

US album sales rise for first time since 2004

January 5 2012, By RYAN NAKASHIMA , AP Business Writer



FILE - In this Sunday Aug. 28, 2011 file photo Adele performs at the MTV Video Music Awards in Los Angeles. U.S. album sales rose more than 3 percent last year for the first gain since 2004 - a sign that rising digital sales are finally stemming the decade-long decline of compact discs. The uptick to 458 million album sales was helped by the hugely popular sophomore album "21" from British singer Adele, which sold 5.8 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan. (AP Photo/Matt Sayles)

(AP) -- U.S. album sales rose more than 3 percent last year for the first gain since 2004 - a sign that rising digital sales are finally stemming the decade-long decline of compact discs.

The uptick to 458 million album sales was helped by the hugely popular

sophomore album "21" from British singer Adele, which sold 5.8 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Huge interest in Adele also led to the sales of 856,000 copies of "19," her debut album from 2008.

Michael Buble's "Christmas," which was released in late October, racked up 2.5 million album sales. Lady Gaga's "Born This Way" sold 2.1 million, boosted by a massive sale at Amazon.com earlier in the year for a heavily discounted 99 cents.

Digital album sales rose nearly 20 percent to 103 million, while CDs fell nearly 6 percent to 225 million.

The rest of the total is made up largely of digital single tracks, where 10 tracks are counted as one album. Digital singles sales rose nearly 9 percent to 1.27 billion.

The digital sales gains are likely here to stay, said Dave Bakula, [senior vice president](#) of analytics at Nielsen. He noted more consumers are using high-end mobile devices, and [Google](#) Inc. has launched its online music store, giving it a way to sell music to users of smartphones on its Android platform.

"It shows there's still a lot of growth potential in digital," he said. "That's something I don't see falling down."

Sales of older albums rose nearly 9 percent to 151 million, thanks to heavy discounting, including a Father's Day promotion at some big box retailers and iTunes that touted Journey's greatest hits and the work of other older rock bands.

The Nielsen tally does not include growing subscriptions to all-you-can listen music plans, which have been rising thanks in part to the entry of Swedish service Spotify to the U.S. market in July.

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