

© 01 December 2021, 05:30 (PST)

# New Survey from Dolby Reveals Shifts in Music Listening Behavior Among Adults in the U.S.

Nearly 70% of Gen Z have recently discovered a song released over a decade ago for the first time.

More than half of adults feel they were born in the wrong era because of their taste in music, and for most, the 2000s best match their music preferences.

Nearly 90% believe enhanced audio quality is a “must-have” when streaming music, and 80% of those upgraded or changed services to one with better quality.



**SAN FRANCISCO** – December 1, 2021 – Dolby Laboratories, Inc. (NYSE: DLB), a leader in immersive entertainment experiences, released findings from a new survey illustrating a shift in music listening behavior. The U.S. study of adults (18+ or older) who regularly listen to music found that many, particularly Gen Z, have recently discovered iconic songs and artists from past decades for the first time while others are rediscovering songs from their past. The research revealed social media and Hollywood entertainment have a strong influence over how people discover music. In addition, the study also found that better audio quality is a priority for many, particularly Gen Z, when choosing a streaming subscription over other features.

“Music fills our lives with moments of joy and has been a way to escape the challenges we have faced over the past two years. This has driven changes in consumer behavior, such as the revival of music from past decades to the prioritization of better-quality experiences that allow listeners to connect more deeply with their favorite artists and songs,” said John Couling, Senior Vice President of Entertainment at Dolby Laboratories. “As we look to the future, we expect these influences to have a lasting impact over how we enjoy music.”

The US-based survey, conducted by OnePoll in November 2021, polled 2,000 general population adults who regularly listen to music for at least one hour per day. The survey examined their listening behavior, purchase decisions, and habits formed from the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **U.S. adults are feeling nostalgic based on their choices in music**

A number of respondents feel like they were born in the wrong era because of their taste in music, which was highest among Gen Z. This has led to the increased popularity of iconic songs and artists being rediscovered or discovered for the first time.

- **Six in 10** feel like they were born in the wrong era because of their taste in music, which was highest among Gen Z (**nearly 80%**). For most, the era that most closely matches their taste in music was **the 2000s**.
- **Almost half** have recently discovered a song released over a decade ago, which was highest among Gen Z respondents (**nearly 70%**).
- **Almost half** stated they had rediscovered an iconic song or album within the past two years, particularly **Gen Z** (over two-thirds).
- **Most respondents**, close to 70%, are embarrassed to share their music playlists with others, particularly **their boss**.

### **Social media and Hollywood entertainment heavily influence the discovery of new music**

Social media is the most significant influence shaping how people discover new music, while movies and TV shows play an equally important role.

- **57%** said social media is the top way they discover music.
- While YouTube is the **most popular platform** for discovering music, according to 79% surveyed, **Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok** significantly influence how people find new songs.
- **Almost a fourth** of people who recently discovered a song released over a decade ago attribute this discovery to a viral video on social media.
- **Six in 10** have also discovered a new artist or song after watching a TV show or movie.

### **People in the U.S. are spending more time and money on music**

Music has been a vehicle for escapism as many now spend more time and money on music than they were at the start of 2020.

- **Over two-thirds** spend more time listening to music each day than before the start of 2020, with **over half** listening to music **four hours per day or more**.
- **55%** indicated that they spend more money on music purchases each month, such as streaming subscriptions, than at the start of 2020.

### **Many are prioritizing audio quality when enjoying music**

When choosing a music streaming plan, music fans prioritize quality above all – especially Gen Z. This insight coincides with broader industry trends around the uptick among streaming services that offer subscribers enhanced audio through spatial audio experiences like Dolby Atmos or high resolution (HD) audio.

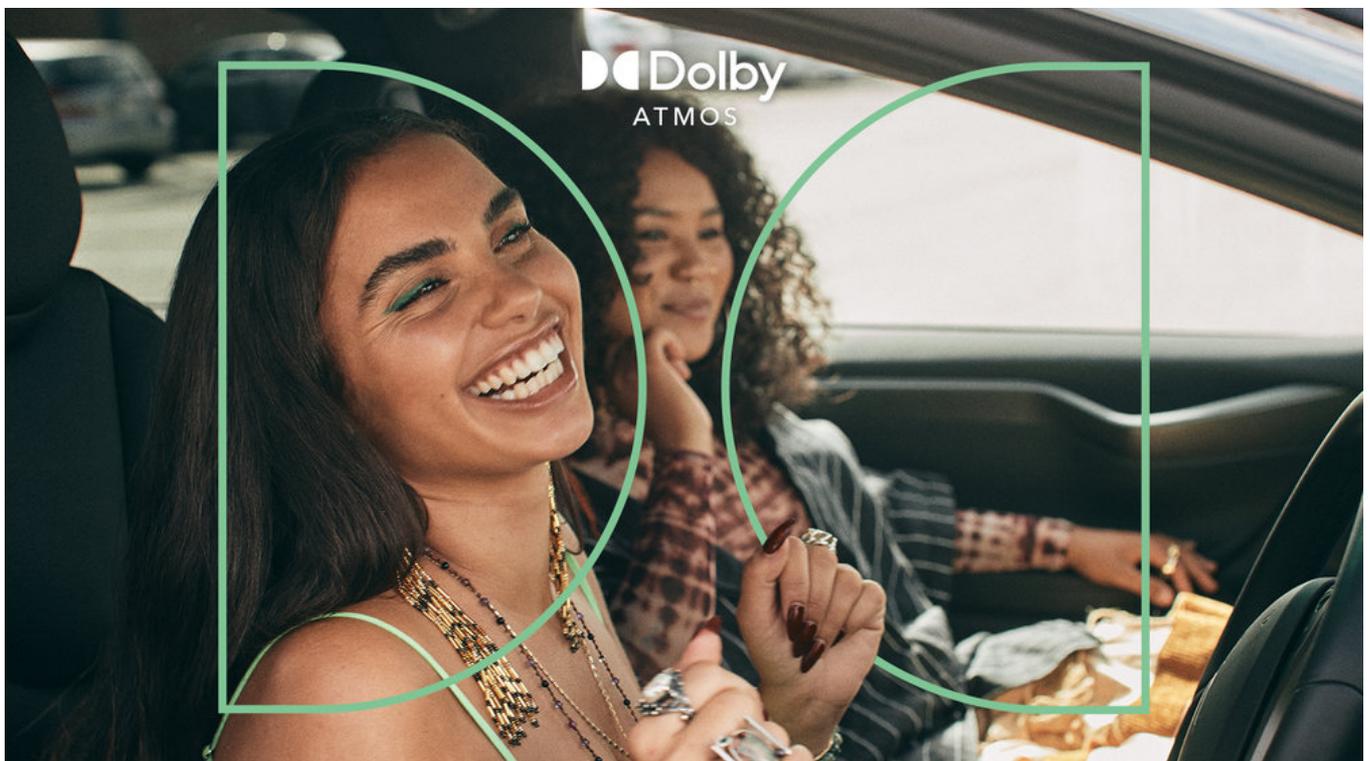
- Among those who pay for a music streaming plan, **nearly 90%** agreed that enhanced audio quality is a “must-have” feature of their subscription, of which **more than half strongly agreed**.
- Of this group, **82%** have upgraded, changed subscriptions, or explicitly paid for a service because it offered better audio quality.
- **Nearly two-thirds** who pay for a music streaming subscription indicated that better sound quality was **more important** than other features such as ad-free listening, exclusive content, or the ability to add multiple users to their account.
- **Over 70%** surveyed are likely or very likely to purchase a new audio device within the next six months specifically to enhance their experience when listening to music.

Preference for better audio quality was notably high among Gen Z:

- **Nearly half** of Gen Z surveyed who pay for a music streaming subscription want access to the latest cutting-edge audio technologies with their plan.
- **86% of Gen Z surveyed** are likely to purchase a new audio device in the next six months to get better audio quality when enjoying music.

The survey also uncovered:

- Comparing various types of in-car entertainment, most see the biggest opportunity for enhancing the listening experience **when enjoying music** in the car (43%), followed by audiobooks and podcasts (23%).
- **More than two-thirds** stated they were very interested or somewhat interested in a new technology that lets them experience music more deeply when driving.



**Incredible music listening experiences in Dolby Atmos are more accessible than ever**  
With many adults prioritizing audio quality, streaming services look to technologies like Dolby Atmos to meet this demand and offer subscribers a differentiated experience. At the same time, Dolby Atmos has been used by creatives to introduce, or reintroduce, their music to new audiences.

“Dolby Atmos empowers artists to push their artistry to new limits by expanding the palette of what is creatively possible. As a fan, there is no comparison to hearing music in Dolby Atmos for the first time,” said John Couling, Senior Vice President of Entertainment at Dolby Laboratories. “Listening to songs in Dolby Atmos is a visceral experience that completely changes how you want to enjoy music.”

Music fans can enjoy Dolby Atmos today through popular music streaming services like [Apple Music](#). Dolby has also worked with MGM Resorts International to launch [Dolby Live at Park MGM](#), the world’s first performance venue of its kind to offer live concerts in Dolby Atmos. Dolby Atmos is also transforming music listening inside cars through recent partnerships with [Lucid Motors](#), [Mercedes-Benz](#), and [NIO](#).

For information about how to enjoy Dolby Atmos, visit: <https://www.dolby.com/music/>

#### Survey Methodology

This random double-opt-in survey of **2,000 general population adults in the U.S.** was commissioned by **Dolby** between **November 10** and **November 12, 2021**. It was conducted by market research company [OnePoll](#), whose team members are members of the [Market Research Society](#) and have corporate membership to the American Association for Public Opinion Research ([AAPOR](#)) and the European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research ([ESOMAR](#)).

#### About Dolby Atmos Music

Dolby Atmos is an immersive audio technology, which is transforming how music is created and experienced. It takes music to new levels by immersing listeners inside the song to reveal details with unparalleled clarity and depth. Whether it’s hearing the layers of instruments move all around, catching the subtle breath a singer takes between lyrics, or being enveloped in a wave of melodies, nothing compares to hearing music in Dolby Atmos.

To learn more, check out Dolby’s recent consumer campaign celebrating Dolby Atmos Music. The campaign features five of the most prominent artists in the world – [Billie Eilish](#), [J Balvin](#), [Justin Bieber](#), [Olivia Rodrigo](#), and [The Weeknd](#) – who share why they think Dolby Atmos is ushering in a new era for music.

---

## ABOUT DOLBY

Dolby Laboratories (NYSE: DLB) is based in San Francisco with offices around the globe. From movies and TV shows, to apps, music, sports, and gaming, Dolby transforms the science of sight and sound into spectacular experiences for billions of people worldwide. We partner with artists, storytellers, developers, and businesses to revolutionize entertainment and communications with Dolby Atmos, Dolby Vision, Dolby Cinema, and Dolby.io.



Dolby