

## Why does vinyl still exist?

Written by The Conversation USA

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As I post this, Tim Cook will be waiting in the wings at an event in which he is expected to announce the launch of a [new smaller iPhone that will reverse slowing sales](#) . This comes just weeks after Forbes announced that

[2015 was the tenth consecutive year in which vinyl music sales increased](#)

. The extensive coverage of both stories means you could be forgiven for thinking that significant numbers of people are switching back from digital music to vinyl, although

[this graph](#)

at digitalmusicnews.com shows how feeble a “revival” this really is. Let me give you a red hot tip for the new iPhone – it won’t have a turntable. The real trend over the past three decades has of course been the utter domination of digital formats. Why?

[Recent research](#) by Amanda Krause and I found that people enjoyed listening to music more if they listened via a portable digital device. The key factor was the control that this gave the listeners: the more control we have over music so the more we like it; and skips, likes, and playlists make digital the perfect format for providing this control.

From there we next looked at [how and why people use the different functions of their digital music players](#)

. Having a university education, for example, correlates with selecting specific music rather than using shuffle or playlists. Perhaps us academic types are fussier than most about the music we listen to, or at least happier to procrastinate.

People who are not interested in digital technology are most likely to listen via shuffle: they are clearly trying to avoid interacting with the technology. In contrast, conscientious people are more likely to use playlists. It takes considerable effort to prepare playlists to listen to in different locations, while you are with different people, or doing a range of different activities, and so only the most conscientious people are prepared to devote that much time to preparation.

Another group who like to use playlists are those who readily share their knowledge with others and shape their views. In our research, these were people who also identified themselves closely with music technology. As such, it is easy to see how playlists have become so commonplace: the most influential music listeners define themselves partly through digital technology and value playlists highly.

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Of course, if the way in which we listen to music is driven by psychological factors, then so might also be the reasons why we play musical instruments. We are investigating this right now, and please take part by visiting <http://www.tinyurl.com/investmentstudy> . In the meantime, psychology can easily explain the rise of digital music listening: the tougher question is why vinyl still exists.

### Disclosure

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**Read more** <http://theconversation.com/why-does-vinyl-still-exist-56629>