

[OPENS WITH RECORD PLAYING SOUND SCENE]

Narration: Over the past few years, we've seen a real resurgence in physical media. Younger listeners are getting into collecting records and CDs, whether it's hunting hidden gems while thrifting or picking up albums directly from the artists they love. It's been really interesting to see this mix of nostalgia and modern fandom coming together.

Lily: I've been collecting CDs since, like, high school, because my library had like a media sale, and I would buy \$1 CDs, and that's kind of how it started. And now it's progressed to a collection of over 300 I have 350 now.

There was a period in middle school when I started buying CDs off of Amazon and it would be like the used Amazon section and I bought the Panic at the Disco, a fever you can't sweat out, along with Bad Religion, Stranger Than Fiction, because the Bad Religion was because my parents liked that album and kind of showed it to me. And then Panic at the Disco's because I was like, I really like the email music in middle school. I guess.

Narration: Lily Goldblatt is a senior at The University of Connecticut. She works at UConn's radio station, WHUS, as the Program Director. She organizes the broadcasting schedule, making sure all the DJ's have a time slot for their weekly shows.

Lily has her own show, Kill Yr Idols, where she almost exclusively uses cd's.

[SOUND SCENE – LILY'S RADIO SHOW]

Lily: Sometimes I will try to, like, use my CDs to do my show. I think it's like, more fun and more involved to do a show with physical media, because otherwise you're kind of just playing a playlist of MP3's, of course, MP3's, because we would never use any streaming. But of MP3's off of your computer and you just, like, kind of sit there and make sure it's playing right. But like, if you have a CD, you have to change over the tracks. You have to, like, be aware of what tracks you're playing. And so it's a lot, I think it's a lot more involved and more fun, and you're kind of, like, more interacting with the show. And then I also, we

get CDs from promoters, and I'm always very excited to get those my favorite new music in the mail, just to, like, have around the station.

Aidan: I'm Aiden Cruz. I'm a junior here at UConn. I am also the music director at wh US stores. Every time I'm here, I'm digging through different shelves. I'm trying to find other things. Not too long ago, like, I'm always on, trying to find, like, I'm really on John Coltrane right now. So I was, like, going through the, like, the shelves and trying to find if we have any. We had, like, one or two that we had Coltrane Duke, we had Miles Davis. It was just insane. And then, not only that, but it's like my, I think one of my favorite things is, when I started working here, we were doing all that with seven inches. And a lot of the hardcore music comes out on the seven inches right back in the day. And it just like, I went in and I think Paige just told me, like, you know, like, we have all these boxes. Just go through them, like, see what's in there. Like, I we kind of don't know, like, because we just have so much I spent probably, like, I literally was there from like noon until like 9pm at night, just digging through the crates. Because it's what I love to do. I just love digging. I love finding treasure. And that's what it feels like, is when, whenever I find something good, it's like, oh, I got a new treasure.

Narration: Ken Best has had a radio show at WHUS for ___ years, pulling music from his own personal collection each week.

Lily: I was talking to one of our DJs A while ago, and I was like, talking about how, like, oh, I have like, 300 something CDs. He's like, well, I have a little bit more than that. And he's like, I have a think about close to 1000 and I was like, Wow. I mean, one day.

[SOUND SCENE – LILY'S RADIO SHOW]

Narration: Many collectors find these alternative copies to sound cleaner in comparison to the digital, streamed version. There's appreciation especially for vinyl records because of their warm sounds and subtle nuances to the music.

Lily: Technically, the audio quality is better. I'm not sure if I'm like, really an audio file, but it is technically better than like a streaming service would be. And yeah, I just like having a physical representation of music at my disposal.

Narration: [In a piece published by the BBC](#), a digital kit can't read analogue soundwaves and instead translates them into a digital signal then back to analogue. Information can be lost during this process, altering the sound of the audio.

With records, each part of the analogue wave is recorded in the grooves of the vinyl, ensuring that nothing is missing.

Lily: I think it's cool to like have this connection to the past. I guess I feel like I don't call myself like an old soul, but I do have like interest. Like a lot of the music I listened to was like coming out when CD was, like, the main form of media, and sometimes vinyl, and, yeah, I think it's cool to like, hear how people that were like living and experiencing this music coming out, Like when it was coming out, interact with it.

[BACKGROUND MUSIC]

Lily: I was interviewing somebody for there's a place called Best Video, which they do a D, it's a DVD rental store in this day and age. And I was interviewing, they had a festival of like, vendors, and he was selling DVDs. And I was asking him about, like, what the appeal is, and he was saying that, like, he uses word tactile, which I like, which is, like, it's like, literally something you can hold in your hands and like, because, like, a lot of people have very deep connections with music, so having, like, a physical representation of that, I think, is really cool.

Narration: Many recording artists have been releasing CD's and vinyl's for fans to purchase over the past few years, following the rise of interest.

Lily: I think that physical media is back. There's little, a lot of controversies with like Spotify recently, and physical media is like, not at the whims of copyright issues and stuff like, it's not gonna get taken off of a streaming service because of, like, an issue with the platform. You're gonna like, have it for the rest of your life. So I think that it's making a comeback. There's definitely been an uptick in vinyl that's not like, something I personally like. I have a very small collection of vinyl, but I think CDs are kind of making their way up. More artists

are starting to sell CDs of their music again, and tapes. For some reason, I don't have a tape player, but I do have a few tapes in the hopes that one day I will have a way to play it.

Narration: [According to a report done by the RIAA](#), a trade organization, we spend a lot of money on physical media, about 10% of \$5.6 billion worth.

In 2025, the total revenue of physical media was \$5,589.1, an increase from 2024, with a total of \$5,537.

Aidan: Physical media at this point is kind of like a way of life to me. I don't see myself ever stopping collecting it, especially since a big thing for me, is the fact that streaming, streaming doesn't equal owning I feel like that's a big, big push for me to keep collecting is the fact that this, this means I own it. This means I have it for life.

Narration: Most DJs may be using music as MP3 files or through streaming platforms, but those few at WHUS who don't, will not be switching over and will be sticking with what they know.