

Goodbye to MP3s: Music listeners are happy with streaming services

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In a survey of over 600 young Finns, 76% of respondents listened to music from YouTube every day.

YouTube and Spotify were by far the most popular music sources in the study. YouTube was the most frequently used service for music listening and new music discovery. Even active Spotify users visited YouTube often to complement Spotify's incomplete music selection. YouTube was also perceived as the most shareable music source by the Finnish students in their early 20s who participated in the internet-based study.

"The popularity of YouTube was overwhelming. Nearly everyone uses it for listening to music," says Dr. Lassi A. Liikkanen. "YouTube has transformed the digital media world and the practices of music listening. For the first time, we now have a scientific record of the big change that has taken place."

Why do users flock to YouTube to listen to music?

Although motion-picture content might seem an important attractor to YouTube, Aalto University researchers found little support for this idea.

"It's not only about the videos. We believe that at least in a solitary YouTube music listening context, the video is secondary to audio. We ran an experiment to evaluate this and found that our participants evaluated their musical experience similarly, regardless of the presence

of accompanying picture. This provokes many questions for future research," says Liikkanen.

The study was published in the journal *Interacting with Computers*.

This study describes a transition from the first generation of digital music to a second generation solution, from file downloads to streamings.

"The change has already happened for the people under 30. We expect that the rest of the population will follow. The transition is of course not clear cut. Our results show that people will return to their CD's and MP3 files at times, but they are not getting new content this way. This means that economically speaking, both CD and digital downloads will be dead in a matter of years," Liikkanen continues.

Dr. Liikkanen and Aalto University doctorate student Pirkka Åman also documented the slow evolution of [music listening](#) interfaces. The way consumers listen to music with these second generation of digital music services has not changed much even though the list of most popular services constantly changes.

"Streaming music services also require searching for [music](#) and creating playlists. Digital services have offered new types of radio experiences, but the future lies in hybrid systems that combine human preferences with intelligent recommendations," describes Åman.

More information: Liikkanen L. & Åman P. Shuffling services - Current trends in interacting with digital music. *Interacting with Computers*. Oxford University Press. [DOI: 10.1093/iwc/iwv004](https://doi.org/10.1093/iwc/iwv004)

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