

Hip Hop, Don't Stop: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Influence on Hip Hop from Social Media
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Social media has become one of the biggest influences on hip hop culture today. The explosions of social media and hip hop culture over the last fifteen years are intertwined. Each is an industry generating billions of dollars and attracting billions of followers. One example of this interrelationship is the way in which hip hop artists are able to gain notoriety through their music "going viral," a uniquely 21st-century vehicle for mass communication. In my research, I will analyze the influence of social media on Hip Hop music. Viewed as a rhetorical event, the marketing and distribution of hip hop music via social media highlights the ways in which musical artists leverage decentralized and democratized social media to create a brand that attracts an audience. For example, Lil Nas X's hit "Old Town Road" topped the Billboard Hot 100 hot chart for 17 weeks. What started as a parody led to him winning 2 grammys and exemplifies the power of social media. This study can help other artists with how to employ social media to generate popularity and helps us better understand how continuing developments in communication technology may influence the future of music as a form of public art.