

A Slice of Fairness

Aslice's Successful Model
For Rebalancing
DJ And Producer Income Inequality



Executive Summary

\$422,696

Total amount shared by DJs with
producers via Aslice

In the electronic music industry, where DJs often command substantial fees while producers struggle to make ends meet, Aslice emerged as a revolutionary platform aimed at rebalancing this stark economic disparity. By enabling DJs to voluntarily share a portion of their earnings directly with the producers whose tracks they play, Aslice not only addressed a long-standing issue of income inequality but also proved the viability of a more equitable payment model. From its inception to its closure on September 3rd 2024, Aslice redistributed \$422,696 from 7,396 playlists submitted by 935 DJs to 27,395 producers across 57 countries, processing 85,265 unique tracks from a total of 355,163 reported plays. This groundbreaking initiative, achieved with limited resources, demonstrated the potential for transformative change in how electronic music creators are compensated and recognized for their work.

While \$422,696 may seem small compared to the overall industry, it represents a significant proof of concept achieved with limited resources. Many of the 4,069 registered producers earned money for their work for the first time. The scale demonstrates the potential for much larger impact if adopted more widely.

The Broken System: A Call for Change

There is a stark disparity in compensation between producers and DJs. This imbalance is rooted in outdated payment models and ineffective royalty collection systems. From research we did with Toolroom Records¹ earlier this year we know that: 76% of surveyed artists consider their careers financially unsustainable • 82% of artists seek employment outside music, often in full-time roles • 87% of working DJs believe that merely purchasing music fails to adequately compensate producers.

Traditional Performance Rights Organizations have not adapted to the unique aspects of electronic music. From research we did for Aslice², we know that 70% of DJs using Aslice do not engage with Performance Rights Organisations (PROs) • Of those aware but not participating with PROs, 60% express a lack of trust in these organisations to allocate funds correctly.

¹ Source: Audience Strategies survey of 273 emerging electronic music producers for Toolroom Records in 2024. <https://toolroomacademy.com/features/from-mix-to-mainstage>

² Source: Audience Strategies Aslice User Survey 2024. Conducted for this report.



PROs' failure to support the electronic music scene is evident in several key areas:

1. **Technological stagnation:** Despite the prevalence of digital DJing, PROs have not invested in user-friendly digital interfaces for playlist submission.
2. **Lack of human touch:** Unlike Aslice, which actively reached out to artists, PROs typically do not engage in proactive outreach or community building.
3. **Registration barriers:** PROs often require complex registration processes, creating obstacles for emerging artists and those producing unreleased or promotional tracks.
4. **Inability to track unreleased music:** PROs struggle to compensate for the many unreleased tracks that are crucial to the electronic music scene.
5. **Outdated distribution models:** PROs often distribute unmatched royalties to top-tier artists rather than the actual producers, exacerbating industry inequality.
6. **Low accuracy rates:** PROs' track matching systems are significantly less accurate than Aslice's 99.8% accuracy rate.
7. **No retrospective payments:** Unlike Aslice, PROs typically don't pay retrospectively if a producer wasn't registered at the time of play.

The financial reality for producers is stark: 82% of producers earned less than \$500 in the past year from releasing music • Only 12% of producers can rely on music production as their primary income • 65% of producers feel pressure to become DJs to earn money from their music

Illustration of the broken system: A renowned London nightclub pays an estimated £35,000 annually in public performance fees • After deductions, only about £9 per night of operation is typically allocated for royalty distribution to artists whose music was played and reported • This meagre sum is expected to cover all tracks played by all DJs in all three rooms during a night.

These statistics underscore the urgent need for a more equitable, transparent, and efficient system of compensation in electronic music. Aslice emerged as a direct response to these systemic failures, offering a technology-driven solution to redistribute income more fairly between DJs and producers.



Proof of Concept: Aslice in Action

DJ Engagement: 935 DJs from 57 countries actively participated in the platform • The average contribution per DJ was \$422 • The top 10 DJs shared a combined total of \$257,000, accounting for 65% of all earnings distributed through Aslice • 37 DJs shared \$1,000 or more, collectively representing 76% of the total earnings shared

Producer Impact: 4,069 registered producers earned money through Aslice • A total of \$422,696 was collected for producers • 29% of surveyed producers earned money for their production work for the first time through Aslice • Among producers receiving payments from both Aslice and other channels, 60% reported that their Aslice earnings exceeded income from either physical sales, streaming, or performance rights • The highest-earning producer on Aslice received \$4,909 across 9 payments for 815 plays, averaging \$6.02 per play • The top 10 producers collectively earned \$27,272, accounting for 11.6% of total producer earnings on the platform

Technology and Efficiency

User-friendly technology was key to its success: 93% of DJs who use Aslice reported that the playlist submission process is either fairly or very simple • 54% described the process as 'very simple', highlighting the platform's success in reducing friction³

Aslice achieved industry-leading accuracy in track matching: 99.8% accuracy rate in matching tracks to producers • Only 659 out of 355,163 total reported and processed tracks in the system went unmatched (0.19%) • The human touch was essential, but the machine learning algorithm improved dramatically over time: 59% of tracks matched in its first month, 92% by the end of its first year, 94% over the past 12 months.

The platform's ability to track and compensate for both released and unreleased tracks addressed a significant blind spot in conventional royalty collection methods. This feature was particularly valuable in electronic music, where promotional and exclusive tracks are common.

³ Source: Audience Strategies Aslice User Survey 2024. Conducted for this report



Community Impact

Aslice fostered a strong sense of community and mutual support: 82% of DJs reported feeling good about doing the right thing by sharing playlists • 75% felt more connected to the music community through using Aslice

The platform had a particularly strong impact in the techno genre: 96% of DJs on the platform (894 out of 935) played some genre of techno • 90% of all earnings shared (\$380,850 out of \$422,696) came from techno DJs • 57% of the music on submitted playlists came from registered producers, underscoring the robust ecosystem of mutual support within techno • The strong adoption in techno demonstrates the model's effectiveness and provides a template that could be adapted for other genres

Challenges and Missed Opportunities

Impact of Industry Cynicism: Aslice faced significant scepticism that hindered broader adoption • Despite outreach to over 2,000 professional DJs, many remained hesitant • Some questioned the necessity, arguing existing Performance Rights Organisations (PROs) should solve the problem ... despite 70% of DJs using Aslice not engaging with PROs, and 60% of those aware of PROs but not participating expressing a lack of trust in these organisations to allocate funds correctly • Others were reluctant to share earnings, viewing it as an unfair additional cost • Concerns about accuracy and potential abuse persisted, despite Aslice's 99.8% track-matching accuracy • This cynicism highlights the challenge of implementing systemic change in an industry with entrenched practices

Despite its successes, Aslice faced significant challenges in achieving widespread adoption: Only 5.9% of 15,845 working DJs (with one or more upcoming shows on Resident Advisor) shared earnings through Aslice • 15.1% of active DJs registered, but 61% never submitted a playlist • Just 40 more top-tier DJs would have made Aslice financially viable • The top 10 DJs on Aslice accounted for 65% of all earnings shared • Only 12% of participating DJs (115 out of 935) reported monthly playlists, generating 79% of shared earnings⁴

Financial Sustainability Challenges: Despite a 15% fee on shared earnings, Aslice struggled to achieve financial sustainability • The platform's annual operational costs, including staff, development, and technology, amounted to approximately \$250,000 • This figure was kept low via machine learning and other efficiencies, staff working at below-market rates and the founder drawing no salary • The total net revenue during private and public beta from fees, approximately \$63,404 over three years, fell significantly short of covering these expenses, highlighting the need for broader adoption to achieve viability

⁴ Source: Audience Strategies Aslice User Survey 2024, Audience Strategies analysis of Aslice transaction data and Audience Strategies analysis of data from Resident Advisor. All conducted for this report.



User Retention: Mixed Engagement from DJs: 64% of DJs who submitted one playlist went on to submit a second • 52% of DJs active for over a year remained engaged • 71% of non-participating DJs cited insufficient earnings as the main barrier • Only 22% of surveyed DJs consider DJing their primary income source • 82% of surveyed DJs earn less than \$200 per gig

Limited Adoption Among Top DJs: Only 4.7% (56) of the top 1,199 DJs on Resident Advisor (those with 5+ upcoming events) participated in Aslice • Among techno DJs, the participation rate doubled, but still limited at 9% • For the most popular DJs (10k+ followers and 5+ upcoming gigs), only 9 out of 103 techno DJs participated • This data underscores the challenge Aslice faced in achieving widespread adoption, particularly among industry leaders

Industry Insights

Aslice's data revealed important insights about the electronic music industry: 70% of DJs using Aslice do not engage with Performance Rights Organizations • 87% of DJs believe that merely purchasing digital or vinyl music fails to adequately compensate producers • 82% of producers earned less than \$500 in the past year from releasing music (excluding income from Performance Rights Organizations) • 93% of producers feel they are not fairly compensated for their work

The platform also highlighted the prevalence of free promotional tracks: Top-tier DJs earning \$1,000+ per gig have 37% of their sets comprising free promotional tracks • This contrasts with mid-level DJs (12% promos) and entry-level DJs (6% promos)



Conclusion

Aslice's Enduring Legacy: Despite closure, Aslice's impact extends beyond its operational lifespan • The platform proved the viability of a more equitable, transparent payment model • Aslice's technology and processes are being offered to the industry for potential future initiatives • As part of its closure plan, Aslice pledged to liquidate all outstanding payments to producers, regardless of amount • The project sparked crucial conversations about fair compensation and transparency in electronic music • Aslice set a new standard for what artists can expect and demand in terms of fair compensation, recognition, and ethical operation • The lessons learned from Aslice will be crucial in shaping more equitable compensation models in the future

Aslice's journey demonstrates both the potential and challenges of implementing a more equitable payment model in the electronic music industry. The platform successfully proved that there is willingness among many DJs to support producers financially, that technology can streamline the process of tracking and compensating for music plays, and that direct artist-to-artist payments can create meaningful income for producers.

Key lessons from Aslice's experience include the critical importance of top-tier DJ buy-in, the power of user-friendly technology, and the need for industry-wide education on fair compensation. While Aslice's operational phase has concluded, its legacy as a proof of concept for a fairer, more transparent system will continue to influence industry discussions and practices.

As the electronic music ecosystem evolves, stakeholders across the industry are called upon to build on Aslice's groundwork. Whether through technological innovation, policy changes, or grassroots initiatives, the path toward more equitable compensation models is clearer thanks to Aslice's pioneering efforts. The future of fair pay in electronic music now depends on the industry's collective will to turn these lessons into lasting change.



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Introduction

The electronic music industry has long grappled with a significant disparity in compensation between producers and DJs. While producers create the tracks that light up dancefloors, they often see minimal financial returns. In contrast, DJs who play these tracks frequently command substantial fees.

Our research with Toolroom Records⁵ earlier this year highlighted this issue, revealing that over 75% of artists consider their careers financially unsustainable. This forces 82% to seek employment outside music, often hindering their career progression.

I met Aslice at the 2022 International Music Summit in Ibiza. Their innovative approach to addressing income inequality in electronic music resonated deeply. The sense of hope and community that they embodied was inspiring, and their vision of a more equitable future driven by collective action and technology seemed like a beacon of positive change. I offered our support. However, I still remember the undercurrent of cynicism from others in the industry. Many expressed doubts about Aslice's viability and the industry's willingness to change. At the time, I brushed off these concerns, not realising how significant they would prove to be.

Nearly two years later, Aslice reached out for assistance. Contrary to expectations of supporting their growth, we were tasked with documenting the history of an initiative that was closing. Despite this outcome, we recognised the importance of chronicling Aslice's journey. Over recent months, Rufy Anam Ghazi, Simon Jacobs and I have collaborated closely with the Aslice team to present their story comprehensively and objectively.

This report captures the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from this bold community-driven initiative. It reflects on the power of hope and community action, as well as the unexpected impact of industry cynicism. By documenting Aslice's approach and the data it generated, we aim to inform future efforts towards a more equitable music industry, while providing a candid look at the obstacles such initiatives may face.

It's clear that the cynicism I initially dismissed turned out to be a much more formidable barrier than anticipated. The Aslice story exposes a disconnect between the desire for fairness and the willingness to act on it. It challenges us to confront an uncomfortable reality - that the greatest obstacle to progress is not technological limitations or lack of solutions. This report serves as both a celebration of what's possible and a call to action, urging us to examine why, even in the face of elegant solutions, we often choose the comfort of the status quo over the demonstrated possibility of a more equitable future.



David Boyle, Audience Strategies, August 2024

⁵ Source: Audience Strategies survey of 273 emerging electronic music producers for Toolroom Records in 2024.
<https://toolroomacademy.com/features/from-mix-to-mainstage>



Methodology: An Independent Perspective

Audience Strategies was commissioned to conduct this independent analysis of Aslice's operations and impact on the electronic music industry. It is crucial to note that this report represents our own work and conclusions, not those of Aslice. The Aslice team entrusted us with the task of telling the story that we believe best fits the facts, granting us full independence in our approach and narrative. Our methodology was comprehensive and impartial. We designed, conducted, and analysed a survey of Aslice users, providing insights into the experiences of both DJs and producers. We also performed in-depth analysis of raw transaction data provided by Aslice, ensuring our findings are grounded in factual, quantitative evidence. To provide context and qualitative depth, we interviewed industry professionals, scrutinised social media commentary, and carefully selected artist quotes that we felt best illustrated key points. This approach allowed us to construct a complete view of Aslice's operations, achievements, and challenges. Our independence in this process was paramount, enabling us to present an objective assessment of Aslice's impact on the electronic music landscape.



Overview: Rebalancing the Economics

The electronic music industry stands at a critical juncture, grappling with longstanding issues of income inequality and fundamentally broken compensation models. Aslice emerged as a bold endeavour to address these challenges, offering a technology-driven solution to redistribute income more equitably between DJs and producers. This report provides a comprehensive analysis of Aslice's impact and the lessons it offers for the future of fair compensation in the music industry.

"... Aslice is one of the most important, exciting, and altruistic projects our scene has ever seen! It shines a light on the disparity in economics between producers and DJs and recognizes the intrinsic value music has for every performance. DJs have nothing to say without the music and artists behind it ..."
 - Richie Hawtin (DJ and Producer / Canada)

Key findings include:

1. **Proof of Concept:** Aslice successfully collected \$422,696 from 935 DJs to 27,395 producers across 57 countries, demonstrating the viability of a more equitable payment model.
 - a. **First-Time Earnings:** 29% of producers earned money for production for the first time through Aslice, highlighting the platform's role in opening new revenue streams.
 - b. **Competitive Compensation:** 60% of producers reported that their Aslice earnings exceeded income from traditional sources (sales, streaming, or performance rights).
2. **Scalable Impact:** The top 10 DJs on the platform contributed 65% of all earnings distributed, illustrating the potential for significant impact with broader adoption among high-earning artists.
3. **Community Building:** Beyond financial benefits, Aslice fostered a sense of community and support within the electronic music scene, addressing both economic and emotional needs of artists.
4. **Technological Innovation:** Aslice's user-friendly interface and ability to track both released and unreleased tracks demonstrated how technology can streamline payments.
5. **Industry Wake-Up Call:** Aslice's success exposes the limitations of traditional compensation models and challenges the status quo, prompting a reconsideration of value distribution.
6. **Industry Cynicism:** Aslice faced significant scepticism. This, combined with a lack of widespread adoption by top-tier DJs, ultimately hindered the platform's ability to achieve long-term sustainability.



While Aslice's closure shows that more DJ support was ultimately needed, its achievements offer valuable insights for future initiatives. The platform's ability to engage artists, facilitate direct payments, and promote transparency provides a blueprint for addressing income inequality in the music industry.

This report examines Aslice's journey, from its innovative approach to the challenges it faced, offering a view of both its successes and limitations. As the industry continues to evolve, the lessons learned from Aslice will be crucial in shaping equitable compensation models and fostering a fairer, more sustainable ecosystem.

"... It always felt a bit off because there is no me without [producers]. I [now] have a chance to financially support those who partly define me as a DJ in the most simple, transparent way possible ..."
- MARRØN (DJ / Netherlands)



Electronic Music's Faulty Payment Model

The electronic music industry stands at a critical juncture, where technological innovation and creative output are flourishing, yet financial rewards remain unevenly distributed. There are systemic challenges within the current compensation models for electronic music producers and DJs. From the limitations of traditional Performance Rights Organisations to the economic pressures faced by emerging artists, the industry's payment structures often fail to reflect the true value of musical contributions.

Collection societies aren't working for electronic music. Our survey⁶ for this report showed that, among the DJs who use Aslice, 70% do not engage with Performance Rights Organisations, suggesting a preference for Aslice's model. The reasons for this discrepancy between sentiment and action are multifaceted. For Performance Rights Organisations, there's a significant awareness gap – 60% of non-submitting DJs were unaware they could or should submit playlists. Among those aware but not participating, 60% express a lack of trust in these organisations to allocate funds correctly.

Producers aren't getting paid. A recent report we wrote with Toolroom Records⁷ underscores the pressing need for initiatives like Aslice in the electronic music industry. The data paints a stark picture of financial instability among artists, with over three-quarters of respondents indicating their careers are not financially sustainable. This precarity forces 82% of artists to seek employment outside of music, often in full-time roles, particularly among older artists with greater financial responsibilities. The struggle to balance these jobs with creative pursuits significantly hinders career progression for more than half of the surveyed artists.⁸

70%

Of Aslice DJs do not submit playlists to Performing Rights Organisations

"... The current system is broken; Aslice provides a way to restore some equity. I joined Aslice because the royalties collected by APRA and PPCA are an obsolete model. They are not flowing toward the right people, so I thought I'd join the disruption ..." – Acid Safari (DJ and Producer / Australia)

The need for a solution is widely recognised by DJs. Of the 469 working DJs surveyed for this report⁹, an overwhelming 87% believe that merely purchasing digital or vinyl music fails to adequately compensate producers. There's a strong consensus that DJs earning from gigs should share their income with producers, particularly when they receive most of their music for free (87% agree). Even among DJs who purchase a significant portion of their music, 75% support the idea of income sharing.

⁶ Source: Audience Strategies Aslice User Survey 2024. Conducted for this report.

⁷ Source: Audience Strategies survey of 273 emerging electronic music producers for Toolroom Records in 2024. <https://toolroomacademy.com/features/from-mix-to-mainstage>

⁸ Source: Audience Strategies Aslice User Survey 2024. Conducted for this report.

⁹ Source: Audience Strategies Aslice User Survey 2024. Conducted for this report.



The Broken Beats of Conventional Performance Payments

Traditional payment models of compensation for artists whose work is played publicly have never worked for electronic music. ASCAP and BMI are the two most widely recognized Performance Rights Organisations. ASCAP was founded in 1914, while BMI was founded in 1939. It's worth noting that the Technics SL-1200 turntables were introduced to the world in 1972, and turntablism and DJing only became popular in the 80s and 90s.

Performance Rights Organisations are charged with collecting and distributing royalties, but have been hampered by outdated systems ill-equipped to accurately track and compensate for music played in clubs and at festivals. They've not invested enough in updating these systems and the artists that make the music that gets played have suffered as a result.

The limitations of traditional Performance Rights Organisations (PROs) become starkly apparent when compared to Aslice's model. A prime example is a renowned London nightclub, which illustrates the stark disparity between fees paid and royalties distributed to artists.

Let's break down the economics:

- The nightclub pays an estimated £35,000 annually in public performance fees.
- After fees and deductions, only about £9 per night is typically allocated for royalty distribution to artists whose music is played.
- Consider a typical night at this club: Three rooms, each featuring DJs playing music for six hours straight. Conservatively assuming each song lasts about five minutes, in each room, a DJ would play approximately 72 songs over six hours. Across all three rooms, about 216 songs would be played throughout the night.
- When we divide the £9 royalty pool by the 216 songs played, each track earns a mere 4 pence (5c) in royalties. This minuscule amount is expected to cover all tracks played during the night, regardless of the number of DJs, rooms, or the duration of their sets.

In stark contrast, Aslice's model ensures that a much larger portion of shared earnings goes directly to producers. **The average payout per track per play across all of Aslice's payments is \$1.60.** This means that for a single play in a club, an Aslice-using DJ would generate 31.5 times more revenue for the producer than the traditional PRO model in our London club example.

\$0.05

Estimated per-track payment by
Performing Rights Organisation for a
renowned London nightclub

\$1.60

Average per track per play
across all of Aslice's payments



To put this into perspective:

- The \$1.60 Aslice per track per play payment is nearly double what an artist would make on **Bandcamp** (\$0.81) or more than triple the earnings from **Beatport** (\$0.50) after a typical 50/50 label split on a single sale.
- To earn the same \$1.60 from streaming services, an artist would need approximately 366 plays on **Spotify** or 218 plays on **Apple Music**.
- **The highest-earning producer on Aslice** received an average of \$6.02 per play, which is equivalent to what an artist would earn from over 1,378 Spotify streams or 819 Apple Music streams - for a single play of their track by a DJ using Aslice.
- **The highest per track per play on Aslice** was \$36.93. Meaning that on that specific playlist, every track reported was paid out \$36.93!

\$1.60

Average per track per play
across all of Aslice's payments

366

Spotify Plays needed to earn the same

Furthermore, unlike the one-time sales on platforms like Bandcamp or Beatport, or the accumulation of streams, Aslice payments are ongoing. This provides a consistent revenue stream each time a track is played, creating a more sustainable economic environment for electronic music producers. This model particularly benefits those whose tracks are regularly played in clubs but may not have high streaming numbers.

The London nightclub example vividly illustrates how the traditional PRO model fails to adequately compensate artists in the electronic music scene. Despite significant fees being paid by venues, only a fraction reaches the actual creators. Aslice's innovative approach not only offers fairer compensation but also aligns the economic interests of DJs, producers, and venues, potentially transforming the financial landscape of the electronic music industry.

"... Here in Switzerland, our collecting society SUISA, doesn't seem to pay much attention to electronic music played in clubs and festivals. That seems unfair. For me, embracing Aslice wasn't just a choice but a statement of artistic integrity..." - Buds Buzzy (DJ / Switzerland)

Discrete Circuit, the artist name of Berlin-based DJ and producer Andreas Horn, offers a stark comparison between traditional royalty payments and Aslice's model: "I earned more in one quarter with Aslice than in the last decade through GEMA. What accumulates there in a year isn't even enough for a coffee." Horn's commitment to Aslice is notable, with the artist also sharing between 10% and 20% of his DJ fees through Aslice.



Music's Value is Diminishing Due to Demands of Social Media

Our survey¹⁰ for this report revealed that 82% of artists cited "social media status being more important than music" and 54% pointed to a "lack of focus on the music" itself as the most pressing problems for both DJs and producers. These findings highlight the vital importance of Aslice's mission in an era where the value of music seems to be diminishing. By creating a direct link between plays and compensation, Aslice encourages a refocus on musical quality, offering a way to value music on its own merits rather than its online popularity. This approach not only addresses fair compensation but also pushes back against broader trends that threaten to overshadow the music itself, potentially reorienting the electronic music industry back towards its artistic roots.

82%

Artists citing "social media status being more important than music"

Aslice's approach stands in contrast to the proliferation of self-promoted charts and user-generated top 10 lists that often dominate social media but that don't reflect what's actually moving crowds on dancefloors. Aslice paid producers based on the real-world impact of their tracks, rather than their social media savvy.

Producers Are Struggling

The electronic music industry is facing a crisis of sustainability for its creators. A recent survey we conducted with Toolroom Records¹¹ reveals that an overwhelming 76% of emerging electronic music producers do not consider their careers in electronic music to be financially sustainable. 65% of the producers in our survey said they feel pressure to become DJs to earn money from their music. This stark reality forces the vast majority to seek income elsewhere, with 82% relying on jobs unrelated to electronic music. This necessity for multiple income streams not only diverts time and energy from music creation but also highlights the profound challenges faced by those attempting to build a career solely within electronic music.

Most producers in our survey¹² for this report do not release tracks on major labels (4% do so). They mostly release on other peoples' independent labels (91%) or their own label (60%). When it comes to getting paid, just 9% of producers releasing music on others' labels receive payments on a regular schedule. 43% said they never get paid.

43%

Producers saying they never get paid for releases on labels

¹⁰ Source: Audience Strategies Aslice User Survey 2024. Conducted for this report.

¹¹ Source: Audience Strategies survey of 273 emerging electronic music producers for Toolroom Records in 2024. <https://toolroomacademy.com/features/from-mix-to-mainstage>

¹² Source: Audience Strategies Aslice User Survey 2024. Conducted for this report.

"... Some of my favourite producers have full-time jobs, and if only we could free their time so that they can make more music, I'd be the happiest DJ on the planet. The world needs better music and better DJs, and both take time to perform well, but it all starts with great music ..." - Van Anh (DJ / Netherlands)

The shortcomings of the traditional payment models are further exacerbated by the proliferation of digital platforms and the shift away from physical sales. While streaming services have become a primary mode of music consumption, they offer notoriously low payouts to artists, with some estimates suggesting that it takes over 200,000 monthly streams on Spotify to earn minimum wage. This disparity is particularly pronounced in electronic music, where tracks are often designed for specific contexts and communities rather than broad commercial appeal. The result is a system where many producers, even those whose music is regularly played by top DJs, struggle to earn a living wage from their creative output. This imbalance not only threatens the sustainability of the electronic music ecosystem but also undermines the very creativity and innovation that drive the industry forward.

"... While many barriers to entry for artists have dissolved, so have the opportunities for independent music producers to secure a stable and steady income ..." - Mike Swells (DJ and Producer / USA)

Furthermore, while Performing Rights Organisations only pay out for music that is registered with them or found in their respective internal database, Aslice has the ability to track and compensate for both released and unreleased tracks using multiple global databases to make the right match. The ability to compensate every play, whether producers are registered with Performing Rights Organisations or not, addresses a significant blind spot in conventional royalty collection methods. The existing system often fails to support the cutting-edge, promotional tracks that are the lifeblood of electronic music culture.

"... I don't feel performance rights organisations work very well in practice, and people do not always get paid as they should. Given I play a lot of unreleased music; this model allows those artists to get paid way quicker than they would through PRS/PPL ..." - Ant TC1 (DJ and Producer / UK)

"... Big publishing was never made for what we do as DJs. Aslice lets us make sure producers get paid when we play their music, and if you play lots of promos, it's also a nice thank you to those who give you free music ..." - Noncompliant (DJ and Producer / USA)



The Hidden Costs of Free Music

"... It has become increasingly difficult for producers to earn a living. While DJ fees are now at an all-time high, income from streaming and sales have been dwindling. We must come together as a community to recognize that DJs would not benefit from these exorbitant fees without the incredible music created by talented yet struggling artists ..." - Dubfire (DJ and Producer / USA)

Our analysis unveils a stark imbalance in the electronic music ecosystem, highlighting the challenges faced by both emerging DJs and producers. At the top end of the spectrum, established DJs earning \$1,000+ per gig enjoy a significant advantage: on average, 37% of their sets comprise free promotional tracks. This contrasts sharply with mid-level DJs (12% promos) and entry-level DJs (6% promos), illustrating how the economic burden of music acquisition falls disproportionately on emerging talent.

37%

Of sets by top DJs are comprised of free, promotional tracks

"... Why not share a portion of what you earn playing their demos, promos, or releases every weekend? ..." - Oscar Mulero (DJ and Producer / Spain)

"... I'm playing a lot of unreleased music, and with Aslice, I'm able to give something back to the producers who are sending their music even if it's not released ..." - Rødhåd (DJ and Producer / Germany)

This disparity extends to the producers fuelling the industry. While 86% of producers surveyed for this report¹³ send their music to DJs playing paid gigs at clubs and festivals, the financial returns are sobering. Only 12% of producers can rely on music production as their primary income. A staggering 82% earned less than \$500 in the past year from releasing music (excluding income from Performance Rights Organisations), with a similar percentage (78%) earning less than \$500 from Performance Rights Organisations.

86%

Of producers that were surveyed send free music to DJs

12%

Of producers rely on music production as their primary income

"... For a Latino from Venezuela with huge dreams and major challenges, getting Aslice's emails has become one of the biggest motivation forces in the game. Aslice is bringing all artists from top to bottom closer ..." - Confidential Recipe (DJ and Producer / Venezuela)

"... It's mind-blowing that a platform built by and for artists is paying me directly for my music, much more than all streaming platforms combined over the years ..." - Anika Kunst (DJ and Producer / Spain)

¹³ Source: Audience Strategies Aslice User Survey 2024. Conducted for this report.

The cumulative effect is clear: alongside the 87% of DJs who believe that purchasing music fails to adequately compensate producers, 93% of producers feel they are not fairly compensated for their work. This sentiment, coupled with the challenges faced by emerging artists, paints a picture of an industry where value is concentrated at the top, potentially stifling innovation and diversity.

These findings raise critical questions about the sustainability and fairness of the current model. How can we create a more equitable ecosystem that supports both emerging talent and established artists? Addressing this imbalance is crucial for the long-term health and creativity of the electronic music industry.



Aslice: The Birth of Fair Pay

Origins and Vision

Aslice emerged from a simple yet powerful idea: to create a fairer ecosystem in electronic music by enabling DJs to share a portion of their earnings directly with the producers whose tracks they play. This concept, born from the experiences of its founder Zak Khutoretsky (known professionally as DVSI), aimed to address a growing disparity in the industry.

The genesis of Aslice can be traced back to New Year's Eve 2020. Khutoretsky, reflecting on his success as a DJ, recognised that his achievements were intrinsically linked to the music created by producers worldwide. This realisation sparked a desire to find a tangible way to give back to these artists, many of whom struggle to make a living from their craft.

Initially, Khutoretsky considered reaching out personally to thank and compensate producers whose tracks he played regularly. However, the logistical challenges of this approach quickly became apparent. As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, providing unexpected time for reflection, Khutoretsky began to envision a broader solution that could benefit the entire electronic music community.

What began as a personal initiative quickly evolved into a project that would prove that change was possible. Khutoretsky and a small team of artists, producers, PR professionals, former journalists, and tech experts came together to create a fairer music ecosystem. Their efforts highlighted a stark reality: the technology to address income inequality in electronic music was not only possible but achievable with limited resources. This raised important questions about why larger, well-funded entities within the industry had not developed similar solutions. Aslice demonstrated that a small, dedicated group of industry insiders could create what multi-billion dollar corporations and established organisations had failed to deliver.

Their successes underscore the potential for artist-led initiatives to drive meaningful change and expose the inertia of larger industry players in addressing long-standing issues of fair compensation.

The Aslice Model: A Slice of the Pie

At its core, Aslice's mission was twofold:

1. Empower DJs to directly support the artists whose work forms the foundation of their performances
2. Provide a new revenue stream for music producers

The "slice of the pie" concept is straightforward: DJs voluntarily contribute a small percentage of their performance fees – typically around 5% – to be distributed among the producers whose tracks they played during their sets. This approach aims to create a more equitable distribution of income in an industry where DJs often earn substantially more than the producers who create the music they play.



Aslice set out to build a user-friendly platform that would make this sharing process as seamless as possible. By leveraging technology to simplify playlist reporting and automate payments, the project aimed to remove barriers to participation and foster a culture of mutual support within the electronic music scene.

This vision represented an innovative approach to addressing income inequality in the industry, one that relied on community action rather than top-down regulation.

Innovative Features and Technology

After nine months of planning and building the product, six months of private beta, and 2.5+ years of public beta, Aslice leveraged technology to address several long standing issues in the industry:

1. **Streamlined Playlist Submission:** The platform's innovative model streamlined the often cumbersome process of playlist submission and royalty distribution. This ease of use was critical in encouraging DJs to regularly report their playlists, a task that has historically been challenging.
2. **Tracking Released and Unreleased Music:** One of Aslice's key innovations was its ability to track and compensate for unreleased or pre-release tracks, a significant advancement versus the Performing Rights Organisation system in an industry where promotional copies and exclusive tracks are commonplace. By allowing registered producers to add an Aslice ID in their track metadata, the platform further improved its matching to ensure unreleased music could be accurately identified and compensated. This feature addressed a longstanding issue in electronic music, where producers often struggle to monetise their work in the early stages of its lifecycle.
3. **Automated Payments:** The platform automated the payment process, ensuring that once tracks were identified and playlists verified, producers would receive their share efficiently.
4. **Almost Perfect Matching:** Aslice's ability to match almost all tracks played is unheard of. Through a combination of machine learning and human effort, very few tracks went unmatched. *See later chapter for more on this.*

Proactive Producer Outreach and Community Building

In stark contrast to Performing Rights Organisations who would never reach out to try to contact producers and who don't pay retrospectively if a producer isn't registered at the time of the play, Aslice demonstrated a remarkable commitment to ensuring producers received their due compensation, going to great lengths to track down artists entitled to payments:

1. **Dedicated Outreach Team:** Aslice has a dedicated team that actively sought out producers whose tracks had been played, especially those nearing the \$50 payout threshold, to ensure they were in the system to be paid in the upcoming payment cycle.



- 2. Extensive Research:** This proactive approach involved extensive research to locate and contact artists, often through social media or industry connections.
- 3. Personal Engagement:** Aslice's efforts extended beyond mere financial transactions; they aimed to build a community by personally engaging with producers, explaining the platform's mission, and assisting with the registration process.

Beyond its technological solutions, Aslice's human approach fostered a sense of community and shared responsibility within the electronic music scene. The platform's transparency and direct artist-to-artist payment model resonated with many in the industry who had long sought a fairer system. By creating a more direct link between DJs and producers, Aslice not only facilitated financial transactions but also strengthened connections within the music community, encouraging a culture of mutual support and recognition.

Impact and Legacy

As we explore the Aslice story, we'll see what worked as well as the challenges it faced, and the lasting impact it had on the electronic music landscape.

While Aslice's journey as a platform may be concluding, the questions it raised and the solutions it proposed continue to resonate, offering valuable insights for the future of fair compensation in the music industry. The Aslice public beta demonstrated how community-driven initiatives can address systemic inequalities in innovative ways, potentially paving the way for future efforts to create a more equitable music ecosystem.

"... For a long time there has been an unclear legal framework regarding the payment of royalties. Aslice fixed that and supports producers who are generally underpaid for their work. It creates a more equitable music ecosystem, rewards producers and encourages them in the process ..." – Justine Perry (DJ and Producer / Germany)



In detail: How Aslice Worked. A simple step-by-step guide

1. DJ Registration:

- DJs sign up for an Aslice account.
- They agree to share a portion of their gig fees (recommended 5%, minimum \$10).

2. Playlist Submission:

- After a gig, DJs extract their playlist from their DJ software.
- They upload the playlist, along with gig details and the amount they're sharing.

3. Track Matching:

- Aslice uses machine learning to match tracks to public and proprietary databases.
- For unmatched tracks, the admin team manually verifies and approves them.

4. Producer Registration:

- Producers create an Aslice account and verify their identity.
- They provide payment details (PayPal or bank account via Wise).

5. Earnings Accumulation:

- When a producer's track is played and reported, they earn a share and are notified.
- Earnings accumulate in their Aslice account.

6. Payout Process:

- When a producer's earnings reach the \$50 threshold, they become eligible for payout.
- Payouts occur automatically on a quarterly basis.

7. Handling Unreleased Tracks:

- Producers can proactively add their unique Aslice ID to unreleased track metadata.
- This allows Aslice to identify and compensate for pre-release or promo tracks.

8. Transparency:

- DJs and producers can view detailed reports of plays and earnings.
- The platform provides insights into which DJs are playing which tracks.

9. Community Engagement:

- Users can share their Aslice activity on social media using custom graphics.
- This promotes transparency and encourages wider adoption within the community.

This streamlined process aimed to make fair compensation as simple and frictionless as possible for both DJs and producers in the electronic music ecosystem.



A Concept Proved: Aslice in Action

In its brief but impactful tenure, Aslice emerged as a compelling proof of concept for a more equitable electronic music ecosystem. This section looks into the tangible outcomes of Aslice's approach, presenting a data-driven analysis of its reach, impact, and effectiveness. By examining the platform's engagement metrics, financial distributions, and user experiences, we provide a comprehensive overview of how Aslice's model translated into real-world benefits for both DJs and producers. From facilitating first-time earnings for emerging artists to redistributing significant sums from top-tier DJs, Aslice demonstrated the viability of a community-driven solution to long standing industry inequities. These findings not only validate Aslice's core mission but also offer valuable insights for future initiatives aimed at fostering a fairer, more transparent music industry.

This success, achieved with limited resources and without external funding, serves as a powerful proof of concept for future initiatives aimed at creating a fairer music industry.

Meaningful Compensation

Our survey of 680 artists for this report¹⁴ revealed that, amongst producers who received payments through Aslice, nearly a third (29%) earned money for their production work for the first time. This underscores Aslice's role in opening new revenue streams.

Moreover, Aslice paid better than other sources. Among producers receiving payments from both Aslice and other channels, **a staggering 60% reported that their Aslice earnings exceeded income from either physical sales, streaming, or performance rights.**

29%

Of producers who received payments through Aslice earned money for their production work for the first time

"... Aslice stands out for its refreshing transparency addressing the longstanding issue of fair compensation in an industry where many artists struggle to make a sustainable living ..." - GiGi FM (DJ and Producer / Germany)

¹⁴ Source: Audience Strategies Aslice User Survey 2024. Conducted for this report.

Scaling Fairness By DJs

Aslice hit some big numbers. Our analysis shows they successfully engaged **935 DJs from 57 countries, who collectively shared \$422,696** of their earnings with producers. This global reach, with Germany, the USA, and the Netherlands leading in participation, underscores the international appeal and relevance of Aslice's mission.

On average, **each participating DJ contributed \$422**, a significant sum that highlights the willingness of many DJs to support producers when given an accessible means to do so. This average, however, masks a more nuanced picture of engagement and impact. The top 10 DJs on the platform shared a combined total of \$257,000, accounting for 65% of all earnings distributed through Aslice. Furthermore, 37 DJs shared \$1,000 or more, collectively representing 76% of the total earnings shared.

"... As a DJ supporting and giving back financially to the producers feels great. Aslice is a very good and easy way to start restoring the imbalance between producers and performing DJs ..." - Elisa Bee (DJ and Producer / Italy)

The case of **Aslice's most active contributor** provides a compelling proof of concept for the platform's model. The top supporting DJ (who, by the way, is not affiliated with Aslice) shared a total of \$82.5K, submitting on average 5.8 playlists per month. This level of engagement not only resulted in substantial financial support for producers but also demonstrated the feasibility of integrating such a system into a busy DJ's workflow. The regularity of submissions suggests that, with the right tools and motivation, even the busiest touring DJs can consistently contribute to a fairer ecosystem. Later sections will examine why this level of participation was not more widespread and what barriers may have prevented broader adoption among top-tier artists.

These figures reveal two important insights:

- Even a relatively small number of highly engaged users can drive significant impact.
- The potential for exponential growth in impact if more high-earning DJs were to adopt such a model.

While the concentration of contributions among top earners mirrors existing industry inequalities, Aslice's model provided a practical mechanism for redistribution. By facilitating direct sharing from DJs to producers, Aslice created a new, more equitable revenue stream within the electronic music ecosystem.

Aslice in numbers

935

DJs shared income

57

Countries the DJs were from

\$422

Contributed on average



Scaling Fairness To Producers

Aslice has demonstrated significant reach, with **4,069 registered producers earning a share** from their music being played by DJs. However, the fact that only 12% have reached the automatic \$50 payout threshold¹⁵ shows that more DJs were needed to make the system work well. Beyond these 4,069 registered producers, Aslice recorded plays for an additional 23,165 producers that have yet to register with Aslice, that's a total of 27,395 producers!

The average earnings figures provide further context. While an average payout of \$58 across all producers who earned a share may seem modest, it represents income that would not have otherwise reached these artists. For those surpassing the \$50 payment threshold, the **average earnings of \$269 and the maximum of \$4,909** highlight the platform's potential to generate meaningful income for some producers. These figures underscore both the promise of Aslice's model and the challenges in scaling its impact across the entire producer community.

The frequency of payments, averaging **2.4 payments** for those who've received at least one payout, indicates a degree of much needed consistent earnings for a subset of users.

The platform's impact is further underscored by the total redistribution figure of **\$422,696** to producers. This substantial sum demonstrates Aslice's capacity to channel funds directly to creators. The identification of 85,265 unique tracks, with 48,791 linked to registered producers, highlights Aslice's broad reach and the potential for growth in producer registrations. It also shows proof of the community effect; 57% of the music played was music from registered producers! These figures collectively paint a picture of a system that, while not yet transformative for all users, has proven its ability to create a more equitable payment structure in electronic music.

"... I've had some tracks played on significant podcasts, streams, and radio shows that didn't have tracklists, and it stung. Income from Aslice will end up being a somewhat significant supplement for some producers ..." - Clarisa Kimskii (DJ and Producer / USA)

Aslice in numbers

4,069

Registered producers earned a share

\$58

Average payout across all producers who earned a share

\$269

Average producer earnings

\$4,909

Received by the highest-earning producer

¹⁵ On closure, Aslice will pay out producers even if they haven't reached the usual \$50 threshold



Didn't hit the earnings threshold? No Problem

Aslice's commitment to fair compensation extended beyond its operational lifecycle. Whilst only 12% of producers reached the \$50 payment threshold during Aslice's active period, the company plans to ensure all earned funds found their rightful recipients upon closure.

As part of their wind-down strategy, Aslice pledged to liquidate all outstanding payments, regardless of amount. This approach demonstrates a dedication to their mission, even in the face of operational challenges. Producers will be given until the end of the year post-announcement to register, with Aslice verifying identities and processing payouts on a rolling basis. This measured approach balanced the need for thorough verification with the urgency of distributing funds. For any truly unclaimed funds, Aslice maintained its community-focused ethos by channelling these to charities nominated and vetted by the Aslice Foundation Contribution Committee and voted on by users. This solution elegantly addressed the industry-wide issue of unattributed royalties, typically absorbed by top-tier artists, by redirecting funds to causes that benefit the broader music community.

Maximising Impact: When Aslice Delivered

Aslice's earnings data reveals compelling evidence of its potential to significantly impact producer incomes when fully utilised. The platform's top earners exemplify the tangible benefits of consistent playlist inclusion and support from higher-paying DJs.

The highest-earning producer's success story is particularly illuminating. With **\$4,909 earned across 9 payments for 815 plays, averaging \$6.02 per play**, this case demonstrates the substantial financial impact Aslice can deliver when operating at its full potential. Such results underscore the platform's capacity to provide meaningful income streams for electronic music producers.

Aslice's revenue sharing model demonstrates a significantly more equitable distribution of earnings compared to industry norms, while still rewarding top talent. The top 10 producers on the platform collectively earned \$27,272, representing 11.6% of total producer earnings. This distribution stands in stark contrast to the broader music industry, where top earners often capture a disproportionately large share of revenues. By ensuring that 88.4% of earnings are distributed beyond the top 10, Aslice strikes a crucial balance: providing substantial financial support to top performers while simultaneously ensuring that a diverse range of producers can benefit from the platform. This approach not only encourages excellence but also fosters broad participation and sustainability in the electronic music ecosystem. Aslice's model thus addresses one of the fundamental inequities in the music industry, creating a more fair and inclusive environment for creators at all levels.



Aslice's platform creates an ecosystem where support from DJs can translate into significant financial rewards for producers. This is evident in the wide range of per-play earnings: while the top 10 producers saw average earnings between \$0.70 and \$6.83 per play, one exceptional playlist resulted in payouts of \$36.93 per track. Such variation illustrates how Aslice amplifies the impact of DJ support, particularly from those who share larger amounts. This model not only provides producers with the potential for substantial earnings but also strengthens the symbiotic relationship between DJs and producers, encouraging a culture of mutual support and fair compensation within the electronic music community.

These figures, while representing the upper tier of earners, serve as a proof of concept. They show that when fully embraced by the DJ community, particularly those with the means to share substantial amounts, Aslice can deliver impressive financial outcomes for producers. This data not only validates Aslice's model but also points to the untapped potential for fairer income distribution in the electronic music industry.

"... Witnessing that my work travels around the world with busier DJs who charge large figures feels somehow fair to the amount of time and money I put into buying gear and covering electricity costs so that other DJs can play the music I work on ... " - Gabriella Vergilov (DJ and Producer / Denmark)



Beyond the Bottom Line: Aslice's Wider Influence

While Aslice's financial impact was significant for many producers, as we'll discuss in a later chapter, its influence extended far beyond monetary compensation. The platform fostered community, validation, and mutual respect within the electronic music scene. By providing transparency and direct connections between DJs and producers, Aslice created a feedback loop of recognition and inspiration. This section explores the intangible yet crucial benefits that Aslice brought to the industry, from boosting morale to encouraging continued creativity. Through the words of artists themselves, we see how Aslice's model addressed not just financial inequities, but also the psychological and emotional needs of music creators in an often challenging industry landscape.

"... There are many ups and downs when it comes to making music. Seeing your favourite DJs playing your tracks and reporting them via the app can easily boost a trough in inspiration to a peak ..." - Cressida (DJ and Producer / UK)

"... As an artist based in Asia, it's satisfying to know DJs around the world are playing your music. This leads to community and network building – something we don't physically have the luxury of doing ..." - Arjun Vagale (DJ and Producer / India)

"... The feeling of receiving validation for the music you create is really special and motivational; it provides energy that can help you to keep on track as a producer. Payouts also create more room for producers to invest in the art of creating music ..." - Isaiah (DJ and Producer / Netherlands)

"... Using Aslice has facilitated more direct connections, frequent music exchanges, and consistent dialogue with producers, which didn't happen for me on the same breadth or frequency before this platform existed ..." - D.Dan (DJ and Producer / Germany)



Voices from the Decks and Studios

The impact of Aslice on the electronic music community is best understood through the experiences of its users. Both DJs and producers have found unique value in the platform, from fostering connections to providing new insights into how music travels through the industry. The following testimonials offer a glimpse into the diverse ways Aslice has influenced artists' careers and perspectives.

CRYME, a DJ and producer, highlights the reciprocal effect of Aslice:

"... It's amazing to get that [Aslice notifications] feedback as a producer. This inspired me to start using Aslice whenever I DJ, to return the favor and share that wonderful feeling with the producers whose tracks enhance my sets ..." - CRYME (DJ and Producer / Germany)

Doctor Jeep emphasises the importance of recognition and fair compensation:

"... For many, seeing yourself on a live set's tracklist and knowing that the music you make is actually being heard outside of your bubble fuels the fire to create more. To be able to give back financially for the hard work beyond a one-time track purchase feels even better ..." - Doctor Jeep (DJ and Producer / USA)

Volvox discusses how Aslice facilitates connections in a saturated market:

"... I like Aslice because it allows me to connect with producers whose music I'm already playing but might know nothing about. When artists share my plays on Instagram, it's usually the first opportunity I have to see their faces and explore their catalogues from a central place. From there, we are connected, leading to promos, in-person meets, and a more focused interaction ..." - Volvox (DJ / USA)

Vallas Martins, based in São Paulo, shares how Aslice inspires a culture of sharing:

"... Aslice is the way of equitable and fair redistribution of income for music producers. I'm based in São Paulo, and as much as I feel that my shares are small (due to the devaluation of the local currency), I keep sharing after every gig I play. It's my way of encouraging others to share as well ..." - Vallas Martins (DJ and Producer / Brazil)

Juana, a DJ from the USA, describes how Aslice aligns with her storytelling approach to DJing:

"... Most DJs try to tell a story with their sets, and I am definitely in that camp. When tracks resonate strongly with me emotionally and sonically, that creates a kinship with the producers. Without their artistry and skill, I can't tell the kind of stories and evoke the feelings I want. Aslice not only allows me to share monetarily but also enables nice social connections between producers and DJs ..." - Juana (DJ and Producer / USA)



The Impact of Fair Compensation

For many producers, receiving payment through Aslice represents a significant milestone. These first-time experiences not only provide financial support but also validation and motivation. The following testimonials capture the excitement and impact of these initial payments.

Mulya describes how Aslice income directly supports artistic growth:

"... The Aslice income has been a blessing in developing my skills and investing in studio equipment. I reinvest all DJ contributions directly into my art, enhancing my creative capabilities ..." - Mulya (DJ and Producer / Hungary)

Maloog expresses excitement about the global reach Aslice reveals:

"... It blows my mind that now I know which DJs are playing my music in different venues worldwide. By helping us to gain more recognition, Aslice motivates all of us producers to continue working on our art ..." - Maloog (DJ and Producer / Argentina)

Amotik reflects on Aslice's role in addressing industry imbalances:

"... For me, Aslice has been a positive step forward for our industry over the last few years, helping to address the imbalance between DJ and producer. It's great to see the emails detailing who's playing my music, but it's also a welcome additional revenue that I can reinvest into the studio ..." - Amotik (DJ and Producer / Germany)

Louis The 4th emphasises the emotional impact of recognition through Aslice:

"... To receive my first producer payment from Aslice proves how this platform for fair redistribution is pushing the music community forward. It's not just the financial reward from DJs sharing via Aslice, but also that special feeling of seeing that tracks we produced at home are resonating in the walls of legendary clubs all around the world ..." - Louis The 4th (DJ and Producer / France)

Alican appreciates both the financial and informational benefits of Aslice:

"... The quarterly payments make a huge difference for me as a producer, and the detailed reports of where my tracks are being played are incredibly rewarding. It's great to see who plays my music and that it's heard and enjoyed worldwide. These insights are invaluable for understanding my reach ..." - Alican (DJ and Producer / Turkey)



Technology as an Enabler

At the heart of Aslice's approach lies its user-friendly technology, designed to streamline the often cumbersome process of playlist submission and royalty distribution. Our survey for this report¹⁶ underscores the success of this approach, with an overwhelming 93% of DJs who use Aslice reporting that the playlist submission process is either fairly or very simple. Notably, over half of these users (54%) described the process as 'very simple', highlighting the platform's success in reducing friction and encouraging participation.

"... The app is straightforward and intuitive and provides useful information that has otherwise been unavailable, tracking the performance of a track through plays in the environment that it was intended for is groundbreaking ..." - dBridge (DJ and Producer / UK)

Aslice's operational model was built on a foundation of simplicity and accuracy. The platform utilised a combination of machine learning algorithms and human verification to achieve an **industry-leading 99.8% accuracy rate in matching tracks to producers**. Yes. That's true. We calculated that number ourselves. We found just 659 of the 355,163 tracks in the system were unmatched at the time of writing (0.19%). We also found that the accuracy of the machine learning algorithm Aslice developed has increased dramatically over time, matching 59% of tracks in its first month of private beta to matching 92% of tracks by the end of its first year. Over the past 12 months the algorithm has matched on average 94% of tracks uploaded with human intervention enabling the 99.8% final match rate.

99.8%

Accuracy in matching tracks to producers through machine learning and human research

To put 99.8% in context, we reached out to some industry experts ourselves. DJ Monitor is widely recognised as leading the rest of the industry with about a 93% match rate for the kinds of DJ sets that Aslice processes (matching is much easier for more mainstream music, of course!). Most of the rest of the companies trying to match similar types of music fall significantly short of this, at around 80% match rates.

DJs could easily extract playlist data from popular DJ software and upload it to Aslice, where the system would automatically process the information. For tracks that couldn't be automatically matched, Aslice truly went above and beyond. They employed a dedicated team to manually search for, verify and approve tracks. They also reached out to the DJs who submitted playlists for clarification and to their network for help before marking a track as "unmatchable." This approach ensured that even obscure or unreleased tracks were properly credited (and financially compensated).

¹⁶ Source: Audience Strategies Aslice User Survey 2024. Conducted for this report.

Moreover, Aslice's technology enables the tracking and payment for **unreleased or pre-release tracks**, a significant advancement in an industry where promotional copies and exclusive tracks are commonplace. Cleverly integrating the human element alongside technology was critical here. By allowing producers to embed an Aslice ID in their track metadata, encouraging producers who register to use unique artist names and partnership with promo services like FATdrop, Aslice ensured that even unreleased music could be accurately identified and compensated. This feature addresses a longstanding issue in electronic music, where producers often struggle to monetise their work in the early stages of its lifecycle.

"... At first, I was a bit sceptical, assuming it would mean a lot of extra work, but submitting and uploading your text playlists literally takes three minutes. I quickly integrated it into my workflow. When I open my rekordbox after a gig, it's the first thing I do ..." - Locus Error (DJ and Producer / Netherlands)

This ease of use stands in stark contrast to traditional payment systems, which have often been criticised for their complexity, lack of accessibility and poor match rate. Aslice's technological solution addresses a critical pain point in the industry: the difficulty of accurately tracking and reporting music played in club and festival settings.

"... With the erosion of income for producers over the years, having a simple interface that works hand in hand with the software prevalent throughout our industry means this should become second nature for all DJs ..." - James Ruskin (DJ and Producer / UK)

"... Compared to royalty collection agencies, submitting playlists and performance information feels like a breath of fresh air with Aslice ..." - Blue Hour (DJ and Producer / Germany)

By leveraging technology to simplify the sharing process and enhance accuracy, Aslice has demonstrated how long standing barriers to fair compensation can be overcome. The platform's ability to make playlist submission straightforward and effortless not only encourages more frequent and accurate reporting but also empowers DJs to easily support the producers whose work forms the backbone of their sets. When the administrative burden of fair compensation is minimised, artists are able to concentrate more on their creative output.



A Community of Mutual Support

Aslice's impact extended far beyond its economic and technological contributions, fostering a community united by shared values of fairness and mutual support. Our survey for this report¹⁷ highlights the profound emotional and social benefits experienced by users, with 82% of DJs reporting that sharing playlists through Aslice made them feel good about doing the right thing. This sense of ethical satisfaction was closely followed by a **feeling of connection to the music community**, cited by 75% of respondents. These findings underscore how Aslice tapped into a deep-seated desire within the electronic music scene for more equitable practices and stronger community bonds.

"... Aslice isn't just a platform; it's a driving force, a movement for change that promotes fairness and unity among artists. In an expansive industry where feeling adrift is common, Aslice facilitates connections between creators, fostering mutual support—a truly gratifying experience ..." – Liliith (DJ and Producer / Germany)

Moreover, Aslice's community-centric approach extended to its operational practices. The platform's commitment to transparency and fairness was exemplified by its handling of **unmatched royalties**. Rather than distributing these funds to top-tier artists, as is common practice in the industry, Aslice redirected unclaimed money to charitable organisations chosen by its user base. This democratic approach to philanthropy further reinforced the sense of community ownership and shared values among users.

"... By coming together on Aslice, we create a culture of transparency, collaboration, and an inclusive environment ..." – Dychromatic (DJ / Germany)

Aslice's commitment to changing the industry landscape was evident in its extensive outreach efforts. Between mid-2021 and early 2022, the platform conducted an intensive campaign to engage professional DJs. They personally **invited over 800 professional DJs to info sessions and one-on-one calls**, directly speaking with more than 400 DJs. Post-launch, the team continued its efforts, reaching out to dozens of agencies and more DJs. In total, Aslice contacted an impressive 2,293 DJs between 2021-2024. Each DJ on their list was contacted to explain the service personally, get feedback and ultimately enlist them to register and use the service. They contacted DJs between one and eight times, with potential users receiving one to three contacts and those who were also producers with pending earnings in the system receiving up to seven or eight follow-ups! This persistent and personalised approach demonstrates Aslice's dedication to not only building a user base but also educating the industry about the importance of fair compensation for producers.

"... It's [Aslice] a creative hub that fuels unique inspiration and fosters a sense of belonging within the community. Being a part of a platform that values the work and well-being of artists is extremely important to me ..." – Ly Sas (DJ and Producer / Georgia)

¹⁷ Source: Audience Strategies Aslice User Survey 2024. Conducted for this report.



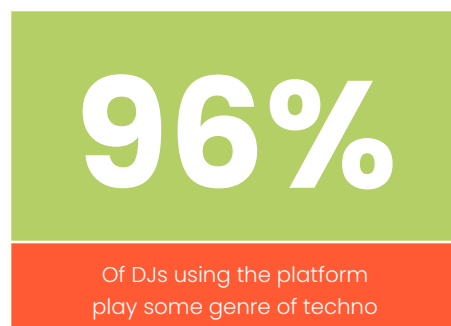
The formation of this values-driven community stands as one of Aslice's most significant achievements, potentially outlasting the platform itself and continuing to influence industry practices and discussions around fair compensation in electronic music.

"... Uploading my playlist after a gig became a ritual. The fee percentage we, as DJs, give may seem so small sometimes, but in the end, doing it at any level shows that we care. We care about the music we are playing and the people that create it..." - Camila Rodhes (DJ / France)

"... I fell in love with electronic music because of the music, but I stayed for the community: the sense of connection and a unique shared experience on dance floors and beyond. Aslice feels like a modern extension of the same principle: a global community of like-minded DJs and producers sharing a mutual love for a special corner of the music universe..." - Lee K (DJ and Producer / USA)

First Came Techno

If you thought Aslice's results were impressive already, consider this: the results came mostly from the first genre they got traction in! Aslice's roots in the techno community played a pivotal role in shaping its initial user base and impact. An astounding 96% of DJs using the platform (894 out of 935) played some genre of techno, accounting for 90% of all earnings shared (\$380,426 out of \$422,696). This concentration within the techno scene not only highlights the genre's strong sense of community but also demonstrates how effectively Aslice's model resonated when leveraging existing networks and shared values. The fact that 57% of the music on submitted playlists came from registered producers further underscores the robust ecosystem of mutual support that was clearly being built within techno. Imagine the potential impact if other genres had embraced Aslice with similar enthusiasm! This data provides a tantalising glimpse of what could have been achieved if invited artists from other genres had embraced Aslice.



Amplifying Recognition Through Social Sharing

Aslice's innovative approach extended beyond its core payment system, leveraging social media to amplify recognition for both DJs and producers. The platform's dynamic social assets feature enabled users to share their Aslice activity, creating a virtuous cycle of visibility and appreciation within the electronic music community. This section explores how this unique aspect of Aslice fostered transparency, encouraged wider adoption, and strengthened connections between artists.

Lindsey Herbert, a DJ from the USA, exemplifies the enthusiasm many users felt for Aslice's social sharing capabilities:

"... All playlists from my gigs from February till now have been uploaded into @asliceofficial 📁 If I played your music recently, you should have received an email! Thanks as always to the producers who make amazing music that I buy/receive as promos (yes, I still buy music too)—without your music my sets would not be what they are; and as well to the artists who report my music through Aslice! As always I'm very happy to support @asliceofficial and use it after ALL of my gigs, and I encourage you to as well ..." - Lindsey Herbert (DJ and Producer / USA) - [Source: Instagram](#)

Brenda, another DJ based in the USA, highlights how Aslice's user-friendly process encourages participation and fosters a sense of contribution to a fairer ecosystem:

"... One of my 2024 goals was to sign up for Aslice and directly support producers. Proud to say, mission accomplished. ✓✓ The Aslice process was simple and I've already been tagged by a few producers. Feels great knowing they've been acknowledged and to give them a piece of the pot. After all, without their time, dedication, and talent, my sets filled with their incredible music wouldn't be possible. ❤️👏 Aslice is changing the electronic music landscape and creating a fairer ecosystem. I'm happy to be a part of it and encourage others to join, if you haven't already ..." - Brenda (DJ / USA) - [Source: Instagram](#)

Fiana Molina, a Producer and DJ from Argentina, emphasises the global reach and inclusive nature of Aslice's network:

"... A way to make our world fairer through @asliceofficial, my contribution and thanks to the producers. From wherever you live in the world, I invite you to be part of this network ..." - Fiana Molina (DJ and Producer / Argentina) - [Source: Instagram](#)

Paula Koski, a Finland-born, Germany-based DJ and producer, reflects on how Aslice's social features have expanded her professional network and fostered new relationships:

"... I receive a lot of promos every week, so Aslice felt like a natural decision. It feels good to share my playlists and make the producers aware that their music is shared on many dance floors worldwide. Aslice has helped me connect with many more artists, expanding my network in the music industry and even forming new friendships ..." - Paula Koski (DJ and Producer / Germany)

Additionally, producers appreciate the features Aslice provides beyond the financial reward. When asked which features of Aslice's app they liked the best, 77% of producers said 'notifications when people play my music' and 68% of producers said 'validation that my music is reaching people'.



Engagement: DJ Participation Rates

To better understand Aslice's impact and the challenges it faced in achieving widespread adoption, we conducted an in-depth analysis of DJ participation using data from Resident Advisor (RA), a platform for electronic music events and artist profiles. This analysis provides crucial insights into the size of the potential user base for platforms like Aslice and the rates of engagement among different segments of DJs.

Defining the Pool of Active DJs

Our analysis of RA's database, which contains 121,211 DJ profiles, reveals that the number of consistently working DJs is much smaller than this total figure suggests. We identified several ways to define "active" DJs:

1. **Working DJs** - Those with at least one upcoming event: 15,845 (13.1% of total profiles)
2. **Experienced and working DJs** - 20+ total events and at least one upcoming event: 10,849 (9.0%)
3. **The busiest DJs** - The 1,199 DJs who have 5+ upcoming gigs

Aslice Adoption Among Working DJs: A Stark Reality

Our analysis reveals a significant gap between Aslice's potential user base and its actual adoption. Out of 15,845 DJs identified as working (those with one or more upcoming events), only 935 DJs, or 5.9%, actually shared earnings through Aslice. While 2,389 DJs (15.1%) registered on the platform, 1,454 of them (9.2% of working DJs) never followed through with their intent to share a portion of their earnings. Despite the fact that, to register as a DJ, they had to store a credit card to their account. They were set up, ready to share - they only needed to spend the 60-90 seconds to upload a set list in order to share a portion of their earnings with the producers whose music they played. They also weren't moved to do so by monthly reminders, following Aslice on social media or seeing content and media coverage about Aslice. Many DJs playing at Support The Sound clubs and festivals like Dekmantel, Fuse Belgium, etc would have also not been moved to do so when reminded upon booking.

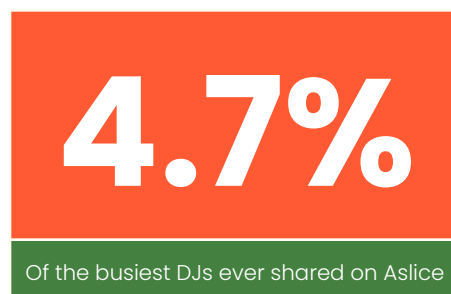
These figures starkly illustrate Aslice's challenge in achieving widespread adoption. A staggering 94.1% (14,910) of working DJs never shared through the platform. This highlights Aslice's most formidable obstacle: effectively engaging DJs. Despite offering an innovative solution to a recognized industry problem, Aslice struggled to convince the vast majority of working DJs to integrate the platform into their regular practice.

94%

Of working DJs
did not share through Aslice

Aslice Adoption Among the Busiest DJs

Let's look at the 1,199 busiest DJs (those with five or more upcoming events on Resident Advisor), to examine Aslice's penetration among DJs who are most likely to have a significant impact on industry practices and cultural norms. These DJs represent the potential early adopters and influencers who could drive wider acceptance of fair pay initiatives like Aslice.



This approach provides a more realistic and relevant picture of Aslice's reach within the professional DJ community, offering insights into the challenges and opportunities for similar platforms in the future:

- A staggering 89.5% (1073) never registered on Aslice at all.
- 5.8% (70) registered but never shared earnings, possibly only to receive payments as producers or out of initial interest that didn't translate to action.
- Only 4.7% (56) ever shared earnings through the platform.

These figures starkly illustrate the uphill battle Aslice faced in achieving widespread adoption among DJs.

Engagement by Follower Count: Popularity Doesn't Equal Participation

Breaking down the data by DJ popularity reveals:

1. Less than 100 followers:
 - 96.7% didn't register
 - 2.2% registered but never shared
 - 1.1% shared at least once
2. 100-1k followers:
 - 89.9% didn't register
 - 4.2% registered but never shared
 - 6.0% shared at least once
3. 1k-10k followers:
 - 86.0% didn't register
 - 9.5% registered but never shared
 - 4.5% shared at least once
4. 10k+ followers:
 - 90.3% didn't register
 - 3.7% registered but never shared
 - 6.0% shared at least once

Notably, even among the most popular DJs, over 90% never engaged with Aslice at all. Further, DJs with 100-1k were as likely as those with 10k+ followers to share on Aslice, showing emerging DJs were as likely



as top-tier artists to share, challenging a reasonable assumption that more established artists would be more likely to support fair pay initiatives.

The data shows a **Popularity Paradox** – no clear correlation between a DJ's popularity and their likelihood to use Aslice. This challenges the notion that established artists would naturally lead the charge in supporting producers. It may suggest that personal values or individual experiences with the struggles of production play a larger role in determining engagement than career success.

Techno DJs: Better, But Still Far From Universal Adoption

Focusing on DJs tagged as "techno" shows somewhat improved, but still low, engagement rates:

1. Less than 100 followers:
 - 91.5% didn't register
 - 6.8% registered but never shared
 - 1.7% shared at least once
2. 100-1k followers:
 - 80.9% didn't register
 - 6.4% registered but never shared
 - 12.8% shared at least once
3. 1k-10k followers:
 - 77.7% didn't register
 - 13.9% registered but never shared
 - 8.4% shared at least once
4. 10k+ followers:
 - 85.4% didn't register
 - 5.8% registered but never shared
 - 8.7% shared at least once

Overall for techno DJs:

- 81.8% never registered
- 9.3% registered but never shared
- 8.9% shared at least once

While these numbers are better than the overall DJ population, they still show that the vast majority of even techno DJs—Aslice's strongest community—did not engage with the platform. This underscores the depth of the challenge Aslice faced in changing industry norms, even within its most receptive genre.



Challenges and Lessons Learned

Aslice's journey offers valuable insights into the complexities of implementing a voluntary income redistribution system within the electronic music industry. While the platform demonstrated significant promise, it also faced notable challenges in driving sustained engagement and achieving widespread adoption, particularly among top-tier DJs. These challenges, coupled with financial constraints, ultimately led to the platform's closure.

Financial Realities: The Cost of Innovation

Despite Aslice's innovative approach and initial success, financial sustainability proved elusive. The platform operated on a lean model. No team member drew a proper salary and the founder drew none. This commitment to the mission over personal gain was a testament to the team's dedication but also highlighted the financial pressures faced by the platform.

Aslice's revenue model, taking a 15% fee from the amounts shared by DJs, was designed to be fair and sustainable. However, this percentage, while industry-standard, proved to be insufficient to cover operational costs given the current level of adoption. In total, Aslice's 15% fee amounted to approximately \$63,404 over the three years of the project, which was just a fraction of the platform's annual expenses.

The platform's operational costs, including staff, development, design, and technology amounted to approximately \$250,000 annually. This figure, while modest for a tech startup, was challenging to sustain without broader adoption, particularly among high-earning DJs. It's worth noting that these costs were kept artificially low due to significant discounts on development work and the team's willingness to work for reduced compensation.

This financial structure, while allowing Aslice to operate longer than it might have otherwise, was ultimately unsustainable without a significant increase in user adoption and transaction volume.

Star Power Shortage: How Top DJs Could Have Tipped the Scales

Perhaps the most significant challenge Aslice faced was in securing buy-in from industry leaders. Our analysis suggests that if just 40 more DJs at the level of Aslice's current top 10 users had participated, the platform would have been financially viable. Alternatively, even participation by a single high-profile DJ like Calvin Harris or Tiesto could have easily covered Aslice's operating costs.

This is disappointing news as, despite contacting 2,293 professional DJs between 2021-2024, including 277 estimated to be at the level of the current top 10, only a fraction became active users. This disparity between expressed interest and actual participation highlights the difficulty of changing established industry practices.



Aslice's journey illuminates a crucial dichotomy within the electronic music industry: those who dream of change and those who actively work to create it. While many industry figures vocalised support for fairer compensation, Aslice provided a tangible, low-barrier opportunity to turn words into action.

This disparity between public statements and private actions was a recurring theme. Many high-profile DJs who regularly spoke about music producer and industry inequities, mentioning Aslice directly, failed to engage with the platform, despite its minimal personal cost and potential tax benefits. This inaction yielded a lack of insights for producers, a higher pressure on actively participating DJs to share a higher burden of responsibility, and a lack of sustainability for Aslice as a company.

Walk the Talk: The Importance of "Showing Up"

Perhaps the most crucial lesson from Aslice's journey is the difference between expressing support and actively participating in change. As Khutoretsky succinctly put it, "People have to show up. They can't just give you their best wishes and hopes. They actually have to show up."

This principle extends beyond Aslice and the music industry. In an era where social media allows for easy expressions of support, Aslice's story reminds us of the critical importance of tangible action.

The Power of Pessimism: The Impact of Industry Scepticism

While Aslice's vision of creating a more equitable payment system for music producers resonated strongly with many artists, the platform also faced significant scepticism and cynicism from others in the industry. This mixed reception played a crucial role in Aslice's trajectory and ultimate sustainability. We spoke to many industry figures at the time of Aslice's launch and were a little taken aback at some of the cynicism. Here's some of what we heard and what we've read since.

Many DJs and producers were inspired by Aslice's mission to address the long-standing issue of income inequality in electronic music. The platform's innovative approach and user-friendly interface garnered enthusiastic support from a segment of the community who saw it as a tangible way to effect positive change. However, this enthusiasm was not universal.

A significant portion of the industry approached Aslice with scepticism. Some questioned the necessity of the platform, arguing that existing Performance Rights Organisations should already be solving this problem. Some felt a partial solution wasn't worth investing in when a wholesale solution is needed, with a DJ in one publication writing "it feels a bit like rearranging the furniture or shuffling around money." Others debated whether it was fair to place the responsibility of compensating producers on DJs, especially given that venues already pay licensing fees to Performance Rights Organisations.¹⁸ Attack Mag wrote "You're asking people to be morally on point and socially responsible. We know most people aren't."

¹⁸ https://www.reddit.com/r/DJs/comments/1bexamaq/thoughts_on_aslice_and_support_the_sound/



This cynicism manifested in various ways. Including:

- Some DJs were **reluctant to share** a portion of their earnings, even the suggested 5%, and despite it being tax deductible viewing it as an unfair additional cost.
- **The Perfect Solution Fallacy:** Many people's preference to wait for a perfect solution rather than supporting progress.
- Others questioned the **accuracy of Aslice's track-matching** system. (Note: Our analysis shows that Aslice achieved over 99% accuracy in matching music through a combination of automated matching and human intervention. This level of accuracy is unparalleled in the industry.)
- Some raised concerns about **potential abuse of the platform**. (Our audit found no misuse of the system by DJs. Aslice carefully closed any potential avenues for abuse that it found. For instance, the system removes "self plays" to ensure DJs can't pay themselves, and it divides earnings for tracks with multiple artists fairly.)
- Some simply argued that **DJs don't have time**. (Our survey for this report¹⁹ revealed that 82% of participating DJs found it easy to integrate Aslice into their workflow, suggesting that for those who tried it, the process was not burdensome. 52% of Supporting DJs who first submitted a playlist more than a year ago were still active a year later, demonstrating that those who engaged found it worth their time.)

The impact of this scepticism on Aslice's adoption and sustainability cannot be overstated. Despite extensive outreach efforts, including contacting over 2,000 professional DJs and speaking directly to hundreds in info sessions, Aslice struggled to achieve the critical mass of users needed for long-term viability. The platform's data suggests that just 40 more top-tier DJs consistently using the service could have made Aslice financially sustainable.

This raises a critical question: If fewer people had been cynical about Aslice's model, would more DJs have participated, potentially allowing the platform to continue operating? The answer is not straightforward, but it's clear that widespread industry buy-in was crucial for Aslice's success.

The debate surrounding Aslice reflects broader tensions within the electronic music industry about fair compensation, responsibility, and the effectiveness of existing systems. While Aslice offered an innovative solution, its reliance on voluntary participation made it vulnerable to industry scepticism.

Ultimately, the mixed reception of Aslice underscores the challenges of implementing systemic change in an industry with entrenched practices and diverse stakeholder interests. It also highlights the ongoing need for dialogue and collaboration to address economic inequalities in electronic music culture.

¹⁹ Source: Audience Strategies Aslice User Survey 2024. Conducted for this report.



User Engagement and Retention

Our analysis reveals both encouraging trends and areas for improvement in how DJs interacted with Aslice.

A key challenge was converting registered users into active participants. Of the 2,389 DJs who registered with the platform, 61% (1,454) never submitted a playlist, indicating a gap between intent and action.

61%

Of DJs who registered with Aslice, added credit card details, received monthly reminders but who never took 60–90 seconds to share with producers

(Despite the fact that, as mentioned previously, to register, they had to store a credit card to their account. They were set up, ready to share – they only needed to spend the 60–90 seconds to upload a set list in order to share a portion of their earnings with the producers whose music they played. They also weren't moved to do so by monthly reminders, following Aslice on social media, or seeing content and media coverage about Aslice. Many DJs playing at Support The Sound clubs and festivals like Dekmantel, Fuse Belgium, etc would have also not been moved to do so when reminded upon booking.)

Our survey for this report²⁰ revealed that financial considerations were the primary barrier to participation. 71% of non-participating DJs cited insufficient earnings as the main reason, either due to low fees or infrequent gigs. This aligns with our finding that only 22% of surveyed DJs consider DJing their primary income source, with 82% earning less than \$200 per gig.

However, among the 935 who did submit at least one playlist (termed 'Supporting DJs'), we observed more positive engagement patterns:

1. 64% went on to submit a second playlist, suggesting a positive first experience.
2. 34% submitted a playlist within 90 days of this analysis, indicating a core of consistently active users.
3. 52% of Supporting DJs who first submitted a playlist more than a year ago were still active a year later, demonstrating solid long-term retention.
4. A small but dedicated group of users accounted for a disproportionate share of activity on Aslice. Only 12% of DJs (115 out of 935) reported one or more playlists per month over their lifetime on the platform. However, this group was responsible for 79% of all earnings shared through Aslice.

These figures paint a picture of a platform that, while struggling with initial user activation, successfully retained a core group of engaged users over time. The data suggests that once DJs overcame the initial hurdle of submitting their first playlist, many found ongoing value in the platform.

²⁰ Source: Audience Strategies Aslice User Survey 2024. Conducted for this report.



Ripple Effects: Aslice's Enduring Impact

While Aslice faced significant challenges, its impact extends far beyond its lifespan as a platform. The project's innovative approach, successes, and even its struggles have sparked important conversations and shifts within the electronic music industry. As such, Aslice, even in its absence, will continue to shape the discourse around fair compensation and transparency in electronic music.

Challenging Industry Norms

Aslice's emergence sent ripples throughout the electronic music industry, challenging long-established norms and sparking crucial conversations about fair compensation. By providing a transparent, direct method for DJs to share earnings with producers, Aslice has **highlighted the inadequacies of traditional royalty collection systems** and forced stakeholders to reconsider their approaches to artist remuneration.

"... The big companies and institutions have to follow in order not to lose their stakes ..."
 – Acid Pauli (DJ and Producer, Germany)

The platform's success **put pressure on Performance Rights Organisations** to modernise their tracking and distribution methods. Aslice's ability to accurately identify and compensate for unreleased tracks played in clubs has exposed the limitations of current systems, which often fail to capture this vital aspect of electronic music culture.

As Measure Divide, a DJ and Producer from Canada, noted:

"... The world of collecting royalties from Performance Rights Organisations has historically been inconsistent and unreliable. I see Aslice as a bridge that allows DJs to give back to producers, creating a harmonious circle ..."
 – Measure Divide (DJ and Producer / Canada)

Empowering Artists

Aslice has empowered artists to **take control of their financial relationships**, bypassing traditional intermediaries. This shift towards direct artist-to-artist payments has the potential to reshape power dynamics within the industry, giving both DJs and producers more agency in how their work is valued and compensated.

Rose, a Producer and DJ from the UK, emphasised this point:

"... Aslice has stepped up bravely to tackle one of the most persistent problems in the DJ world: unfair distribution of fees and royalties. The official copyright collection societies have failed us for decades, but Aslice finally gives us a chance to give producers their fair share ..."
 – Rose (DJ and Producer, UK)



Fostering a Culture of Mutual Support

Perhaps most significantly, Aslice has fostered a culture of mutual support and recognition within the electronic music community. By **making the act of sharing earnings both easy and visible**, the platform has normalised the idea that successful DJs have a responsibility to support the producers whose work forms the foundation of their sets. This cultural shift could have lasting implications for how value is perceived and distributed throughout the industry.

Hitam, a Producer and DJ from the Netherlands, reflected on this aspect:

"... The moral grounds on which Aslice is built encourage me to be even more aware of the responsibilities we have as artists to support each other. Being able to give and receive support, both financial and affirmational, is an inspiring way to be more productive and creative. I see it as a bridge-building platform, stimulating and connecting artists to take care of each other ..." - Hitam (DJ and Producer / Netherlands)

This sentiment was echoed by Nørbak, a DJ, Producer and Label Owner from Portugal:

"... I believe that Aslice can be a big part of the answer to a bigger problem: the disrespect and unfairness towards producers. With this new game-changing platform, I believe things can shift towards a more fair and respectful system ..." - Nørbak (DJ, Producer & Label Owner / Portugal)

Technological Innovation

Aslice has demonstrated the potential for innovative **human-centric technological solutions** in tracking and compensating for music plays in club and festival settings. Alex Stacey, Owner and Product Manager of FATdrop, recognized this innovative approach:

"... These are tough times for artists and labels, and providing new ways for artists to be paid when their music is played is a worthy cause. As a fellow independent company, we admire their innovative grass-roots approach to improving the ecosystem for artists and labels ..." - Alex Stacey (Owner & Product Manager of FATdrop)

Setting a New Standard

As we look to the future, it's clear that Aslice's impact will extend far beyond its operational lifespan. The platform has altered the conversation around fair compensation in electronic music, setting a new standard for transparency and direct artist support. **Future initiatives in this space should be measured against the benchmark Aslice has established.**



Dixon, a renowned DJ and Producer from Germany, highlighted the far-reaching potential of Aslice's model:

"... I'm hopeful that we're setting an example that goes far beyond the music industry. The simplicity of the initial idea – how artists can benefit from each other's success – has the potential to influence other areas, showcasing the positive impact collaborative efforts can have ..."
- Dixon (DJ and Producer / Germany)

Building Lasting Connections

One of Aslice's **most enduring legacies may be the community it fostered**. The connections forged between DJs and producers through the platform have the potential to evolve into long-lasting professional relationships and collaborations. This strengthened sense of community could lead to more grassroots initiatives aimed at addressing industry challenges.

Lee K, a DJ and Producer from the USA, emphasised the potential for long-term impact:

"... Aslice is the kind of constructive feedback loop our industry needs. My hope is this platform continues to grow and becomes the status quo instead of the exception to the rule, creating an equitable and reciprocal way of working together to underscore what many of us came here for to begin with: a community we can support and connect with for the long haul ..." – Lee K (DJ and Producer / USA)

Inspiring Industry-Wide Change

Perhaps most importantly, Aslice has instilled **a sense of possibility** within the industry. By showing that alternative, more equitable models are not only possible but can be successfully implemented, Aslice has empowered artists to envision and demand fairer practices. This shift in mindset could be the catalyst for broader, systemic changes in how the electronic music industry operates and values its contributors.

Luis Miranda, a DJ and Producer from the USA, captured this sentiment:

"... Aslice's bold commitment for change is paving the way for a fairer future for all producers ..." – Luis Miranda (DJ and Producer / USA)



Conclusion

Aslice's journey, though shorter than anticipated, has left an indelible mark on the electronic music landscape. By challenging industry norms, empowering artists, fostering a culture of mutual support, driving technological innovation, and setting new standards for fair compensation, Aslice has catalysed important conversations and actions within the community.

The platform's legacy extends beyond its operational lifespan, inspiring a new generation of artists, technologists, and industry professionals to envision and work towards a more equitable future. While Aslice itself may no longer be operational, the ripples of its impact continue to spread, potentially shaping the electronic music industry for years to come.

As the industry continues to evolve, the principles championed by Aslice – fairness, transparency, and community support – are likely to remain at the forefront, guiding the development of more equitable practices in electronic music and beyond. The true measure of Aslice's success may well be the initiatives and changes it inspires in the future, as the electronic music community builds upon its groundbreaking work.



Unresolved Echoes: Unfinished Business

While Aslice made significant strides in addressing income inequality within electronic music, its journey has exposed enduring challenges that continue to shape the industry landscape. This section delves into the unresolved issues highlighted by Aslice's innovative approach, offering a roadmap for future efforts in creating a more equitable music ecosystem.

Persistent Income Inequality: Chief among these is the stark income inequality between top-tier DJs and the majority of producers. While Aslice provided a mechanism for redistribution, the voluntary nature of the platform meant that participation was often limited to those already inclined towards fair compensation practices.

"... Every DJ, big or small, needs their tools to play, so it's time for all producers to get more than just feedback. Every piece helps financially and mentally, so you remain motivated and inspired to make the music we all need. It's payback time ..." – Dimi Angélis (DJ and Producer / Netherlands)

Integration with Broader Industry Infrastructure: Another area of unfinished business is the integration of such compensation models into the broader music industry infrastructure. While Aslice demonstrated the feasibility of direct, transparent payments, the challenge remains to scale this approach and potentially incorporate it into existing licensing and royalty collection frameworks.

"... It [Aslice] works well on its own, but even better as another cog in a wheel of tools that you have at your disposal to create independent economic sustainability without relying on the whims of the music industry or the rapidly changing music income landscape ..." – Martyn (DJ and Producer / USA)

Improved Data Collection and Sharing: The platform also highlighted the need for improved data collection and sharing across the industry. Aslice's success in tracking plays of unreleased tracks underscores the potential for more comprehensive music usage data. However, realising this potential industry-wide would require unprecedented cooperation between various stakeholders, from clubs and festivals to labels and streaming platforms.

The need for more comprehensive and transparent data collection extends to Performance Rights Organizations (PROs). The lack of public records and transparency in payouts to registered producers remains a significant issue. Aslice's experience underscores the necessity for improved data sharing across the industry, including PROs, clubs, festivals, labels, and streaming platforms.

Regulatory Oversight and Artist Protection: There is a growing need for increased regulations, governmental audits, and legislation to protect artists' rights. Aslice's journey has highlighted the gaps in current regulatory frameworks that leave many artists vulnerable to unfair compensation practices.

Collaboration Between Established and Innovative Platforms: Aslice's attempts to collaborate with established PROs, such as GEMA, were often met with silence. This lack of willingness to engage with artist-led projects points to a broader issue of resistance to innovation within the industry. Future efforts must bridge this gap to create more comprehensive solutions.



Technological Limitations and Adoption: While Aslice demonstrated the potential of technology in fair compensation, the broader industry still lags. Music Recognition Technology (MRT), crucial for accurate tracking of plays, remains expensive and inaccurate, currently implemented in only 1% of clubs worldwide. This technological gap continues to hinder fair compensation efforts.

Changing Industry Norms and Practices: Aslice's model highlighted that sharing playlists after every gig should be a standard part of a DJ's workflow to ensure proper compensation through existing structures. However, this practice is not yet widespread, indicating a need for cultural shift within the DJ community.

Education and Awareness: Aslice's experience revealed the ongoing need for education within the DJ community about the importance of fair compensation for producers. While many embraced the platform's mission, others remained hesitant or unaware of their potential role in creating a more equitable industry. Bridging this knowledge gap and fostering a universal sense of responsibility among DJs remains an unfinished task.

"... Buying a track is one thing, but paying to play it multiple times is something else, and in my opinion, it's more fair than anything else. Paying for playing is the direct royalty as they should be ..." - Nastia (DJ / Ukraine)

"... The complex field of artist royalties and financial gain through music plays has always been a grey area. Aslice has enabled a fair and transparent system for me to give back to all the hard-working creators ..." - Offtrack (DJ and Producer / Ireland)

"... Aslice might be the DJ / producer retirement plan we have all been dreaming of, but didn't know how it could work ..." - Hagj Craig (Booking Agent / USA)

Continuity of Fair Pay Initiatives: With Aslice's closure, a crucial question emerges: Who will continue this work of ensuring fair pay for producers? The need for equitable compensation persists, and new initiatives or reforms of existing systems are necessary to fill this gap.

Addressing Industry Cynicism: Aslice's experience revealed a deep-seated cynicism within the industry, often stemming from distrust in existing PRO structures. Future initiatives must address this cynicism head-on, demonstrating tangible benefits and transparency to build trust in fair compensation systems.



Aslice's short-lived but impactful presence serves as a stark wake-up call for the electronic music industry. By demonstrating the feasibility of a more equitable payment model and redistributing \$422,696 to producers, Aslice has laid bare the shortcomings of existing systems and the urgent need for change. This journey challenges industry norms, forcing a re-evaluation of how value is attributed and distributed within the electronic music ecosystem. From exposing the limitations of traditional Performance Rights Organisations to showcasing the power of community-driven solutions, Aslice underscores the potential for innovation to address long-standing inequities.

While Aslice may have closed its doors, it has opened countless windows of opportunity for industry reform. The unfinished business highlighted here serves not as a discouragement, but as a call to action. As the industry grapples with these revelations, the question remains: how will established players respond to this clear demonstration that a fairer system is not only possible but also desired by many within the community? As stakeholders across the electronic music spectrum confront these challenges, the spirit of innovation and fairness embodied by Aslice must continue to guide the way towards a more equitable future.



Conclusion: A Blueprint for Change

Aslice's journey offers valuable insights for driving positive change within the music industry. The platform's success stemmed from its ability to address a widely recognised problem with a straightforward, technology-driven solution. This approach – identifying a clear need and leveraging technology to meet it – provides a compelling blueprint for future innovators in the field.

"... The demand for a fair compensation tool that truly acknowledges the worth of studio work has been long overdue. It is really fulfilling to receive recognition and appreciation for one's music and this platform ensures a smooth process for achieving that ..." – Skatman (DJ, Producer and Label Owner / Germany)

The platform's emphasis on **transparency** and **direct connections** between artists highlights the power of community-driven solutions. By fostering a sense of mutual responsibility and support, Aslice demonstrated that significant change can be achieved without relying solely on top-down regulations or industry-wide agreements. This grassroots approach to industry reform has potential applications across various challenges facing the music community.

"... Aslice offers a simple interface for peers to voluntarily support each other amid an otherwise inhospitable economic system. The current climate that exists to pay artists for their time and money invested is poor, but can be improved through community action ..." – Paul Fleetwood (DJ, Producer and Label Owner / USA)

User-centric design played a crucial role in driving adoption. Aslice's success in attracting and retaining users was largely due to its intuitive interface and seamless integration with existing DJ workflows. Future initiatives aimed at changing industry practices would do well to prioritise ease of use and minimal disruption to established routines.

However, Aslice's experience also revealed key challenges that suggest two potential paths forward for similar initiatives:

1. Focusing on **technology and user experience** to make playlist submission an effortless, ingrained part of a DJ's post-gig routine, thereby increasing consistent participation across the board.
2. Concentrating efforts on engaging **top-tier DJs**, given that a small number of prolific users can drive significant impact. While expanding the base of occasional contributors is valuable, the most substantial gains in producer compensation might come from increasing participation among top-tier DJs. A handful of major artists consistently sharing their earnings would easily exceed that of a huge swath of less frequent performers.

Further, there is the underlying problem at the heart of this all: The traditional **Performance Rights Organisations** were not designed with DJing in mind as a form of performance. This art form only gained popularity in the 80s and 90s and at present, the industry mostly comprises Digital DJs. Therefore, updating the technology to reflect that and incorporating this into the administrative process would be an ideal scenario.



Ultimately, Aslice's experience demonstrates that while technology can facilitate fairer practices, driving widespread, consistent adoption requires addressing both technical and cultural factors. The challenge lies not just in making it easy for DJs to share, but in fostering an industry-wide shift where such sharing becomes the norm rather than the exception.

Despite concluding its operational phase, Aslice has set a new standard for what artists can expect and demand in terms of fair compensation and recognition. As the industry continues to evolve, the principles championed by Aslice – fairness, transparency, and community support – are likely to remain at the forefront, guiding the development of more equitable practices in electronic music and beyond.

Aslice's Parting Gift: Technology with a Human Touch

As Aslice concludes its operations, it leaves behind a powerful tool for industry transformation. In a move that underscores its commitment to ethical change, Aslice is offering the industry not just innovative technology, but also scalable processes that infuse human care into digital solutions. This combination has proven highly effective in streamlining playlist submissions and ensuring fair compensation for producers.

We issue a call to action to all industry players: explore how this technology can be put to use. Whether you're an established industry body looking to update your processes, or an entrepreneur with a vision for a fairer music ecosystem, Aslice's technology could be the key to turning ideas into reality. The industry now has a unique opportunity to build on Aslice's work and drive meaningful change in how electronic music producers are recognized and compensated.

We can't wait to see what's built from this.

- Audience Strategies, 29th August 2024

"... Today, like any major musical or cultural trend, the capitalist system has found a way to hijack part of it. And that's where Aslice is revolutionary for me because it re-establishes the horizontality of the initial movement between the DJs, producers, and ravers and helps to rebalance the inequalities that have grown. Today, smaller DJs, the so-called locals, and the residents are essential to maintaining our culture. So if you believe in this culture, movement, and music, it doesn't matter what your fee is: Aslice is essential to the underground resistance ..." - Medulla Oblongata (DJ and Producer / France)



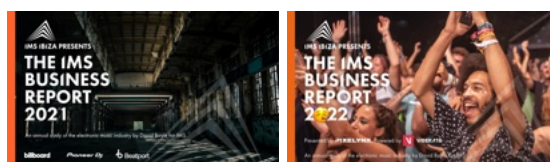
APPENDIX: About Audience Strategies

We are data people. We help organisations find growth by using data to better understand and engage with their audiences. We use data, insights, research, analytics, and data science to inform our strategic approach, and have a wide range of experience working with diverse types of organisations, from large global brands to small startups. From Investment banks to social justice organisations. We've worked for presidents of the USA and pop stars.

We're also music people. We have backgrounds working in EMI Music, Universal Music and Warner Music. We're passionate about dancefloors and have worked on strategic reports to help the electronic music scene with KUVU / Pioneer DJ / AlphaTheta, Native Instruments, Amazon Music, Sony Music, the UK Night Time Industries Association, Trapital, the International Business Summit, Toolroom Records, MDLBEAST, the Jaguar Foundation and now, proudly, Aslice.

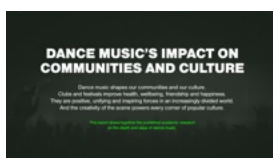
More on [our website](#) and in this [presentation](#).

Other reports we've worked on that we think you'll like:



International Music Summit Business Report

[report](#) | [video](#)



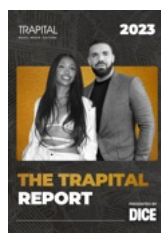
Dance Music's Impact on Communities and Culture [link](#)



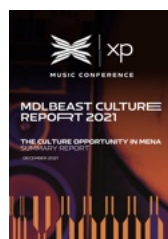
The UK Night Time Industries Association's Dance Music Trends and Valuation [link](#)



Toolroom's Blueprint for emerging artists [link](#)



Hip-Hop / Music / Culture: Annual Trapital Culture Report [link](#)



Middle East and North Africa Culture Report [summary](#) | [complete](#)



Jaguar's Gender Representation in UK Dance Music Report [link](#)