our CEE Report.)

Music pricing projects: We assembled and augmented a range of CISAC, IFPI, and internal collective management data with open and alternative data sources, building hedonic pricing, market comparator, and discounted cash flow models, among others, in order to value music in restaurants, hotels, broadcasting or in private copying. We integrated data from nationally representative surveys that we designed with the technical guidelines of the ESSNet-Europe.

Do you already have the data? We add value to existing industry or public data with curation, high-quality metadata documentation and increasing the usability of the information content. Get in touch via Daniel Antal, CFA on LinkedIn or Andrés García Molina, PhD on LinkedIn or via the Reprex contact form.