

US music business in rare growth as streaming doubles

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Subscriptions to paid services like Apple Music led to overall revenue growth for the US music industry of 8.1 percent from a year earlier

The US music industry Tuesday posted its strongest growth in more than a decade in the first six months as streaming subscriptions doubled, but weakness reigned in other formats.

Consumers in the world's biggest [music market](#) had 18.3 million

subscriptions to paid services such as Spotify, Apple Music and Tidal in the first half of 2016, compared with 9.1 million in the same period a year earlier, the Recording Industry Association of America said.

The revenue from paid subscriptions also more than doubled to just over \$1 billion.

The [subscriptions](#) led to overall revenue growth for the US music industry of 8.1 percent from a year earlier.

The last time the industry posted a similar rate was in 1999, at the dawn of the era of [digital music](#), when revenue grew 6.4 percent on a full-year basis.

Cary Sherman, chairman and CEO of the industry association, said that the figures showed that music remained "fundamentally undervalued" due to outdated laws and structures despite rising consumer demand.

"Many services rake in billions of dollars for themselves on the backs of music's popularity but pay only relative pennies for artists and labels. Pirate sites operate with seeming impunity," he said in a blog essay.

Outside of streaming, other segments of the [music industry](#) remained soft.

CD shipments dropped 11.2 percent to 38.9 million, while downloads on iTunes and other services tumbled 14.5 percent to 48.2 million albums.

In one potentially alarming sign, shipments of vinyl albums—a niche market which has recently led to a resurgence of record stores—slipped 9.1 percent to 8.4 million records.

Vinyl shipments had soared by more than 28 percent in all of last year.

The latest figures are in line with the global industry, which last year posted its first significant growth since the late 1990s thanks to the rising popularity of streaming.

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