

# Patterns of music consumption in the digital age

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This research was conducted by **Jordi Lopez-Sintas and three others** at the **Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona** and **Universitat de Girona, Spain**.

## Summary

This paper sought to understand the ways that people access and acquire music, how their tastes are shaped and how they subsequently share music. The research was particularly interested in how this happened given the availability of digital technology. The research was based on a survey of nearly 15,000 adults living in Spain in 2006-07 conducted by the Spanish Ministry of Culture. It asked people about how and why they bought, downloaded and copied music. They found that people's behavior fell into one of four patterns, and that this was largely a result of people's age and education levels.

## The research identified four types of music consumer

'Non-accessers' (73.5% of people) never bought, copied, or downloaded music; 'Buyers' (4.5%) tended to buy music; 'Downloaders' (13%) mostly downloaded music from peer-to-peer networks; and 'Copiers-buyers' (9%) copied from friends and family, but also bought music.

## Accessing and acquiring music becomes less important for older people

'Music access and listening patterns are both structured by an individual's social position (indicated by education) and life stage (indicated by age).' 'Non-accessers' tended to be older and less well-educated than the minority of the population who were active music buyers, downloaders and copiers. It's worth bearing in mind that the research was unable to differentiate age effects from

cohort effects (meaning that people who are 20 years old today may behave just the same way when they are 80!). It's also worth remembering that internet access in Spain at the time of the survey was lower than the average for Western Europe and North America.

## Keywords

**digital** **music** **sharing** **sales** **downloading** **spain** **survey**

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