

INSIGHTS

# The power of fan armies sets Tytl records

Fandoms took stan culture to new heights with the boom of social media and fan-voted awards in the 2010s, but what we are witnessing now reveals that the passion around stardom has hit new levels. At The Tytl, listening is in our DNA, and what we heard through fan polling in late 2019 was loud and clear: Fandom is an unbroken fever. In the span of three weeks, fans voting on their favorite Pop Icon of the Decade and best groups broke all records set during The Tytl's four-year history.

By **Deron Dalton**  
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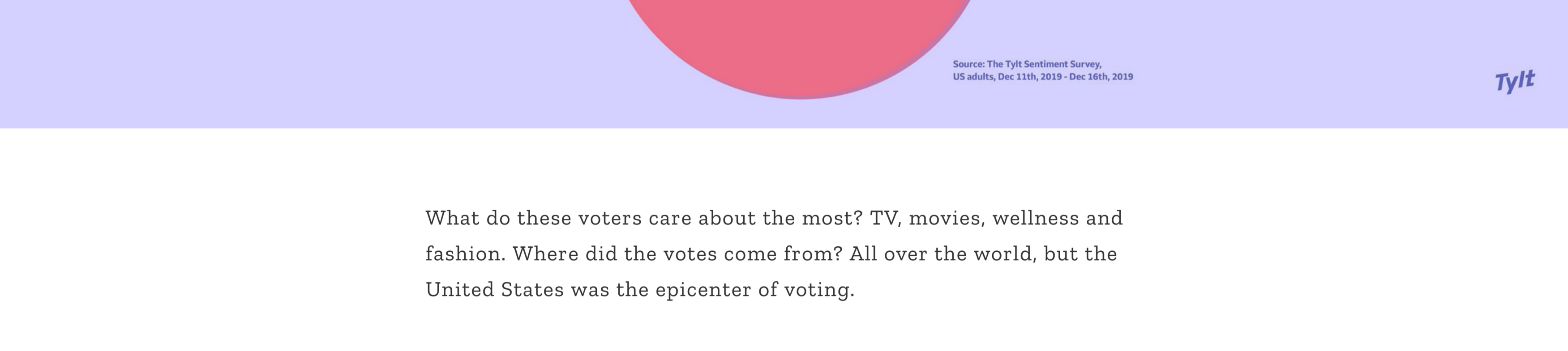
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Music's greatest fan armies mobilized like never before and took fan voting to the next level with The Tytl's Best of the Decade awards. The "Who's the Pop Icon of the Decade" bracket was won by Katy Perry over Lady Gaga, and "Which Groups Won the Decade" category series was dominated by One Direction and BTS. Collectively, the two voting opportunities gathered 16 million votes during a flurry of activity across social media and on The Tytl's site, where fans strategized and rallied each other to push their favorites to the finish.

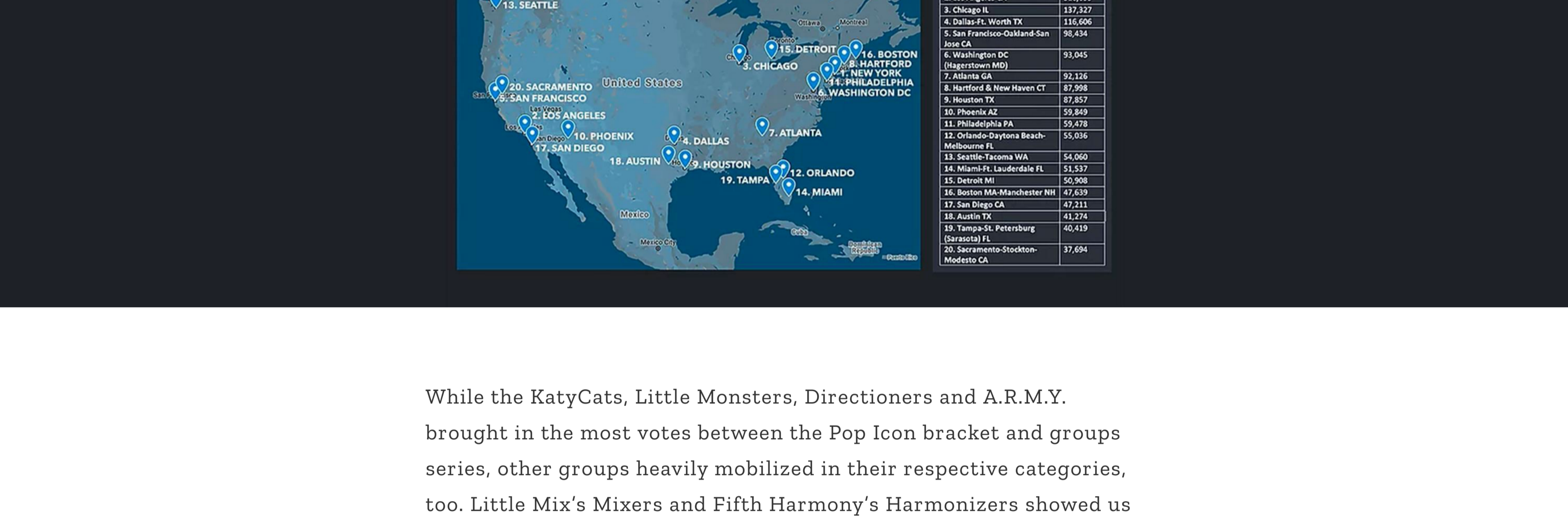
In a super tight race between Katy Perry and Lady Gaga, the lead went back and forth in the Pop Icon of the Decade bracket, bringing a collective of over 1.2 million votes between #KatyWins10s and #GagaWins10s. In the end, Perry's KatyCats regained the lead and emerged on top with over 670,000 votes, winning by the slimmest of margins: 50.5 percent.

While The Tytl processed more than 3 million votes that poured in from the collective four rounds of the Pop Icon bracket, the Directioners and A.R.M.Y. mobilized in the millions for Boy Group of the Decade, bringing in an estimated 10 million votes, while the five categories of "Which groups won the decade" brought in a total of 13 million votes in just five short days! In a race tight until the final hours, the fan forces behind the Directioners' #1DWins10s flooded social media for a huge push, earning victory with over 6 million votes and a 62 percent share. Both #1DWins10s and #BTSWins10s trended on Twitter for two days before Boy Group of the Decade closed.

What was eye-popping about the groups of the decade series wasn't just the sheer volume of votes, but the demographic breakdown, as well: 89 percent were female; 86 percent were adults 18–34; 89 percent voted on mobile.



What do these voters care about the most? TV, movies, wellness and fashion. Where did the votes come from? All over the world, but the United States was the epicenter of voting.



While the KatyCats, Little Monsters, Directioners and A.R.M.Y. brought in the most votes between the Pop Icon bracket and groups series, other groups heavily mobilized in their respective categories, too. Little Mix's Mixers and Fifth Harmony's Harmonizers showed us they are just as fierce as the defining '10s girl groups they stan.

Like Directioners, Harmonizers made it clear that despite their band being on hiatus and each member embarking on impressive solo careers, they are still mobilized and, as one Directioner put it, "the fandom is not dead." Collectively, Girl Group of the Decade also brought in over 1 million votes with #5HWins10s winning with over 630,000 votes at 55 percent.

- BEST OF THE DECADE WINNERS:
- Pop Icon of the Decade: Katy Perry (50.5%)
  - Boy Group of the Decade: One Direction (62%)
  - Girl Group of the Decade: Fifth Harmony (55%)
  - Duo of the Decade: Twenty One Pilots (64%)
  - Pop Band of the Decade: Maroon 5 (56%)
  - Breakout Band of the Decade: 5 Seconds of Summer (56%)

All of the involved fan armies clearly continue to let the Internet know their passion and enthusiasm for winning honorific titles and awards for music's most impactful stars. Fan armies don't just vote on their faves for the sake of voting—the prestige titles and awards seriously mean something to fan armies and how they identify with the artist. The music artists who are chosen for The Tytl's polls and, heck, any award, have made an impact on their fans beyond the bops.

Fandoms typically name themselves—if not named by the artist—after their favorite pop act and mobilize together to showcase their love. The passion for the artists and the knowledge the fandoms carry become part of their identities, and give them a sense of belonging and community. Fandoms showing their dedication to the entertainers and entertainment they consume is not only a source of identity, but it's escapism from the harsh realities of what's happening in the world, making entertainment their chosen reality.

Fandoms played a part in how the original 16 "Pop Icons" were selected. From Rihanna Navy to the Barbz to the XO Crew, the fan armies' past mobilizations made it easy to choose the right icons to include in the bracket.

They speak, we listen—and we write and try to reach them. They mobilize. We continue to listen and do our best to create polls that truly have an impact on their community and the artists they identify with.

But that's not all. Overall, cultural impact and consistent commercial success of the 16 chosen pop stars are how they made it into the brackets.

All 16 pop stars rose to prominence by or before 2015—meaning breakout stars in the later '10s, like Cardi B, Post Malone and Lizzo, did not make the cut. In fact, most pop stars were defining the '10s by breaking records or sharing records with the legends that preceded them, dominating the Billboard 200 and Hot 100, winning GRAMMYS and selling out stadiums in the first half of the decade.

But ultimately today, in order to be a pop icon, you have to have a fandom's backing. From the iHeartRadio Music Awards to the Video Music Awards to the American Music Awards to Billboard's Fan Army brackets, fan-voted awards are a significant part of Internet culture and how artists are recognized. The artists behind social media's most mobilized fan armies make sure the power of their fandoms does not go unnoticed.

In the first round, we chose artists that were contemporaries or related to each other to face off. The choices were difficult, and you want to make predictions for the future rounds that make the face-offs continue to make sense throughout the bracket. But "Pop Icon" literally meant that any of these icons could come out on top, especially with fandoms mobilizing to show their love for the decade's most revered pop artists.

At the end of the day, your fave—or the one you think is the most popular or most commercially successful—can still get eliminated from the competition, especially if the fandom behind one artist truly gets into formation.

Speaking of formation, Beyoncé, also known as Queen Bey or the First Lady of Music, was expected to win Pop Icon of the Decade after being named the most successful female artist of the '00s by Billboard and spending the bulk of the '10s being revered as the entertainer of this generation. But due to an overnight comeback of Pink's Pinkies, Pink won in the first round against Bey on Wednesday, Nov. 27.

In the second round, when 16 stars dropped to the eight finalists, Rihanna's Navy kept the Bad Gal in the lead until The Weeknd's XO Crew pulled off a resurgence of votes in the final hours, winning the second round. Just goes to show you never know who's going to come out on top, and to never, ever underestimate the power of fandoms!

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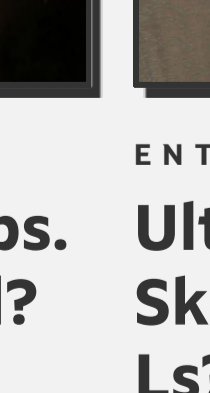
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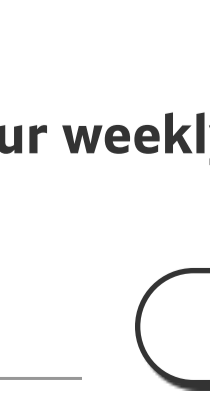
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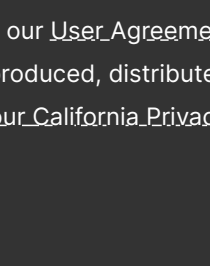
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