

Adele, and her foe streaming, lift 2015 music sales

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Adele's "25" was by far the top-selling album in both the US and Britain for 2015 even though it came out on November 20

The rapid growth of streaming and sensational success of Adele triggered a rebound of overall music consumption last year in the United States and Britain, industry trackers said Wednesday.

The growth came despite a persistent fall in CD sales and a growing decline in digital downloads on service such as iTunes as [streaming](#)

services offer unlimited, online music.

US music consumption rose 15.2 percent in 2015 from a year earlier to 549.4 million albums or their digital equivalent, reversing a decline in 2014, Nielsen Music said in an annual report.

British music consumption also reversed a slump, with album equivalent sales rising 3.7 percent, according to data released separately Wednesday by the British Phonographic Industry trade association.

Both the United States and Britain, the world's largest and fourth-largest music markets respectively, saw streaming volumes nearly double.

Music streams went up 92.8 percent year-on-year to 317.2 billion songs in the United States and rose by 81.7 percent in Britain.

The growing entry of competitors such as Apple Music and Jay-Z's Tidal to a sector dominated by Spotify only managed to broaden overall interest, said David Bakula, Nielsen's [senior vice president](#) of industry insights.

"You're going to continue to see the types of growth that we've been seeing for a long time to come, I think," he said.

Nielsen looks at consumption and not directly at revenue—which is a major sore point for many artists who argue that their compensation from streaming is puny.

Industry bodies will report more detailed data on profitability in the coming months.

Yet leading the way in 2015's rebound was one of the few artists to reject streaming—Adele.

Backed by public anticipation due to a more than four-year wait since her last album, Adele's "25" enjoyed the biggest first-week sales on record in the United States and Britain.

"25" was by far the top-selling album in both countries for the year even though it came out on November 20.

Nielsen said its research found that about one-third of US consumers planned to buy "25," with around 20 percent of them not generally music consumers.

Yet even with its record-breaking numbers, "25" accounted for just 3.1 percent of US album sales, meaning Adele-mania likely had knock-on effects.

"I think the impact, beyond just the sales part of it, is the fact that people were talking about it. People who are not your traditional music buyers," Bakula said.

Another steep source of growth, but on a much smaller scale than streaming, is its low-tech foil—vinyl, which has enjoyed a rebirth led by collectors.

Vinyl [sales](#) rose by nearly 30 percent in the United States and shot up by more than 64 percent in Britain.

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