

# Making music in the new economy

An educational resource by:

Royal Geographical Society  
with IBG

**New Economy:** Through the process of globalisation, the countries of the world are coming together into a single economic system. The things that we buy (food, electronics, clothes, services, music) are produced in many different parts of the world, which are becoming increasingly interconnected. This made possible by:

- **Networks:** a 'spiders web' connecting different places to one another
- **Flows:** the way in which things (goods, money, ideas) move through networks
- **Players:** Organisations (companies, governments, the United Nations) that have influence to shape the global economy. Players have varying levels of power.

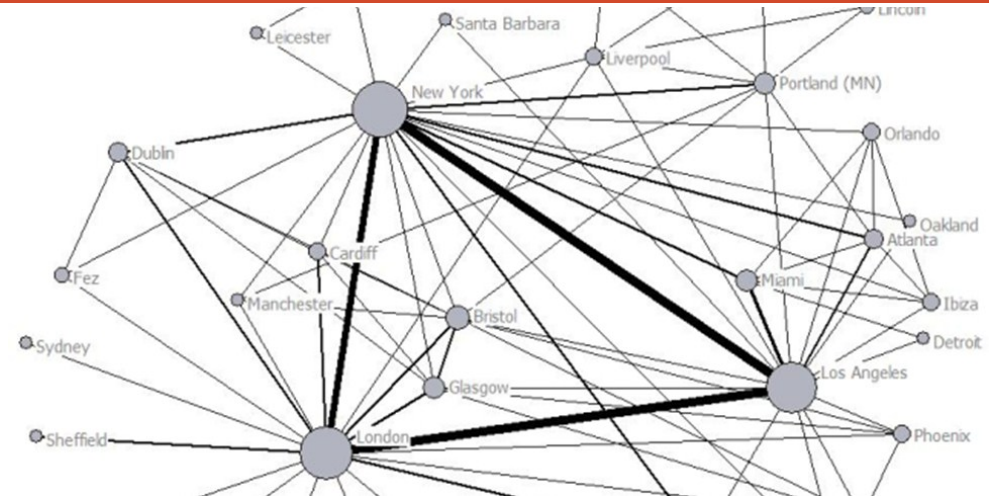


Diagram: The global network of music production for the UK. Credit: Dr Allan Watson



Photo: Alex Turner of Arctic Monkeys performs in Madrid. Credit: Victor Rocés/Flickr

## Case study: Arctic Monkeys

Arctic Monkeys formed in 2002 in High Green, a suburb of Sheffield. But they now have a global reach as illustrated by the geography of their fourth album.

- The album was **written** by lead singer and guitarist Alex Turner in his home: a 4th floor flat in Brooklyn, New York.
- The band all met to **rehearse** the album in an East London synagogue
- It was "grey and horrible" in the UK, so the band were keen to return to California. They decided to **record** the album in Sound City Studios, Los Angeles.
- The album was **distributed** worldwide. It reached top three in the charts of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain and the UK.
- The band undertook a year-long **tour** in support of the album. They visited: Stockholm, Oslo, Washington D.C, New York, Toronto, Sheffield, Paris, Berlin,

# Your task is to...

## CREATE YOUR OWN BAND!

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### Your task

You have just formed a band and must **decide where to make your first album**. You have formed in your hometown but you're going to sell records around the world. This involves choosing somewhere to write, record, produce, distribute, sell and perform the album. Think carefully about the pros and cons of each location.

### Writing

1. **At home.** It may not be glamorous, but it was good enough for Arctic Monkeys' number one album. Save on costs and keep comfy. But be warned that you might have your mum interrupting your jam sessions every five minutes.
2. **Scottish highlands.** Escape the distractions of everyday life. Facebook, twitter, YouTube and SMS won't bother you in the most remote of areas. Take inspiration from the natural beauty around you.
3. **Mumbai.** Take in the hustle and bustle of this lively Indian city. Broaden your musical horizons and put an Indian twist on your first album. It'll make you stand out in the long-run.

### Recording and producing

1. **Notting Hill.** There are 96 companies located in this "music cluster" in West London. It is one of the best connected musical centres in the world. The four major record labels have their European headquarters within walking distance.
2. **Los Angeles.** Less than 60% as connected as London. Still a major centre of music production. Warm weather and a relaxed atmosphere. Remember, you will have to account for the cost of flights and accommodation.
3. **Liverpool.** A city with a rich musical history, from the Beatles to the Sugababes. Recording studios are cheaper here and they will produce a simple, vintage sound.

### Distributing and selling

1. **United States.** Accounts for an astonishing 40% of the world's total album sales. The Anglophone connection and a similar culture should be of great benefit to you.
2. **United Kingdom.** Your country of residence. A large music industry to tap into. TV and radio appearances should be easier to come by. Get support from your home nation before going global.
3. **Japan.** The second largest consumer of music worldwide. Your music will have to adapted to the local demands from the start of the writing phase, however.

### Performing

1. **Shanghai.** A gateway to the large (and growing) music market of East Asia. The Chinese city is one of best connected is in the Eastern hemisphere.
2. **Bristol.** Launching your first album in your home country may mean that fans warm to you more. Develop a modest but loyal following of committed music fans with a smaller city gig.
3. **New York.** Thrust yourself into the media spotlight in the city that never sleeps. There are lots of other acts trying to "make it" so the competition will be fierce.

**EXTRA: Come up with your own locations if think your band would benefit from a different geography. Make sure you think globally. The limits are endless!**