The Attitudes of DJs

A study carried out to gather and understand the DJ communities' current views towards various DJ technologies.

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Abstract

A hot topic often debated in the DJ community revolves around what technology DJs use. The argument of digital vs. analog has been often contested much since the introduction of modern DJ technology. Many new technologies have come into play over the past decade. The reasons behind the use of each technology are examined and a better understanding of the views towards other technologies is gained. Through both qualitative and quantitative methods, research was conducted throughout the DJ community. Over 200 DJs completed an online survey and six in-depth interviews were conducted. The findings are a summary of the views DJs currently have regarding technology and these views represent a certain attitude. Many DJs feel that with the use of more modern technology like software that automatically matches beats, it is up to the DJ to better themselves in another aspect such as using effects, looping or other various skills. Other DJs feel that beat-matching is essential in order to be respected by the DJ community, a skill that must be mastered.

Introduction

Since 1906, the Disc Jockey (DJ) has been selecting and playing recorded music to various audiences. (Brewster and Broughton, 2006, p.28-29) From playing music across airwaves to people's homes to playing music intimately to people in a club and from simple smooth transitions to complicated manipulative harmonic mixes, it has always been the DJ's job to entertain. As disco-tech clubs became more common the DJ's job has evolved to making these audiences dance with the tools and technology laid in front of them.

Over the past 10 years the tools and technology available to DJs has excelled at a pace previously unseen. (Norris, 2011) More products have been made available to DJs today, then ever before. As DJ technology becomes cheaper, the door is opened wider to those beginning. (Skipworth, 2011) With more and cheaper technology available, there has been a raise of new DJs. For some, this has led to experienced DJs questioning new technology. Some believe that it is hurting the values of their DJ culture they hold so beloved.

Before this, for many, the DJ culture was about collecting vinyl records and selecting the right records in order to keep an audience on the dance floor. (Parrish, 2010) In the 1960s Francis Grasso, a DJ from New York City, perfected a technique called beat-matching for mixing records into each other, that is now universally accepted as

the standard of DJing. (Broughton, 2010) This technique involves adjusting the pitch fader on turntables to match the tempo of a record, to the tempo of the current record being played to the audience. The DJ then matches the beats together and smoothly transitions the next record in, over the last record in order to keep the audience dancing. This is now considered the traditional method of DJing. As time went on, DJs began incorporating tricks on turntables to build excitement for the audience.

In 1995 DJ Babu introduced the term 'turntablism' as way to describe DJs that use turntables to manipulate and create music. (Bevin Jee, 1997) Turntablism defined what Hip-Hop DJs had been doing since its birth in 1973 (Bevin Jee, 1997) right up to competitions such as the Disco Mix Club (DMC) Championships that started in 1985. (DMC, 2011) In DMC Championships, DJs use their technical skill on turntables in order to win.

Even before the term 'turntablism' was coined, in 1994 a new technology for DJing was introduced. (Lead 2009) Pioneer Electronics released the CDJ-500 as a tool for DJs to play CDs in DJ sets. It allowed DJs to manipulate CD tracks like turntables did for records. It was from this CD-player that the term CDJ was derived from and used for all CD-players that allow analogue-like control of a CD. It was Pioneer's CDJ 1000, released in 2001, that became the flagship digital turntable with features such as vinyl emulation, waveform display, hot cues and jog display. (Lead, 2009)

Another new DJ technology announced in 2001 was the first Digital Vinyl System (DVS) called 'Final Scratch'. (Hawtin, 2011) This allowed DJs to manipulate and control digital audio of a computer using timecode vinyl and turntables. Early

versions of Final Scratch left many DJs not happy with issues such as reliability and computer resource issues. (Sdbns, 2010) These DJs rebelled against using software as only turntables provided real-time control of music. Though DVS have been greatly improved over the years and allow CDJ control using timecode CDs some DJs remain using traditional vinyl records.

Traktor, a current leading company of DJ software, released its first standalone DJ software in 2000. (Brikha, 2011) Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) controllers allow DJs to control software through hardware (Shailpik, 2009) In 2006 Matt Moldover coined the phrase 'controllerism' stating its definition as *"creating music using software and controllers".* (Moldover, 2007) Software such as Traktor include a feature called auto-sync that allows users to automatically sync the tempo and the beats of two or more tracks when activated.

Over time the DJ community accepted the CDJ as a reliable tool. With bugs, crashes and latency issues software was regarded as a below standard too. Many seen the idea of auto-sync as cheating and an unprofessional way of mixing. DJs such as Theo Parrish dismiss software stating that if you put a laptop DJ against *"a guy that has been playing for years and knows his records, there is no way you can compete"* (Parrish, 2010)

But with more and more DJs seeing the potential of software and with software constantly being improved, the issue of digital vs. analog is widely discussed among the community. Across forums and websites DJs are still constantly debating the issues of using auto-sync from each side of the spectrum. (Inthemix Forums, 2011)

This shows that the issue hasn't been resolved. By taking this issue and examining it we at least can get a better understanding of this much-debated topic.

As one who has been a DJ for a number of years, interacted with the DJ community and who runs a DJ society, this author feels eligible to conduct this study. This author hopes to gain better understanding of what methods are acceptable and what are not acceptable within the DJ community. Therefore members of the DJ society can benefit from this study.

In order for one to fully understand one view, a sense of a DJ's background must be obtained. It then must be compared to the DJ's first DJ set-up to what they currently use. If they have changed it must be understood why the have changed. This understanding alone is imperative to the DJ's general view. The view on traditional methods compared modern methods must be questioned. It must also be questioned if there is still a need for manual beat-matching when software offers the auto-sync feature.

Finding out this information from a number of DJs is the best way to gain an insight into the DJ community. Fully understanding the reasons behind the views from each side, they can be assessed and a conclusion can be drawn.

Research Design Methodology

In this study, the prime methods deployed were quantitative and qualitative research. A summary of DJs' backgrounds, set-ups and current views were gathered via quantitative method. A more in-depth look into views was gathered via a qualitative method. The more DJs that participated, the greater accuracy the insight into the community would be. Having a detailed insight into different DJs' views would be essential to discussing and contrasting these views.

Quantitative Research

Quantitative research was carried out through the method of using an online survey. A survey was the best means of gathering data from the DJ community. Over the course of a week between February 22nd 2011 and March 1st 2011, 203 responses were received. The survey was distributed online via the following social networks and DJ forums:

- facebook.com
- twitter.com
- djtechtools.com
- djforums.com
- erolalkan.co.uk
- serato.com

- irishclubbing.ie

These websites are where DJs congregate and discuss DJ related matters. The best chances of reaching out to the DJ community in order to gather the information needed are through these websites.

The survey was broken up into three sections. A total number of thirteen questions were asked of DJs. Six questions were multi-choice while 6 were left open-ended. This gave a good balance in qualitative and quantitative feedback from the survey alone. The last question reached out to DJs that were interested in completing an interview.

The first section gathered data that combined how long the DJ had been DJing for and where the DJ most often performs. This information provided a brief background of the DJs surveyed.

The second section accumulated information about what equipment the DJs have used. From their first DJ set-up to the current set-up and all equipment they have used in between, we begin to gather a bigger picture of each DJ. DJs were also asked why they have changed equipment if they have done so. Here is where the views of DJ technology can start to take shape. From understanding the reasons behind changing set-ups we can compare the benefits and drawbacks of different set-ups. This information is useful to helping new DJs decide their first set-up or help other DJs upgrade.

- irishclubbing.ie

Third DJs are asked to state their views on DJ technology. Asked whether there should be a distinction between using vinyl records and using software, DJs express their thoughts on each method and state whether these two should share the title of the DJ. They are also asked if they use or have used software and whether the auto-sync feature was used. Here the current attitudes regarded by DJs are gathered and the option to state the reasons behind these views is given. If a DJ has a strong opinion on these issues they have the chance to state it here.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research was carried out to acquire an in-depth understanding of these views compared to the views gathered in the survey interviewing a total of five DJs. Four interviews were structured and carried out by e-mail. One interview was conducted face to face and was semi-structured. A separate semi-structured interview was carried in order to gather an in-depth understanding of controllerism with Matt Moldover. Likewise to gather an in-depth understanding of traditional turntablist, a number of e-mails were sent looking to interview a traditional turntablist. In this case no responses were received and the understanding of turntablism was left down to literature research. All interviews were carried out during the month of March 2011.

In these structured interviews, DJs were asked for instance to give a history of their musical background and at what point DJing came into their lives. Asked what their current DJ set-up was and what style and technique they consider to perform with, these questions build a picture of each DJ.

DJs were asked 'Does your DJ set-up dictate your style of DJing or does your DJing

style dictate your DJ set-up?' DJs were also asked to state their thoughts on DJs that use vinyl and DJs that use software separately thus given a greater in-depth view towards each method.

Qualitative Interview with Moldover

A semi-structured interview with Matt Moldover was conducted to understand controllerism and where it came from. Questions were set out in order to get his thoughts on controllerism.

Moldover was questioned about his musical background and about when DJing came into his life. He was also asked where the concept of controllerism came from and to define the term. Also asked was the relationship between DJing and controllerism and where the line is drawn between the two. With these questions, a full understanding of controllerism would be clarified.

Results and Discussions

Over the past few months of gathering data through surveys and interviews I have come across some interesting findings. These findings have been processed and summarised in the form of figures, tables, and charts. Below are the results.

A Brief Summary of DJs' Backgrounds

How long have they been DJing?
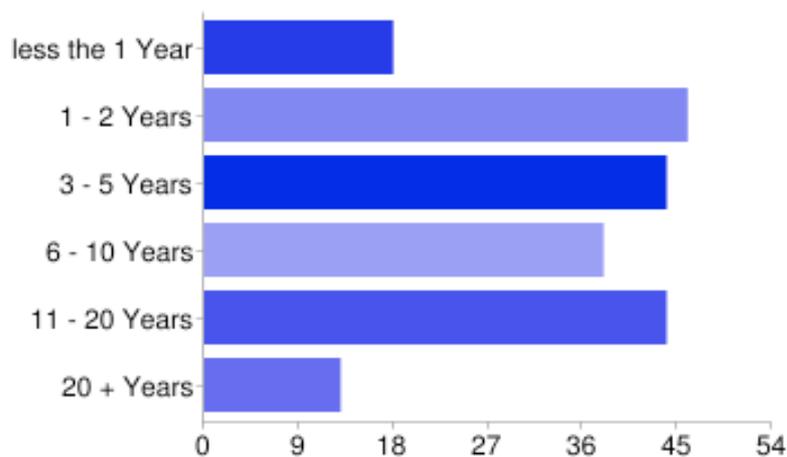
Fig. 1

According to the survey 23% of DJs have been DJing one to two years. Joined with 22% each are the options 3 - 5 years and 11 - 20 years. 19% have been DJing for 6-10 years. This suggests that a majority of respondents are experienced DJs. With much lesser percentages were the options of less then 1 year with 9% and 20+ years with 6%. See Fig 1.

Where do they play?
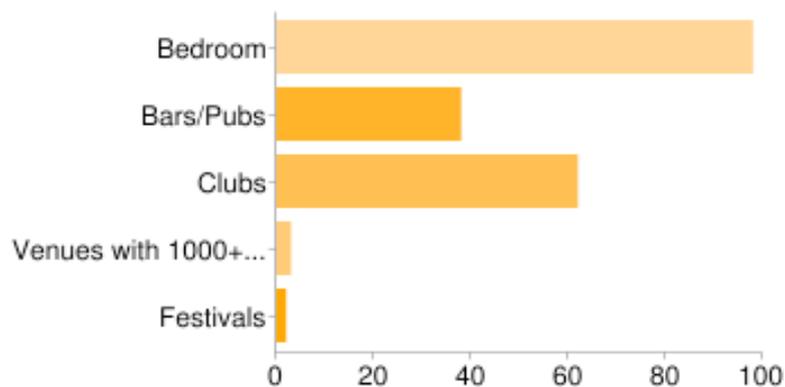
Fig. 2

With a huge majority, 48% of DJs surveyed consider themselves to be Bedroom DJs although, as the first results suggest, some experienced in years. Following that with 31% were the Club DJs. 19% play in Bars/Pubs leaving a minuscule 2% of DJs playing at Venues with 1000+ people and Festivals. This 2% is split between the two as can be seen in Fig 2 along with the rest of the results.

Discussion

There is a much higher percentage of DJs playing in bedrooms then anywhere else. It would seem that for a better spectrum of results, it would be better to have a more even, amount of DJs that play in different places. While this is true, the results may be

more an indication of what type of DJs are actually out there. As Skipworth (2011) suggests, *"as equipment gets cheaper and computers more powerful, there has been a massive increase in the number of bedroom DJs."* Thus this may actually be a true indication of the DJ community. When this is compared to how long the DJs have been playing for we get an interesting discussion. Most DJs have been DJing between 1 and 20 years, and this is spread fairly evenly among the years. Compared to the high number of bedroom DJs it would suggest that for many DJs, DJing has primarily remained as a hobby throughout the years.

Understanding DJs' Set-ups

First DJ set-up?
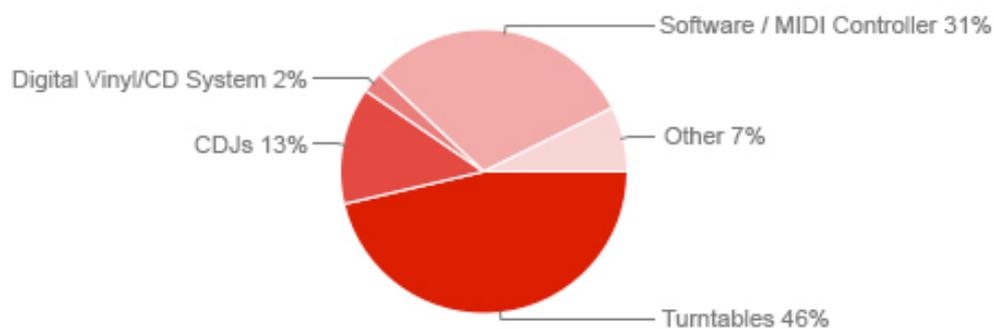
Fig.3

A striking majority of 46% of DJs started on Turntables. Following that with 31% of DJs starting of on Software with or without a MIDI Controller. 13% started on CDJs, 2% on a DVS & 7% started with another type of set-up not listed. See Fig. 3.

Current DJ Set-up
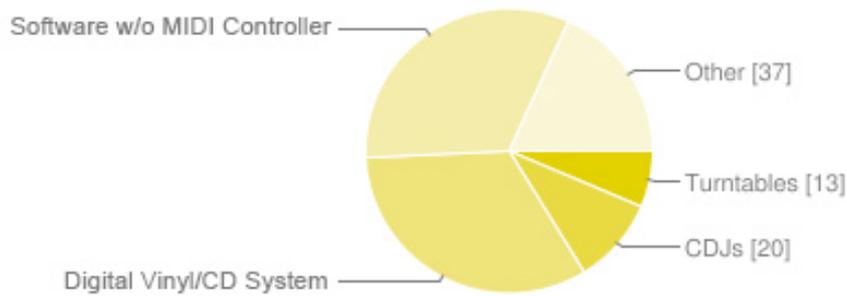
Fig. 4

With a combined majority of 66%, DJs are using either a DVS or software without or

without a MIDI controller as their current DJ set-up. This 66% is split in half with

each set-up getting 33% of the results. 18% of DJs choose Other which, for many,

turned out to be a hybrid of the two or more of the options given. With 10% of DJs

using CDJs, only 6% still use Turntables as their means to DJ with. This is

represented above in Fig. 4.

What other equipment, if any, did they use?
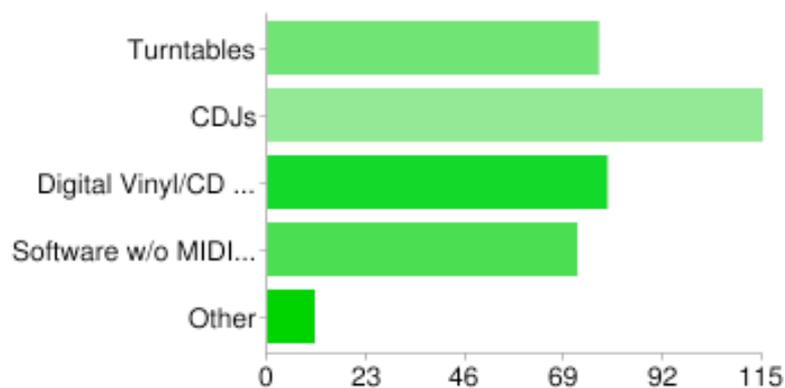
Fig 5

In between their first and current DJ set-ups, 71% of most DJs used CDJs. 49% of

DJs have used a DVS, 48% have used Turntables, 44% have used Software & 7%

have used other equipment to DJ with. See Fig 5.

Why did they change set-ups?

When asked why did they change/upgrade their DJ set-ups many of the answers for

changing from a medium or to another medium were all similarly answered. Here is

an outline of the reasons for changes that were most discussed:

Moving/Upgrading From Vinyl (Turntables)

• Lack of vinyl record shops

• Harder to get new tracks

• Crates of vinyl are too heavy

• Most clubs don't have turntables anymore

Moving/Upgrading to a DVS

• Keep the feel of vinyl

• Digital music is cheaper & easier to obtain

Moving/Upgrading to Software with or without a MIDI controller

• Digital music is cheaper & easier to obtain

• More functionality & possibilities

• Less equipment to carry

The most discussed from the survey results was the change from traditional vinyl on turntables. Due to a number of reasons discovered, many DJs opted to move towards modern equipment. It is understandable for many of the reasons that included the lack of record shops, cost of vinyl, the weight of crates and as cited below, it being harder to find vinyl records.

> *"I changed from traditional vinyl to a DVS because it was becoming easier to find digital copies of songs and harder to find vinyl copies"* (Survey Respondent, Feb/Mar 2011)

Compared to the reasons why DJs moved to software, it seems that software doesn't just offer an alternative to turntables but it also opens up more possibilities. This comes in the form of being able to loop music, cue more then one point in a track, being able to find the cues almost immediately, change tracks with the click of a button and much more. These are features that would never be available to a DJ using real vinyl on turntables. Below this DJ states taking advantage of MIDI control to do more with software.

> *"Full MIDI is so much more efficient that it allows me to do so much more than just blending two songs together"* (Survey Respondent, Feb/Mar 2011)

Many DJs surveyed agreed that the best way to have the best of both worlds is with a DVS. DJs stated that the upgraded from real vinyl on turntables to using a DVS on turntables. This way they could keep the touch and feel of vinyl alive while getting the most out of modern technology such as numerous cue points, visual feedback, cheaper, more accessible music and more. This for many was the most comfortable

and natural option to approach when upgrading from real vinyl.

> *"I'm an older DJ that started off on vinyl. I like using Serato (DVS) because I can*
> *have all my music, but I don't like being overly dependant on new technology"*
> (Survey Respondent, Feb/Mar 2011)

Many DJs that upgraded to software with or without a MIDI controller were looking for the most advanced features and possibilities in order to get the most out their creativity and individuality. These DJs felt that software such as Traktor or Ableton were the best options to go with. While some DJs were happy to upgrade to software with or without a MIDI controller, nearly all DJs that wanted the most out of their creativity, all use the auto-sync feature in their software.

Here is an interesting comment left by one DJ surveyed on his changes in equipment

> *"At first, I switched from software to vinyl in order to be a "real" DJ. I felt the*
> *experience was hindered by the implication of software. From vinyl I switched to*
> *CDJs because I missed some of the technical features that I was used to with my*
> *original software setup, but still wanted the legitimacy of a real DJ. I finally switched*
> *back to software and MIDI controllers when I realized I could do so much more with*
> *this technology."* (Survey Respondent, Feb/Mar 2011)

This shows a DJ moving from software to vinyl and then moving forward with the technologies. It is interesting because he made this move in order to be a 'real' DJ but over time this DJ realised the features possible with software were more appealing

then being a 'real' DJ. Perhaps over this DJ's experiences, they became more confident with modern technologies after experimenting with other technologies. This confidence may have led them to believe that they could be a 'real' DJ even with software and a MIDI controller.

Another interesting statistic that arose was that 47% of DJs stated that they were happy with their DJ set-up while 38% stated that they wanted to or were intending to upgrade. This suggests that while most DJs are happy to stay with their current set-ups, there are a number of DJs that will eventually be buying new equipment. Many of these DJs suggested adding to their current set-ups opposed to changing completely. This indicates that these DJs may be looking to customise their set-ups in order to add individuality to their DJ sets when performing.

Auto-Sync and Beat-Matching

Do they use the Auto-Sync feature found in Software?
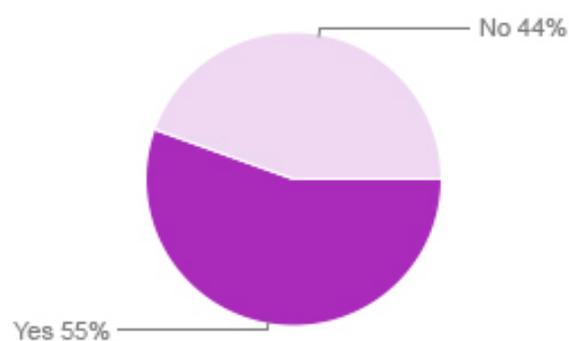
Fig 6

This is an area much divided among DJs. As 55% of DJs use the auto-sync function in software, it still leaves 45% that don't use it. See Fig 6. When asked should there be a

distinction between a DJ that uses vinyl and a DJ that uses software, many DJs took this situation to state their views on beat-matching. Two common arguments were put forward.

One side that argued in favour of beat-matching stated that DJs should have or should go through the process of learning to beat-match and use this technique before allowing the software to do this for them. One DJ stated that a person needs to *"learn the basics of beat-matching to earn the title of a DJ"*. (Survey Respondent, Feb/Mar 2011) This view was shared among those that sided with this argument.

The second argument in favour of auto-sync to a degree. This argument was made slightly more then the first. Many DJs stated that if a DJ is to use the auto-sync button, then the time that is saved with this feature must be used creatively. The idea is that with the time freed up from having to match beats, the DJ should show innovation in their set to compensate. This may include using more sources of music (four channel mixing), looping beats, more effects, etc. This suggests that a DJ should always be kept busy at their set-up because if they are beat-matching their time is spent there, but if using auto-sync, a DJ should use their time on effects, etc. Some DJs might say this view suggests a certain level of controllerism should be implemented when the auto-sync is in effect.

A majority of DJs surveyed stated that DJs in general should be able to beat-match whether or not they use software to DJ. There was not one DJ that stated against this issue though one DJ stated that they believed *"the development of music/DJ technology will eventually force beat-matching to be obsolete."* (Survey Respondent,

Feb/Mar 2011)

A Distinction Between Different Platform DJs

DJs were asked to state their thoughts on whether there should be a distinction
between DJing with vinyl and DJing with software, and should they share the title of
the DJ? 78% of DJs stated that there should not be a distinction between these types
of DJing and should share the title of the DJ. 12% were against this while the rest do
not contribute. There were many long detailed comments left by DJs, many of which
could be summarised into one answer.

> *"They should share the title, they both accomplish the same goal."* (Survey
> Respondent, Feb/Mar 2011)

Like many others, this DJ believes that they are still achieving the same results. Other
reasons for there being no distinction start at the beginning of the history behind the
DJ. The term DJ was around before DJing as we know it on turntables and after it
when DJs changed to CDJs. Both methods are just tools to convey what the DJ wants
to be heard to the crowd in order to make them dance.

Many of the DJs that thought there should be a distinction believed that because when
using software a DJ is longer using a 'disc'. Therefore a referring to them as a 'disc'
jockey would be inappropriate. One DJ commented *"Id rather have it split. Just so
people who DJ with vinyl wont complain any more."* (Survey Respondent, Feb/Mar
2011)

Some DJs believed that because they were using software and controllers that the term 'controllerism' was appropriate as the term 'turntablism' was for turntablist. This coincides with the definition that Moldover gave in the quantitative interview:

"I'd define Controllerism pretty broadly as just using computer controllers & software to make music. I try to keep it as broad as because I'm into a lot of different things beside DJing and if you want an idea to grow, I don't think you should try to control it." (Matt Moldover, 2011)

Many DJs that use software, along with a few DJs that use turntables, stated it's down to the skill that the DJ can produce on the set-up they use. Another DJ believed that using new technology makes for a better DJ:

"A DJ who uses the new tech stuff, is in my mind a better DJ and is recreating the World of the DJ." (Survey Respondent, Feb/Mar 2011)

Other Findings

55 DJs that were surveyed and interviewed added on their own account that when it comes down to it, it is all about making the crowd dance and whatever way this is done shouldn't be the greater issue.

One DJ that was interviewed suggested that playing vinyl on turntables was much more visually appealing then other methods but went on to say that a DJ playing with a number of controllers isn't far behind in the same aspect. He suggested that when he

goes to see a DJ play, he does take an interest in what the DJ is doing with their set-up.

This may suggest that even though the primary objective is keep the crowd dancing,

there will be even a minority that will judge the DJ on the visual aspect as well. He

believed that if the DJ could impress the crowd visually on top of the music being

played, even more respect should be given to the DJ.

Conclusion

One DJ commented in the survey that when they first started of, they found it difficult to be taken seriously and get gigs because they used a MIDI controller. That DJ stated they had been DJing for 3-5 years so while the scenario may have been different 3-5 years ago, it certainly seems different now among DJs. With more stable software and solid MIDI controllers out currently then previously before it would suggest MIDI controllers are serious competition to previous equipment. Results suggest that there are a solid amount of DJs using this equipment and as computers and software become more reliable and filled with more features, this suggests that more DJs will upgrade to software-based equipment.

As more DJs choose software-based set-ups, DJs using older set-ups are bound to see the potential of software based set-ups used by other DJs. While this may not necessarily be enough to change a DJ's set-up from turntables to software, the attitude towards software should be seen in a new light.

If a person that wants to be a DJ and wants to be able to use the auto-sync feature

while DJing with software while at the same time looking for the most amount of respect from a majority of the DJ community, they must meet a certain criteria. Because there are two main arguments surrounding the auto-sync debate, both these issues need to be addressed.

The first would be the need to learn or have the ability to beat-match manually mastered. For many DJs beat-matching remains a crucial skill to be able to do as there may come a time, where the software is unable to do this within a set and the know how in order to fix the problem will sort the good DJs from the bad. I would agree with this argument, as sometimes even the most reliable software can't be 100% reliable all of the time. Having this skill may not seem crucial at first but down the line it might save embarrassment.

The second would be the ability to take full advantage of auto-sync by introducing more skills into your set. Because the tempo and beats are synced automatically, the time freed up should be used efficiently to create a more creative and individual set. This in turn should be represented to the audience.

It would seem that the DJ that is using vinyl on turntables are on the back foot of these results. But it remains a fact that this author did try to contact DJs that still use vinyl but it proved unachievable. Even Theo Parrish who is completely against the use of software for DJing still uses CDJs. (Parrish, 2010) This author was made to rely on out dated information for the argument of using real vinyl records. It seems from these results that turntablism still does live on in DVS. Even the DMC Championships have since 2011 have begun allowing the use of DVS. (Gizmo, 2010)

Before the term turntablism from the hip hop culture existed, one DJ called Terry Noel in the 1960s, was the first person to try ideas that as still used today. These ideas included mixing one track seamlessly into another, mixing with three turntables, using felt slip-matts in order to cue tracks, incorporating bass and treble frequency controls, mashing up two tracks at on time and more. (Noel, 1999) Terry's club successor Francis Grasso is the person recognised as inventing beat-matching and slip-cueing and also idolise as the first ever superstar DJ as they are recognised today. (Broughton, 2010)

It can be argued that turntablism may never have existed if these two DJs, between them, did not try and innovate their DJ set-ups. It may also be debated that if these two DJs were still DJing today, they would be still trying to innovate their set-ups. So if the turntablist was allowed to create their culture using equipment and techniques that were innovated before them, shouldn't DJs be allowed to move into controllerism without being frowned upon? This argument may even be enough to convince DJs still skeptical of using modern technology that innovation is the way forward and should be accepted.

While beat-matching today can be more easily done thanks to a visual aid, it is still important to be able to hear the beats matched. Should the beats be out of sync often, the DJ will need to seriously look at where this problem can be rectified and more often then not the skill of beat-matching will need to be mastered.

This study may to some seem limited by the lack of input from DJs that still use vinyl.

Perhaps traditional DJs do not participate within online communities. One thing for certain is that there is no shortage of DJs running software either on its own, with a MIDI controller or with a DVS.

If this dissertation is anything to go by, DJs shouldn't feel intimidated by people claiming to be a 'real DJ'. It would appear that if a DJ can make an audience dance while maintaining a respectable equivalent of skill for their current DJ set-up, the majority of DJ community should consider them a 'real DJ'. One DJ interviewed summed it nicely.

> *"Remember one overwhelmingly important thing - it's your skills that make you a DJ and not the gear. The most expensive setup on the planet is of little use if you don't have the right music for the crowd, can't read the crowd and don't know which track to drop into the mix and when to do it. Despite all the advances in technology, the DJ's human skills are by far the most important."* (Interviewee Respondent, 2011)

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Appendices

Online Survey

DJ Technology Survey

Hi
My name is Keith Brady. I am a fourth year student studying Communications in Creative Multimedia at Dundalk Institute of Technology, Ireland.

For my Honours Degree I am writing a dissertation in regards to the views on DJ technology. This survey is to help me understand the current situation of DJs regarding technology.

This survey should take no longer then 5 minutes to complete & I would greatly appreciate your time to answer the following questions.

If you would be interested in doing an interview regarding DJ technology, please leave your Name & E-mail address at the bottom. Names or E-mail addresses will not be given out under any circumstances.

* Required

How long have you been DJing for? *

○ less the 1 Year

○ 1 - 2 Years

○ 3 - 5 Years

○ 6 - 10 Years

○ 11 - 20 Years

○ 20 + Years

Where do you play most often? *

○ Bedroom

○ Bars/Pubs

○ Clubs

○ Venues with 1000+ people

○ Festivals

What was your first DJ set up? *

○ Turntables

○ CDJs

○ Digital Vinyl/CD System (Serato, Traktor, etc)

○ Software w/o MIDI Controller (Traktor, Virtual DJ, Ableton Live, etc)

○ Other: [   ]

What is your current DJ set up? *

○ Turntables

○ CDJs

○ Digital Vinyl/CD System (Serato, Traktor, etc)

○ Software w/o MIDI Controller (Traktor, Virtual DJ, Ableton Live, etc)

○ Other: [   ]

Please state the equipment you use in your current DJ set-up. *

Include hardware (& software if applicable)

What are your thoughts on your current DJ set-up? *

Maybe state features you like or dislike? How it could be improved?
Why you use this set up? Etc.

Other then your first & current DJ set up, have you used other DJ set ups? If so what were they?

☐ Turntables

☐ CDJs

☐ Digital Vinyl/CD System (Serato, Traktor, etc)

☐ Software w/o MIDI Controller

☐ Other:

If you've changed from a one DJ set-up to another, for what reasons did you change?

If you use or have used Software, do you use the auto-sync feature?

◯ Yes

◯ No

Do you do any live remixing in your DJ sets? If so how do you incorporate this technique?

Do you think there should be a distinction between DJing with vinyl and DJing with software? Should they both share the title of being a DJ? *

[text box]

Any other thoughts regarding DJ technology that you feel would be useful to my dissertation?

[text box]

If you would be interested in doing a interview via Skype for my Dissertation, please leave your Name & E-mail address below.

[text box]

[Submit]

Survey Results

**203** responses

## Summary See complete responses

How long have you been DJing for?
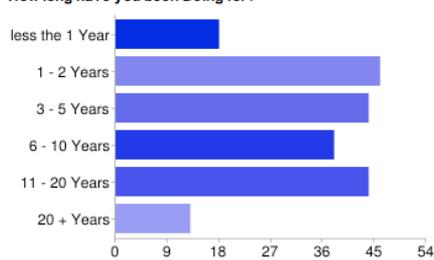
less the 1 Year	**18**	9%
1 - 2 Years	**46**	23%
3 - 5 Years	**44**	22%
6 - 10 Years	**38**	19%
11 - 20 Years	**44**	22%
20 + Years	**13**	6%

Where do you play most often?
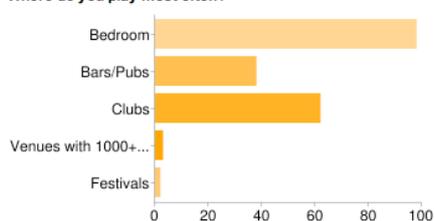
Bedroom	**98**	48%
Bars/Pubs	**38**	19%
Clubs	**62**	31%
Venues with 1000+ people	**3**	1%
Festivals	**2**	1%

What was your first DJ set up?
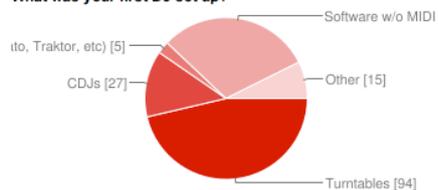
Turntables	**94**	46%
CDJs	**27**	13%
Digital Vinyl/CD System (Serato, Traktor, etc)	**5**	2%
Software w/o MIDI Controller (Traktor, Virtual DJ, Ableton Live, etc)	**62**	31%
Other	**15**	7%

What is your current DJ set up?
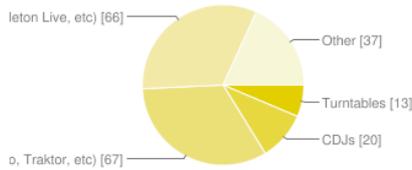
|		
Turntables	13	6%
CDJs	20	10%
Digital Vinyl/CD System (Serato, Traktor, etc)	67	33%
Software w/o MIDI Controller (Traktor, Virtual DJ, Ableton Live, etc)	66	33%
Other	37	18%

Please state the equipment you use in your current DJ set-up.

DJM-800 CDJ-400's Technics 1200's Serato   Pioneer CDJ MK 3's and a DJM 800 mixer   4 x Cdj 2000's Djm 800 Or 4 x Cdj 1000's mk3's + Djm 800   Pioneer CDJ 1000 MK3's and a DJM 800 mixer mainly   Kaos Pad, Launchpad, Apple Macbook Pro, Ableton, traktor X1, djm900 nexus (on order).   midi keyboard (oxygen 49)/midi controller (hercules rmx) mixer: djm 800 (essential for sound qual!) traktor pro   Poineer DJM 700 mixer, Macbook Pro running Traktor Pro Software, Korg nanoKontrol MIDI controller, Novation nio 2/4 soundcard.   1210s, Numark Omni   N.I. KONTROL S4 TRAKTOR MACBOOK PRO   I own CDJ 1000 mk3's (up for sal   ...

What are your thoughts on your current DJ set-up?

Its suits me now but I want to go live soon...equipment is getting better and better to I want to stay on top of my game by knowing it itside out!   Can't wait to get the 2000's :)   USB KEYS AND MP3 DISKS ALL THE WAY.. MAKES IT SO EASY TO CREATE ON THE DECKS...   Happy out to be honest...   I like my current set up, Ideally I'd branch out and get an ipad and maybe some samplers from Akai. But currently happy.   allow easier use of multi tracks. even though traktor has capability for 4 simultaneous tracks it is not encouraged. Software using mp3s should encourage users to be more free in their style of mix   ...

**Other then your first & current DJ set up, have you used other DJ set ups? If so what were they?**
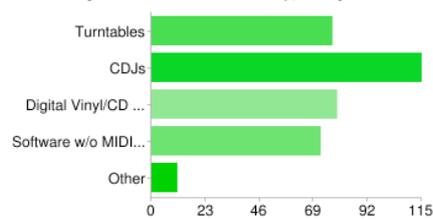
Turntables	77	48%
CDJs	115	71%
Digital Vinyl/CD System (Serato, Traktor, etc)	79	49%
Software w/o MIDI Controller	72	44%
Other	11	7%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

If you've changed from a one DJ set-up to another, for what reasons did you change?

Changed from Vinyl to CD as its cheaper to get music online than buy records.   LAPTOPS ARE TO FRAGILE AND CRASH.. I DID USE SERATO SRATCH BUT IT'S SO MUCH EASIER USING CD'S AND LESS STRESS SETTING UP...   Was Djin with others and just used it to try it out!!   I orignally started using vinyl and cds, mainly vinyl, I sooned stoped using it, as many clubs failed to have turntables, and the newest records were on cd.   sound quality, ease of use in a club atmosphere (nightmare at times), availability if music   I moved away from vinyl as the price of digital music was so cheap compared to vinyl. Then each mo   ...

If you use or have used Software, do you use the auto-sync feature?
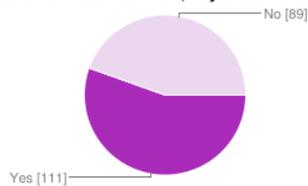
Yes	111	55%
No	89	44%

Do you do any live remixing in your DJ sets? If so how do you incorporate this technique?

Throwing in an accapella of something well known | Trade Secret... | - | I usually use ableton for live remixing, i assign loops and samples from certain tracks and get creative with them. With cdj's i'd use the hot cue and loop features to make a certain song sound way different, or just add a breakdown, Even something as simple as adding an accapella onto a track can have a huge impact. | not live in clubs. | I used to use it but only a small amount. I was using Ableton at the time with an Oxygen 8v2 MIDI controller and USB mixer and I was using the keys on the Oxygen to loop parts of tracks then other | ...

Do you think there should be a distinction between DJing with vinyl and DJing with software? Should they both share the title of being a DJ?

Both are doing the same thing. Gettin bodies on the dancefloor! | Depends on whether or not the creator mixed the audio themselves or not... | Software djing is just not the same... not feeling it... to precise and like a robot also looking at your laptop sucks | - | a Dj is someone who plays music, I personally think its a shared title, but I do think Dj's need to be aware of their movements and pressence in a club, I've seen many "Dj's" with their faces glued to a laptop screen, Its very off putting in my opinion. Having a software controller can make this a lot easier, but they dont seem to be bother | ...

Any other thoughts regarding DJ technology that you feel would be useful to my dissertation?

No the questions asked are on the ball! | It's changing so fast some people have lost touch with what it was originally about.. | I think such features on the newest technology make mixing easier for most Dj's, which is fine (except for that autp-sync nonsense). I feel that the role of a Dj can me lost amongest the equipment. You can have an Dj stand infront of the worlds best set up, and all they'll do is mix, Its a trade and lifestyle being a Dj, So know your equipment, and know what tricks you have access to! | The future of music and a 'DJs' relevance. Anyone can be a DJ now with the technolo | ...

If you would be interested in doing a interview via Skype for my Dissertation, please leave your Name & E-mail address below.

Lisa Brady lisabx@gmail.com | Killianmcdonald@i105107.ie | Pauric Freeman pauricfreeman@gmail.com | PAUL NEWHOUSE REDBOX RECORDS INFO@REDBOX-RECORDS.COM | ... lol | sure thing man. skype - justinmc6 Good luck with the dissertation man. | Chris - chrisupra@gmail.com | Sure, Im JesC jesc1200@gmail.com | The old soul vinylist within...to the newly found controllerist, I'm wishing you the best | Craig Reeves "nem0nic" admin@nem0nic.com Glad to help. | Sure. Matthew Blair rhombus1@gmail.com rhombus_77 from DJTT | I would, but i know there's better choices out there Skype name Ben.coflan from No. Andover Ma | Probably not that | ...

Number of daily responses
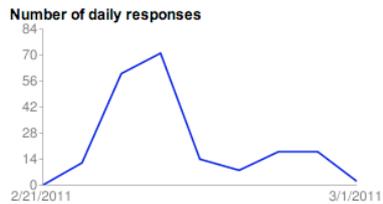
Interviews

Interview 1

Tell me a bit about your background. What got you into music?

Got decks when 13. Into hardhouse. 2 vinyl decks and mixer.

At what point did DJing come into you life? How long have you been DJing for?

DJing 9 years. Buying records. No lessons. Learned how to play them. Learned from listening to mixed cds. Took a year and half to beat matched. Started getting/looking gigs 6 months. Persistence to get gigs. Doing 21st for 2 years. Started playing proper gigs with vinyl for 5 years altogether. Sold decks and bought midi controller and soundcard with shit laptop. Didn't work because laptop was shit.. 5 years. sold and bought cd decks nd mixer for 2 years. tried ableton live using midi keyboard. bought traktor and nano midi controller, soundcard. Custom configured. And been using that since.

How would you consider your style of DJing? (Technique, etc)

Traditional method because of past experienced. Want to upgrade to 4 decks. Wanted analogue mixer for real time mixing but Now with powerful laptop you go route digital mixer. Play short bit of track and then onto the next one

What is your current DJ set up?

Traktor pro with nano midi controller and souncard.

Does your DJ set-up dictate your style of DJing or does your DJing style dictate your DJ set-up?

Equipment holding pauric back. Could only use what he could afford but want to upgrade to suit his own style with

What are your views on DJs that still use vinyl today to DJ?

He loves it. Love to see vinyls played. Just visual aspect and respect for dj. Different respect for vinyl dj. Good to see djs pushing vinyl with 3 decks etc

What are your views on DJs that use software such as Ableton to DJ?

Think its great. Pushing it forward. If it wasn't there software nobody would be pushing limits. With software thers more respect for the vinyl dj. even with all the controls you don't actually know what theyre are doing visually because of custom set up. Theres space to deceive the crowd. But wouldn't think it happens to often though.

There is a huge visual aspect to djing that gets overlooked.

Anything else you wish to add that could be helpful to my dissertation?

Worst thing about laptops is everyone can see what track you are playing. Everyone has the same music because of this.

Tell me a bit about your background. What got you into music?

Genetics? I've always been into music for as long as I can remember. The radio was always on and I embraced anything that came out of it. My first real influence was from my neighbour - a West Indian family who ran a sound system, thus my lifelong love of dub reggae was born, alongside anything that had a good beat, be it soul, funk or disco. I veered away from black music for a while and headed off down the Punk route in the late 70s for a while, but soon came back to my roots via the winding road that was synth pop, which of course included Kraftwerk and then Planet Rock. I've been with every sort of dance music since then, but my taste is still pretty eclectic really. Good music is good music.

At what point did DJing come into you life? How long have you been DJing for?

That's easy - when Hip Hop arrived. I'll clarify that by saying Electro (the original Electro - not the name hijacked EDM stuff). I bought Planet Rock along with a healthy selection of other releases that complimented my existing Electronica collection. But instead of hitting the floor so much, I soon developed an interest in the DJs making the music. I've always been creative, so the idea of manipulating music and making beats soon took over my life. This would really be around the time of Rockit, Wildstyle and 2-3-Break when I started making pause button mixtapes, so that's 1983 - bugger me, that's 28 years!

How would you consider your style of DJing? (Technique, etc)

Being old school, I'm very hands on. Obviously, running skratchworx gives me every progressive angle possible and I love it all. But I'm still very much about manipulating traditional vinyl on 2 turntables. It's in my blood, and I have so much history and memories invested into it. I don't buy the "real DJ" crap that floats around - it's just my preference. There's a world of DJs filling clubs would don't even touch vinyl so who am I - or anyone else for that matter - to judge?

I've spun Hip Hop, Chicago House, Detroit Techno and Acid House before settling down to do the whole family/mortgage thing, but spinning vinyl is the only constant, both as a mix DJ and turntablist. I like to think I have a rounded skill set. Like most things, I'm a jack of all trades.

What is your current DJ set up?

A tough question - it's so transient. Stuff comes in, some stays but most goes again. But at the core are a pair of Numark TTX turntables and a Rodec Scratchbox. I've got a Vestax VCI-300, but there's a stream of 4 channel MIDI controllers coming through

my office right now. Which one I'd pick as a permanent fixture is a tough one. And I'm lucky enough to not have to decide on a single DVS to use either.

Does your DJ set-up dictate your style of DJing or does your DJing style dictate your DJ set-up?

Within reason, most styles of DJing can be carried out on a fairly standard set of equipment. DJing at its core is mixing record A to record B and back again, and in most cases that's what DJ gear is. It's the finer details of the scene or genre that dictate the gear being used. For example, Hip Hop DJing is really very simple - sort mixes often littered with spinback transitions or slam mixes. You can do that on most equipment, but turn up to a Hip Hop gig with a cheap MIDI controller and you'll be bottled off stage.

EDM for example has a more demanding audience, who often won't tolerate simple A to B mixing, and at this point the DJ becomes much more of a performer, and thus the gear setup changes into something more capable than a pair of belt drives and a Blue Dog mixer. Likewise, I've seen DJ setups that look like a technology showcase, but the DJ has done nothing more than blend track to track in a bland style crushing way.

To paraphrase your question into an answer - your DJ setup does indicate your DJ style, but doesn't necessarily define it.

What are your views on DJs that still use vinyl today to DJ?

I'll answer this as a 2 parter to cover all bases:

1. DJs who still spin real vinyl are a dying breed. Some scenes dictate it - usually those rooted in the past like the Northern Soul scene or DJs who still spin reggae 45s. It's a niche discerning audience and something that I love to death. The DJ is core to the culture and I hope it'll be preserved and carries on for years to come.

2. DJs using DVS systems are simply adapting their tried and tested skills into a modern method of music control, and at the same time getting a heap of new tools that they'd never have with traditional vinyl - and of course not having to carry many bags of expensive vinyl to gigs either. But here's the thing that DJs forget - when you put timecode vinyl on your turntable, you turned your deck into a controller or the music you were sent, bought online or just grabbed from a torrent. I'll just leave that one there for people to think about.

Let's be under no illusion here though - vinyl is on life support. Almost nothing new is released on vinyl, and despite people tossing around stupid percentages in terms of vinyl sales increases year on year, 100% increase in nothing is still nothing. New music is largely on new media, or most likely no media at all.

The whole culture surrounding digging, searching and buying a physical piece of

music cannot be matched. I seriously lament the loss of such times, which has all but been replaced by hitting the download button. But it really does save so many things, namely space, money, time and cost. As a working DJ, you can't really knock the digital age at all.

What are your views on DJs that use software such as Ableton to DJ

They're all tools to be used in my book. I've watched DJs totally deconstruct a track down to its bare bones and completely rebuild it, and throw other tracks along the way for good measure - all live. As long as it sounds good and the DJ's performance isn't geeked out into a computer science session where the screen seems more important that the the crowd then it's all good.

Anything else you wish to add that could be helpful to my dissertation?

Remember one overwhelmingly important thing - it's your skills that make you a DJ and not the gear. The most expensive setup on the planet is of little use if you don't have the right music for the crowd, can't read the crowd and don't know which track to drop into the mix and when to do it. Despite all the advances in technology, the DJ's human skills are by far the most important.

Interview 3

Tell me a bit about your background. What got you into music?

I got into music well the dj aspect around 1979 trying to be the next Grandmaster Flash were I'm from Trenton ,NJ it was very popular to be a Dj say the TRi State Area NY NJ & PA or CT depends on how you group them states. A few years later I was given my 1st drum machine a Roland TR 606 by given by my mentor Jasper Bradley. I then went on to start and become a member of the Geto Boys out of Houston Tx had success with from 1987-91 produced some gold and platinum records during my time there are biggest hit 'My Mind Playing Tricks "

At what point did DJing come into you life? How long have you been DJing for?

Ive been Djing since late 1979 so almost 31 years after hearing Grandmaster Flash I was hooked

How would you consider your style of DJing? (Technique, etc)

I am a hip hop dj cutting scratching and blending the whole aspect of what a dj should be able to to do
What is your current DJ set up?

 2- Stanton STR-8 150's and a Rane 57sl

Does your DJ set-up dictate your style of DJing or does your DJing style dictate your DJ set-up?

 No just shows that I do it the old way with a twist

What are your views on DJs that still use vinyl today to DJ?

  I still use vinyl if my life came down to it I would just use records I wouldn't trust a DVS system that just me I have fun with them when I do use Serato

What are your views on DJs that use software such as Ableton to DJ?

Enjoy the technology that that's available to you I don't hate and any aspect of the art

Tell me a bit about your background. What got you into music?

Loved pop music from a love of radio as a child, through which I
discovered the music of the 70s/80s. Was a self-taught guitarist as a
teenager, played in a band, wrote the songs.

At what point did DJing come into you life? How long have you been DJing for?

Got into DJing & promoting at school, putting on school parties etc.
Then bought a mobile disco - thsat was all 1986.

How would you consider your style of DJing? (Technique, etc)

I can beatmix, I can do tricks, I can use CDs, vinyl, computers etc,
but my style is to "let the records speak for themselves" - I like to
programme my sets carefully, react to the crowd, and trust my musical
intuition about what to play next. Technique is important, but not as
important as programming. The music has to come first, not the DJ.

What is your current DJ set up?
I have most modern digital equipment at my disposal due to my job, but
my rig for playing out is a Macbook Pro and a Vestax VCI-300 with
VFX-1 FX section.

**Does your DJ set-up dictate your style of DJing or does your DJing style dictate
your DJ set-up?**
I look for the set-up that suits my style. For instance, I am getting
into loops and reediting on the fly, and the VCI limits me as it is
basically a "two decks and a mixer" paradigm, so I'm hungry for
change. But the music should dictate the technology, definitely.

What are your views on DJs that still use vinyl today to DJ
They are limiting themselves as most music doesn't come out on vinyl,
which trumps all other arguments. But as long as they are aware of
that, and they don't feel that what they are doing is inherently
superior to any other type of DJ, let them continue. there's certainly
an art to DJing with vinyl that has worth.

What are your views on DJs that use software such as Ableton to DJ?

It's great, but the danger is that the DJ will spend more time worrying about the technology that the crowd and the next record. If you can't DJ happily on something after a few beers because it suddenly becomes too complicated, you ought to look at finding a more streamlined way of DJing.

<center>**Interview 5**</center>

Tell me a bit about your background. What got you into music?

My name is Jon Voigt. I'm 33 years old. Live in Cedar Falls, Iowa USA. Rapper, dj, and beat maker.
I've been hooked on rap music since 5th grade when my older sister brought home a dubbed cassette
tape of NWA. Never looked back.

At what point did DJing come into you life? How long have you been DJing for?

I started rapping first....still emcee. Where I'm from, specifically the state of Iowa, if you are a hip hop artist you are
pretty much alone in your endevours. I realized I would have to make my own beats. So I started rapping and producing.
I worked with another local rapper at a bar. We deejayed if you wanna call it that. I call it we pressed play but that's a whole
other discussion. Anyway his roommate worked there first and he was helping clean out a storage closet at this bar one day
and way in the back under dust and boxes out come not one but two Technic 1200 MKIIs. And since the bar had switched over
to CDs he got them for FREE. I ended up hounding this guy for the tables and he finally realized he wasn't gonna really use em
so he sold them to be on contract for like $450....had to pay him $50 every two weeks. So I've had my tables for maybe 7 or 8 years,
maybe longer. I played them, practiced on em for years but not really until this past year have I really focused. I could see myself
quitting rapping and beat making completely...who knows.

How would you consider your style of DJing? (Technique, etc)

I am not a club DJ. Don't know how to rock a party. I am stritcly a hip hop show dj. I scratch. I juggle. End of story.

What is your current DJ set up?

2 Technic 1200 MKIIs, Vestax 05ProII, Serato SL3, MacBook, MPC500 (as a midi controller)

Does your DJ set-up dictate your style of DJing or does your DJing style dictate your DJ set-up?

I definitely dictate what is what. I choose the components to fit my style. If I wanted to start club deejaying
I think I would get a controller like the NUMARK NS7....but I don't.

What are your views on DJs that still use vinyl today to DJ?

I don't care what anybody says....DVS setups do NOT 100% recreate the sound you get from vinyl.
And little platters on controllers don't come close to the feel. Even my Serato Control Vinyl feel twice as heavy
as Dirtstyle records. But with that said DVS comes close. Close enough were I'm using vinyl less and less.
I don't ever juggle with vinyl anymore. I break out the vinyl records to scratch...but not always.

I think its cool if people still use vinyl....but its almost pointless....unless you are some audiophile nerd junkie
you won't notice the difference in sound quality especially if your drunk dancing at a bar...and even if you did
would you care?

What are your views on DJs that use software such as Ableton to DJ?

Whatever works for you do it. But if you can only learn to scratch and juggle using tables. Turntables. The
real ones...12" platters. I'm probably the wrong guy to ask about these kinds of new dj vs old dj questions cuz
I really only care about battle style djs and if you come in with a 7" control platter and have no scratch skills its evident right away.
DJ Rob Swift or QBert could rock the hell outta some 7" platters.....so if that's what you wanna use then use em....skill is skill.
But anyone I've ever seen rock the shit outta a small controller platter is some amazing DJ who uses tables....or at the very least
started on tables.

Anything else you wish to add that could be helpful to my dissertation?

DJ technology is GREAT! Forget all that old school its gotta be 1200s or nothing talk. I remember when Serato / Final Scratch / Etc
first came out and djs all over the world were debating the purity of it all. That lastest like 1 year. Up until DJs realized how great
it all was. Nobody's talking that bs now. So why are we downplaying controllers and software. I mean club DJs have mastered skills
that no software can reproduce. Knowing what song to play...using your hands and ears to mix songs live....etc. You gotta have skill
and talent and a work ethic to be good at whatever you wanna do in life. So some guy gets a gig by having one laptop and a bunch of
songs on it. He aint taking A-Trak's spot in some Paris club anytime soon. And you aint winning the DMC Championships by premixing
some tracks and hitting a hotcue button. But guarantee the top djs in the world are

made so much better with new technology. People
with actual tangible skills are gonna take deejaying to a whole new level with
controllers, software, etc.

All I want is a Rane Serato 1200 SL5. A Technic table with hotcue buttons right
under the platter. But MPC style buttons. So it'd probably have
to be a Rane Akai Serato 1200 SL5.   Rotary knobs that are assignable. Maybe a
digital display. Give me a table to take advantage of the
new tech.

Moldover Interview Questions

Tell me a bit about your background. What got you into music?

At what point did DJing come into you life?

How long did you spend DJing for?

How did the idea of controllerism come about?

Define what exactly controllerism is?

If someone uses controllers and software only to perform a traditional DJ set, ie mixing one track into another continuously, is that person performing controllerism?

//If not, why not?/Where do you draw the line?

Do you believe that the controllerist falls under the category of the DJ?

How does controllerism relate to DJing?

You make your own custom controllers for performing. Where did you get the technical know how to make these?/Do you have a background in electronic?

How is your tour going for you?

Is there anything else you would like to add regarding your views on DJ/controller technology?