DJing AS SERIOUS LEISURE AND A HIGHER THING; CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INFORMATION BEHAVIOUR OF CREATVE DJs

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Introduction

This article will seek to illuminate the world of DJing from the perspective of an information behaviour study, an activity underrepresented in this field, by studying its relationship to two key concepts from information science; *serious leisure* (Stebbins, 2009) and *higher things* (Kari and Hartel, 2007).

Our qualitative fieldwork investigates the information behaviour characteristics associated with DJing, and seeks to situate the activity within the concepts of *serious leisure* and *higher things*. Results are based on twelve semi-structured online interviews with practising creative DJs in Scotland, UK which leads to a definition of DJs as an occupational devotee within the concept of *serious leisure* and identifies examples of the joy and profundity of the activity, indicative of it being a *higher thing*.

Literature Review

We first present a brief background to DJing as a creative and cultural practice. We then highlight the concepts of *serious leisure* and *higher things*, with suitable links to music and the activity of DJing.

A brief overview of the DJ

One of the earliest instances of what can be considered DJing was an experiment in 1906 to transmit radio waves between the United States and Scotland by playing a musical recording of Handel's "*Xerses",* conducted by Reginald A Fessenden, a colleague of Thomas Edison (Brewster and Broughton, 2014). The term DJ, an abbreviation of the term 'disc jockey', is used to describe someone who selects music for other people to listen to, and was first coined in the 1940s in relation to radio broadcasters. Throughout the 1950s the concept of a DJ playing

This is a peer reviewed, accepted author manuscript of the following in-press research article: Munro, K., Ruthven, I., & Innocenti, P. (Accepted/In press – April 2022). DJing as serious leisure and a higher thing; characteristics of the information behaviour of creative DJs. *BRIO*.

records to a live audience caught on and over time encompassed myriad new styles of music, techniques, formats and changes in nightlife culture to become a popular musical activity with the potential to forge a career in (Broughton and Brewster, 2006, Ferreira, 2017).

The creative DJ

While DJing at a basic level is just selecting music for others to listen to, there are a number of ways in which it can demonstrate creativity (Brewster and Broughton, 2014). A DJ can choose from a vast catalogue of recorded music and from this they will blend a selection of music together to create a performance for the enjoyment of others. Where this becomes a creative act lies in the lengths to which DJs will go to find new or relatively unknown music, their technical skills in mixing music together, as well as an innate understanding of the audience they are playing to and the space it is played in. This can involve utilising the emotional resonance of music, the physical frequencies of music, using judgment in selecting music at the right time and an unspoken form of communication with their audience. When all these processes and attributes align, the DJ is capable of creating moments of profound joy.

Instances of creative DJing

Many early examples of creative DJing originate from Jamaica, where the development of Reggae music took place (Bradley, 2001, Brewster and Broughton, 2014). The earliest roots of Reggae are found in the establishment of sound systems by DJs, known colloquially as selectors. Selectors would grow the reputation and popularity of their sound systems by playing music exclusive to them, initially rare imported American records. Once this resource was exhausted, DJs created their own music to meet the need for exclusivity. From this, sound system operators, such as King Tubby, began making their own unique versions of popular songs, breaking down songs to their constituent elements and reassembling them in a way designed to receive a positive reaction from a crowd. This is the earliest form of what became known as remixing, a repurposing of an existing piece of music to meet the needs of a DJ and their audience.

Another instance of the creative DJ was the genesis of Hip Hop (Brewster and Broughton, 2014, Katz, 2012). Pioneered in New York, the earliest roots of Hip Hop came from a DJ called Kool Herc, originally from Jamaica, who operated a sound system similar to those from the

island. He observed that the audience responded enthusiastically to certain portions of records, when it would break down to a simple percussive refrain. From this, he learned to repeat these passages, or '*breaks*', by using two copies of the same record, lining up the start of the break on one record to begin as soon as it ended on the other. This technique generated such a powerful response from dancers that it was rapidly adopted by other DJs in the city and led to other techniques commonly associated with DJing such as scratching, pioneered by Grand Wizard Theodore. Other Hip Hop DJs, such as Afrika Bambaata and Grandmaster Flash, would gain popularity not just for their technical ability, but their ability to find pieces of music containing 'breaks' that were exclusive to them. This element of competition is a mirror to the sound systems in Jamaica. Another area of similarity is that in New York an MC, an abbreviation of master of ceremonies and someone who speaks or sings rhyming lyrics, would rap through a microphone over the top of the music, similar to the 'toasting' of Deejays, the Jamaican term for someone singing or speaking over the music (Bradley, 2001, Brewster and Broughton, 2014). This combination of rapping over a DJs' music was pivotal to the development of Hip Hop as a musical form (Brewster and Broughton, 2014, Katz, 2012).

Another example of creative DJing is the technique of mixing music associated with Francis Grosso called beat-matching (Brewster and Broughton, 2014, Brewster and Broughton, 2012, Jones and Kantonen, 2011). This involved the DJ cueing up the next record to be in time with the music already being played, thus allowing for a seamless transition from one song to the next, allowing the audience to keep dancing without interruption. This form of mixing soon became commonplace alongside the rise of Disco music in New York in the 70s and would become a staple technique in styles of dance music grounded in Disco such as; Garage, House and Techno (Brewster and Broughton, 2014, Reynolds, 2013). In doing so, a DJ can stitch together a wide variety of genres, moods and styles to create a unique performance. As in Jamaica, DJs remixing records for their needs became commonplace amongst Disco DJs and beyond.

The DJ's role in wider culture

DJs have played a role in broader cultural movements, for example, Jamaican sound system culture was imported to the UK via the Windrush generation and helped birth a vast array of DJ driven musical genres including; Bluebeat, Ska, Lover's Rock, Rave, Jungle, Drum & Bass, UK Garage, Grime and Dubstep (Bradley, 2013, Brewster and Broughton, 2014, Reynolds,

2013). These have all had a significant impact on popular music culture in the UK. Similarly, the importing of Jamaican DJ culture to New York led to Hip Hop becoming one of the predominant forms of popular music worldwide. Coincidentally, Francis Grosso, early pioneer of beat-matching, happened to be DJing around the corner from the Stonewall Inn on the night that a police raid instigated protests from an oppressed gay community in New York (Brewster and Broughton, 2014). The increased social freedoms that stemmed from this event were central to the eruption in energy at nightclubs in the city, attended predominantly by the Black and Latino gay community and soundtracked by DJs playing a wide range of music genres (Lawrence, 2004). Much of this energy from the era of Disco flowed into the genesis of Garage, House and Techno genres, again with DJs playing a pivotal role in popularising the music (Brewster and Broughton, 2014, Jones and Kantonen, 2011, Lawrence, 2004). From this, the DJ driven UK Acid House and Rave movements flourished in the late 1980's and early 1990's (Brewster and Broughton, 2014, Bussman, 1998, Collin, 2010, Reynolds, 2013).

The concept of *serious leisure*

A key concept identified to frame the information behaviour of DJs is that of *serious leisure* (Stebbins, 1982). *Serious leisure* is the theory that people pursuing a hobby, amateur or volunteering activity embark on a non-work related career to acquire expertise, comprehension and experience in that field. The concept was initially developed from research on traditional working patterns (Bosserman and Gagan, 1972) and people seeking to define themselves outside of their work (Lefkowitz, 1979, Yankelovich, 1979). Stebbins initially sought to differentiate *serious leisure* activities from casual leisure activities by positing that those engaging in *serious leisure* do so in a way that is the opposite of passively participating in casual leisure (Stebbins, 1982).

The *serious leisure* perspective has been used to guide studies into a wide range of different activities from an information science including gamers using the streaming platform Twitch, gourmet cooking, fanfiction writing, rubber duck collectors and historical re-enactors (Bingham, 2017, Hartel, 2006, Hill and Jen, 2017, Lee and Trace, 2009, Robinson and Yerbury, 2015).

Amateur versus Professional

Stebbins developed his concept by looking at the relationship between an amateur and a professional (Stebbins, 1992). Stebbins posited that there can be a complex interrelationship between the two, that amateurs can mirror the role that professionals play in creative pursuits, with amateurs and professionals often performing together in such fields. This can be observed amongst DJs, being both professional and amateur, from a DJ learning in their bedroom, to a wedding DJ or renowned club DJ (Brewster and Broughton, 2014, Ferreira, 2017, Zemon, 2003).

Serious leisure as occupational devotion

A further development of the *serious leisure* perspective was that of the occupational devotee, where the line between work and leisure is obscured (Stebbins, 2009). This devotion develops through a powerful, positive bond to the activity which rewards the participant with a sense of deep fulfilment, shared culture, a high degree of individual agency and an opportunity to channel their personality through the activity. From this, it is posited that occupational devotees can experience a degree of positivity in their lives that is profound. This can negate the less palatable portions of life and offers a chance for the marginalised to experience the pleasurable.

Serious leisure in music

Of relevance to this piece of research, is a book written by Stebbins on barbershop singers (Stebbins, 1996). While the activity itself is grounded in a different area of musical activity there are some clear areas of overlap. In the overview of the book Stebbins paints a picture of music providing an opportunity for the participant to experience an all-consuming sensation, where the mind is solely focused on the immediate act of musical activity. This state of mind is profoundly rewarding to the person performing the musical action, as is the case with occupational devotees (Stebbins, 2009).

The concept of *higher things*

A second key concept informing this research is *higher things* proposed by Jarkko Kari and Jenna Hartel (2007). They contend that much of the research undertaken in information science deals with what can be termed *lower things*; work processes, problem solving or negative areas of life. Their paper calls for a greater incorporation of *higher things* in information science research, often *serious leisure* activities, that bring humans happiness and joy. In doing so, it is posited that a more human element can be understood in the field of information behaviour, thus enriching the field beyond the more mundane, mechanical nature of everyday problem solving.

How DJing relates to *higher things*

At surface level, DJing may appear to be a simple activity associated with *lower things*, the simple act of playing recorded music. However there are a number of examples associated with DJing that demonstrate profound human experience. These include a link to ritual dance practices dating far back through human history (Brewster and Broughton, 2014), a sense of transcendent understanding amongst a crowd of dancers (St John, 2008), liberation from the constraints of moral norms on sexuality (Lawrence, 2004) and instances of deep emotional responses such as love and joy (Bussman, 1998, Collin, 2010, Reynolds, 2013). These are clear indicators that DJing as a pursuit can be characterised amongst other *higher things*, as called for by Kari and Hartel (2007).

From this review of literature, the following research questions were posed:

1. How do creative DJs relate to the concept of *serious leisure*?
2. Can DJing be considered a *higher thing*?

Research design

This was a qualitative study which utilised semi-structured interviews to gather perspectives into the information behaviour of DJs based in Scotland. Interviewees were also asked to fill out a brief demographic questionnaire regarding their age, gender and employment status. Participants were considered to be creative DJs, broadly in line with the description in the literature review, this is as opposed to more functional and transactional forms of DJing, where performances are tailored towards playing well-known music at social functions like weddings.

There are overlaps between the two forms but the element of having *carte blanche* to play wide ranging and relatively unknown music that is afforded to creative DJs is a key distinction. The first author is a practicing DJ with two decades worth of experience playing in clubs, bars, music festivals and on radio in and around Scotland. He has also run music events at which DJs play. Further to this, he has ten years' experience working in record shops, an environment frequented by DJs looking for music and equipment, as well as being a social hub for meeting other DJs. Therefore, his personal experience was used to inform the methodology and enrich the analysis from an insider perspective (Merriam et al., 2001).

Participants

Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were used in the recruitment process. Participants with broad experience of creative DJing practice were sought to provide insight on the activity. The first author had prior links to all participants, they had either played together at a music event, played at a music event run by them, met through his work in a record shop or through DJing on the radio. All participants could draw on years' worth of DJing experience in clubs and festivals either locally or internationally.

For the study, twelve participants were recruited (Table 1), all DJs based in, or had links to, Scotland, UK. Of particular relevance to the concept of *serious leisure* was the breakdown of participants' employment characteristics. DJing was the main source of employment for four participants. Eight participants had another job as their main source of employment, and although some of these were non-music related, all described how their career choices were based on allowing space for DJing.

Table 1: Participant demographics

ID	Age	Gender	Creative DJing as main source of employment	Main source of employment if not DJing
Participant 1	26-35	Male	No	Illustrator
Participant 2	36-45	Male	No	Music Retailer
Participant 3	36-45	Male	No	Parliamentary Reporter
Participant 4	18-25	Male	No	Restaurateur
Participant 5	36-45	Male	Yes	-
Participant 6	26-35	Male	Yes	-
Participant 7	26-35	Female	No	Hospitality staff
Participant 8	26-35	Male	No	Architect
Participant 9	36-45	Female	No	Massage therapist
Participant 10	26-35	Male	Yes	-
Participant 11	36-45	Male	No	Laboratory manager
Participant 12	18-25	Female	Yes	-

Data collection and analysis

The interviews, using semi-structured questions, were conducted online in July 2020 using video calling applications. The interview questions were designed to explore key concepts set

out in the review of literature, specifically *serious leisure* and *higher things*. They were also partly informed by the first author's personal experience of the activity. Eleven questions were asked on the relationship between DJing and other careers, how they prepare for a performance, how they seek music, how they evaluate performance, barriers faced in DJing, and how they communicate with the audience whilst performing. Approval was sought from the Departmental Ethics Committee, in compliance with best practice for any research involving human participants.

Online transcription software, in this case Otter AI, was used to process the data and generate transcripts. An iterative process of thematic analysis, in line with the methods detailed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019), was applied to the data by the first author, then critiqued by other authors. The themes of *serious leisure* (Stebbins, 2009) and *higher things* (Kari and Hartel, 2007) were used to code the interview transcripts, a deductive approach of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019).

Research limitations

As previously detailed, the first author used their experience of DJing in participant recruitment and these personal connections were intended to make the interviews sociable. This does simultaneously lead to a limitation in the research in that the first author's positionality (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014), knowledge of the activity and relationships with the participants could result in an overly personal perspective on the interview process and subsequent data analysis. This potential risk of bias was mitigated by the input of other authors who critiqued the interview questions to ensure they were open questions which allowed interviewees to describe their own experiences.

The first author's demographic data at the time of the data gathering, a 38-year-old, male, working in music retail for whom DJing was not the main source of employment, is broadly reflected in the group of participants. In one aspect, the age range of participants, the range is wider but the male dominated, second career nature of DJing is common.

The sample of participants is tilted towards male DJs, as is often the case in the field, and this is an area where future research could hear more female voices or consider the DJing experience wholly from a female perspective. The research was not designed to consider race or sexuality, although both were present in the interview data and, given the key role that these

factors played in the genesis of much of DJ culture (Brewster and Broughton, 2014, Lawrence, 2004), they too could be further represented in future research on the topic. New studies are welcome to further enrich this work.

Findings and discussion

As detailed in the research design, the concepts of serious leisure (Stebbins, 1982) and *higher things* (Kari and Hartel, 2007) were used to frame the analysis of the interview data. Using these concepts as a lens, the analysis demonstrates how the participants got into DJing, how it developed from a hobby to something more serious and the fluid relationship between work and leisure found in their careers as DJs, as well as description of the joy of DJing. Discussion of links between these findings and its relevant literature for both concepts are then made.

DJing and its relationship to the concept of *serious leisure*

The first key concept used to analyse the data was Robert Stebbins' on *serious leisure* (Stebbins, 1982, Stebbins, 1992, Stebbins, 1996, Stebbins, 2009). Specific to this analysis were the ideas of what constitutes a hobby and when that might turn into a *serious leisure* activity, how *serious leisure* activities relate to amateurism or professionalism and when the line between leisure and work becomes so blurred that it can be referred to as an occupational devotion. The findings from this analysis were that DJs do not have a simple, easy to define relationship with the concept of *serious leisure* and what starts as a hobby can progress to a *serious leisure* pursuit that is remunerated, a part-time job, a full-time job, an activity that links with other areas of a career and an activity that shapes a career. Ultimately, it is proposed, based on the analysis, that DJs should be considered a variant of the occupational devotee (Stebbins, 2009), where the line between work and leisure is obscured but a commitment to the pursuit is paramount.

Getting into DJing

The first question asked to participants was how they had first got into DJing. This was designed to indicate the factors that led to DJing becoming a hobby initially. Amongst the interviewees a number of different reasons were given, the most common being that they

considered themselves enthusiastic music fans already, described in self-deprecating terms by Participant 5 as, "*I was always the music idiot*". Some other common factors included making music or being in a band, DJing at school events, engaging in the activity through friends, regularly going to nightclubs, making compilation tapes and working in a record shop. Working in hospitality, skateboarding culture and attending a workshop that taught DJ skills were also mentioned.

DJing becoming more than a hobby

Typically, DJing can be considered a hobby when it is first taken up as an activity (Broughton and Brewster, 2006, Stebbins, 1982) and participants had a mixed response when asked when it had become more than a hobby to them. One interviewee suggested DJing was still a hobby to them, Participant 11 stating that '*I have only ever seen it as a hobby*'. Others instantly questioned whether 'hobby' was an appropriate term for something they considered a more serious activity. Questioning this was Participant 3, '*hobby is an interesting word to use because that has connotations of not being serious*' and by Participant 10:

> *To me a hobby is more of an interest, you're not necessarily obsessed. Most of the DJs I associate with are music obsessed*.

Almost all the participants stated it had become more than a hobby when they began playing gigs in bars and clubs and, correspondingly, getting paid for gigs. Sometimes this was a quick progression from home-based hobby to paid gigs. Running music events and joining a female led DJ collective were also given as catalysts for the activity becoming more serious. This highlights how the gap between amateur and professional (Stebbins, 1992) is perhaps not as easy to define with a DJ as in other areas of *serious leisure*, with the commencement of a pursuit being considered more serious also coinciding with beginning of being remunerated for it.

How DJing interacts with a career

One of the key means to understanding DJing in relation to *serious leisure* is to ascertain how the activity interacts with a career, with a particular emphasis on the concept of 'occupational devotee'. This is where the line between work and leisure is so blurred that what is easier to

define is a deep-rooted to commitment to the activity (Stebbins, 2009). From a demographic questionnaire four participants stated that DJing was their main source of employment, while eight stated that DJing was not their main source of employment. From this point a number of interrelationships were uncovered from the interview data. Some of the participants for whom DJing was not their main source of employment identified links to their main source of employment; working in art, record shops and hospitality. These links were evidenced by Participant 1, '*from DJing I've got illustration work for record labels and posters and logos for clubs*', Participant 2, '*one of the reasons I've stayed in the record shop for so long is that it's tied into the DJ thing or to making music*', and Participant 7:

> *A lot of the people who go the venue would be interested in the same kind of music or the same kind of nights I would go to or play at*.

There was a common thread amongst participants discussing a link between studying and DJing. For some their time studying at university had allowed them time and space to develop their DJ careers, others were about to return to further studies and one participant was currently studying. Amongst the interviewees, many mentioned making music as a common associated activity. Tying these aspects together, Participant 12 stated:

> *I think through DJing I've gotten into making music and sound art. So that's become my main practice. It has definitely influenced my practice and my art degree.*

Another common link between careers was a couple of participants working as therapists alongside DJing. One other associated activity of running a record label was identified. Overall, more than half of the participants had some kind of current connection between their job and DJing, through art, making music, working in record shops, running a record label and working in venues where DJs played. Of those participants who did not have a current link, most stated that their job could flex around DJing and that they considered this as a key component in their choice of job. Participant 10 who was due to return to their main source of employment, which was not DJing, after the time of this study described having a job that flexes around DJing as having a '*synergy*'. Some of the interviewees who did not have a direct link between DJing and their job talked of aiming to create links in the future, for example in taking sound recording techniques used in DJing and applying them to sound therapy, or as Participant 10 described:

> *My design skills and my DJing have started to overlap and I've been approached to do freelance architecture projects*.

Links to literature

In terms of relating the analysis to the concepts of *serious leisure* in the review of literature (Stebbins, 1982, Stebbins, 1992, Stebbins, 1996, Stebbins, 2009), it is posited that, amongst the DJs interviewed, there is a fluid relationship between work and leisure. If DJing is not their main source of employment, there exists either a link to their main job, or an intention to ensure that their job will flex around it. There is also a link to associated activities such as making music, art, studying, working in music venues that further blurs the lines between work and leisure, as compared to a lawyer who goes canoeing at the weekend. This suggests the DJ should be considered a variant of the occupational devotee (Stebbins, 2009), where the clear definition between work and leisure is hard to differentiate between full-time work, part-time work or a bridge to other associated jobs and activities. The commitment to this pursuit that this level of devotion requires is motivated by the enjoyment and happiness that can result from performing.

Higher things and the joy of DJing

The second key concept through which the interview data was analysed was the concept of *higher things* (Kari and Hartel, 2007), which calls for studies in information behaviour to look at areas of life, often *serious leisure* activities, where profundity can be experienced, as opposed to the more mundane aspects of everyday life. This also mirrors calls from Robert Stebbins (2009) that studies should seek to understand the pursuits in life that provide moments of joy. From the analysis of the participants' interview, there is demonstration that DJing is a pursuit capable of delivering instances of fulfilment that are deeply meaningful.

Characteristics of the joy of DJing

Kari and Hartel's (2007) call to investigate the activities in life that bring profound joy through the lens of information science are seen in the sentiments stated by all of the participants. The following words were all used by interviewees to describe the positive feelings associated with DJing: awesome, amazing, fulfilment, validation, brilliant, excellent and magnificent. The participants also talked of a range of sensations when they received a positive reaction, such as

joy, ecstasy, love, emotional, euphoria, highs, buzzing, addictive, elation, warmth and intoxication. Further to these positive sensations there was frequent use of words that can be attributed to the collective joy felt between a DJ and their audience: transcendence, healing, primal, sharing, community, connection, stars aligning, unity, therapy, affinity, magic and ritualistic.

Links to literature

As shown in the analysis, there are some clear links between the experiences of the participants and the profound joy sought in the pursuit of *higher things* (Kari and Hartel, 2007), there are also a number of links to other relevant literature discussed in conjunction with *higher things*. One is the idea that people gathering to dance to music can be traced back to ritual dance practices throughout history (Brewster and Broughton, 2014), a concept commented on by a number of participants, with one of them describing DJing in the following terms:

> *There's something like, societal, we've always done this right from tribal kind of villages and all the rest of it, we've always done something that's actually strangely close to what we do now, we're listening to primitive beats and kinda almost sort of elevating yourself to trance like states through dance. I do think there is some sort of energy that happens within a club when you get people of roughly a certain age and roughly a certain mind set. There is, you know, there is an energy and a positivity that's just in abundance, it is palpable.* (Participant 11)

There was also a discussion of the idea of transcendence amongst some participants, tying in with academic writing describing the act of communal dancing offering a route to transcendent experiences (St John, 2008). This was remarked upon by one of the participants when relating the profound joy that is possible when DJing:

> *It is that sense of transcending the self almost, that is the most enjoyable for me. So, more than just playing one piece of music and enjoying the reaction from that, is being able to sustain that feeling, and the end result at the very end of the night where you say, 'Okay, we did a good job, we've told the story or we all we all took part in telling a collective story here'. That's really... that's what makes you want to go and do it again.* (Participant 2)

A further link to the literature discussed around *higher things* was that DJing, and its associated nightlife, offered the opportunity for a freedom of sexuality to be experienced (Lawrence, 2004). This concept was related by one of the participants:

> *When I get people come up to me and tell me that they live for, it's what they look forward to every month and it keeps them going through hard times, or people say that they've been having a really bad week and this has just completely turned that around and lifted their spirits. Trying to create a queer space and maintain a queer space for people, when people tell me that they feel comfortable and they feel validated by seeing other people like them. Being able to see people like trans people being able to take their shirts off comfortably and knowing that in the same venue that I do my nights in, they may not feel so comfortable doing that on another night. Enabling that kind of communal queer joy and just kind of communal dancing, joy and the joint creation of a space where the physical boundaries that we have between each other are temporarily suspended and dissolved.* (Participant 3)

There was also evidence of DJing offering opportunities for emotionally resonant experiences, as stated in the literature review (Bussman, 1998, Collin, 2010, Reynolds, 2013), and summed up in the following manner by one of the interviewees;

> *Really, it's the main thing that you've been connected to a roomful of people, it is lovely, and that to aid in them having a really positive experience is such a gift. It's lovely. It's a great feeling.* (Participant 9)

DJing as a higher thing was also described by one participant in the following terms:

> *'Yeah, it's really hard to describe... when it's going well, you're building an energy in a room and people are more engaged in what you're doing, which is a very, very gratifying, good feeling. It's kind of pretty unparalleled in terms of being able to control a room through music... that's why we do it right? I guess euphoric would be the right term.'* (Participant 4)

These findings clearly demonstrate the potential for profound joy from DJing and situates it amongst other activities considered as a *higher thing*, as well as linking it to the motivation of why a *serious leisure* pursuit leads to a participant becoming an occupational devotee.

Conclusions

This paper has explored the previously understudied information behaviour of DJs through the concept of *serious leisure* and found that, within the participants studied, they can be defined as an 'occupational devotee', someone for whom the line between work and leisure is hard to define, but for whom a strong commitment to the activity is evident. This commitment is motivated not just by a love of music but in the potential for happiness and joy that can come from performing, situating the activity as a *higher thing* in information behaviour studies. Within the field of information studies, particularly related to music libraries and information systems, this increases understanding of a popular area of musical activity, and a group of potential users, that had previously been unconsidered.

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Abstract

This article explores the information behaviour of DJs, a group not previously examined from the perspective of information science, by conducting interviews with a group of creative DJs based in Scotland for their insights and perspective on the activity. This qualitative interview data was thematically analysed for links to key information behaviour concepts, *serious leisure* and *higher things*, with links between findings and literature sought. From this, there was demonstration of how the information behaviours of creative DJs leads them to be seen

as occupational devotees for whom the joy and profundity of DJing is critical to their engagement with this serious leisure activity.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all our participants for sharing knowledge and providing insight on the world of creative DJing. We would also like to acknowledge Nicolle Glen, Sinead Hallinan, Kerry Kurtz, and Colin Paton for their contributions to research undertaken during an MSc project on this topic area, which informed elements of this study.

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