

---

Subject: Re: Audiophile Survey

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Wed, 27 Mar 2024 16:57:10 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

I'm sure there is probably some useful information in finding the "audiophile" demographic in the 2020s but I'm not sure what it is.

I know this: I have been interested in high quality sound since I was around 16 years old, in the late 1970s. I think probably my DIY leanings came from the fact that having that desire at a young age meant I needed to find ways to get high-quality sound on a budget. But the fact that it was even possible for me to obtain high-quality sound equipment at that age is my point.

If someone did a survey of audiophiles in, say 1975 to 1980, I think it would show many audiophiles were young. There may have been more young audiophiles back then than there were older audiophiles.

There was a time - prior to the 1950s or so - that hifi sound was exotic and esoteric. It was only for a dedicated breed, a lot like being a ham radio operator. You had to have financial resources and technical expertise to even get the gear. So even being an audiophile in generations back then was rare.

The decades of the 1960s and 1970s brought more offerings, so there was more to work with at a little bit lower cost. That made "audiophile quality" systems more attainable. But even then, the quality of high-fidelity equipment was significantly better than low-cost radios, tape decks and record-players. So there was a wide range of quality levels, with a large gap between hifi and low-cost systems. That tended to give a reason to want to obtain better systems: There were more obvious benefits in the better systems and they were more available to more people.

Mid-fi in the years prior to the 1970s or so was pretty much a table radio or portable record player with practically no-fi. So if you were a young adult prior to the 1970s, you had to either get a pretty good hi-fi system, or you were settling on sound that really pretty much sucked. There really wasn't a "mid-fi" system in the 1960s and before - you either had a fairly expensive and relatively exotic hifi system, or you had sound bandwidth that wasn't much greater than a telephone.

Not so by Y2K. One could purchase an inexpensive system that wasn't audiophile quality but it was definitely better than a table radio. You weren't limited to telephone-bandwidth sound, even with an inexpensive sound system. So I think that makes younger generations less likely to spend thousands on high-end hifi equipment.

So I am wondering if the age-bias has more to do with that kind of thing - the offerings available to older generations when they were young adults - than the mere fact of age itself. I mean, one might think that boomers are more likely to be audiophiles than younger generations. Could be their natural affluence, or maybe it more because good quality sound became more reachable by the 1970s than, say, the 1940s. And then by Y2K, digital media and other technologies made mid-fi much better sounding than mid-fi in earlier decades, so maybe that's part of it too.

---