Elton John: 'Close Down the Internet!'

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In a story from the British tabloid newspaper "The Sun," music legend Sir Elton John has posted comments online that call for the internet to be closed down. He apparently laments the way that the internet and the emerging industry of digital music has created a cold and impersonal world for artists to create new music in. He says that it is "destroying good music, and that "The internet has stopped people from going out and being with each other, creating stuff." He continues:

Instead they sit at home and make their own records, which is sometimes OK but it doesn’t bode well for long-term artistic vision.

It’s just a means to an end. We’re talking about things that are going to change the world and change the way people listen to music and that’s not going to happen with people blogging on the internet.
I mean, get out there — communicate. Hopefully the next movement in music will tear down the internet. Let’s get out in the streets and march and protest instead of sitting at home and blogging.

I do think it would be an incredible experiment to shut down the whole internet for five years and see what sort of art is produced over that span. There’s too much technology available. I’m sure, as far as music goes, it would be much more interesting than it is today.

I don’t have a mobile phone or an iPod or anything. I am such a Luddite when it comes to making music. All I can do is write at the piano.

I searched to find the original excerpts from his official website to no avail, and posting in his forums require a $40 fan membership, but irregardless I do think Sir Elton John has a good point.

I remember when CDs were first released and everybody lamented about how cold they sounded in comparison to records and cassette tapes. Digital music has not only increased the “coldness” of the recordings in my opinion, but has changed the way in which artists interact with the public and one another.

Sure they now have a global audience and can circumvent recorded labels for the most part giving them unprecedented access to prospective listeners, but at the same time it has removed the personal and physical level which artists previously had to have when interacting with other artists and their fans.

It may not be that bad for music in the long run, for it seems that all of society is going the way of impersonal communication with the rising use of IMs, e-mail, text -messaging, cell-phones, etc., to interact with one another, but it does point to an ominous turn on a societal level in that the human touch is slowly eluding us.

Now I don’t think he really meant to suggest that the internet be closed down, though I do think he longs for a more simpler time, when a majority of artists used actual instruments to make music, and they collaborated IN PERSON in jam sessions to explore new sounds and rhythms.

Though to be honest, there are still plenty of artist who do "jam" and don’t use the internet and digital music distribution as their sole means of reaching their audience. Artists like Jack Johnson, Jack White, Mason Jennings, The Roots, and Slightly Stoopid, all still use living, breathing instruments and regularly team up to jam with other musicians to create quality music.

The good old days aren’t over Sir John, they’ve just changed a bit.