Feature Story

This feature story outlines the ways in which innovations in technology have shaped the way we listen to and experience music. Since the rise of the digital era, music-streaming services have proved to be among the top preferences for listening to music. This is weighing heavily on the convenience and availability aspects of this medium. With access to a global database of music at your fingertips, it is no wonder this technology has become so prevalent throughout current society.

The video interview component of this story gathers insight from various angles surrounding music. Between a music fan, music major, and music professor, they all agreed that streaming was their most used source of listening to music. Although the music major and professor both stated that they preferred listening to an album on vinyl. This provided a better understanding into modern music from those involved in the culture.

The audio interview also provided valuable insight into the means of recording music. Throughout recent decades, technology has drastically evolved to make the music production process much more efficient and malleable. This perspective was helpful in establishing where this music is coming from and how it is being made.

Finally, the photos encapsulate the story with visuals of these new technologies. Each photo exemplifies a major aspect contributing to modern-day music industry. In order:

* Over-Ear Headphones: Fully circumaural, they cover the entire ear, eliminating external sound, and enhancing the overall listening experience. These provide excellent detail to be heard.
* Apple Music: With its genesis as iTunes, Apple has created a cohesive platform for downloading and streaming music. Similar to other streaming services, Apple Music contains a wide variety of music, accessible right on your iPhone.
* Spotify: The leader in internet music streaming. Spotify contains an endless selection of music, all for a low monthly price. These songs are easily downloaded and saved for offline use. It also serves as a platform for artist promotion and discovery.
* Digital Audio Workstations (DAW): This platform allows producers the capability to record and manipulate multi-track sessions, with simply a computer. Compared to physical cassette tape recording, these programs allow for much more experimentation and efficiency when producing records.
* Analog – Digital Converter Interface: Converts the signal from A/D or D/A. This is crucial in transferring an analog signal into a digital interface.
* Turntable: This is one of the earliest methods of playback. This may be rare nowadays due to its inconvenience, but it remains the highest quality listening experience one can have.
* MIDI Keyboard: Pianos are nothing new, but this controller acts as a piano and synthesizer all in one. With weighted keys to mimic a real piano, the MIDI offers a wide range of other effects to manipulate the sound. Through merely a USB connection, the MIDI controller is able to connect directly into the computer and record.
* Vinyl albums: Although interest in vinyl has diminished over the years, the culture for it is still in full power. Many popular artists release albums on streaming sites, but also on vinyl. Even though streaming services seem to dominate, turntables have evolved to be much higher quality than in the past.
* Hardware Rack: These hardware preamps give much more control when recording in a studio. They allow the engineer to run the signal through various channels to get different characters of sound.
* Electric Guitar: This six string instruments features various electrical pickups that emit a different sound. No longer limited to an acoustic sound, electrical guitars provide the option to connect directly into an amp. The amp supplies various EQ and distortion settings.
* iPod & iPhones: What started out as a simple mp3 playback, evolved into a cell phone with internet streaming connectivity. Also much bigger, these devices have grown along with the evolution of music streaming.
* Radio Station Board & Mics: This allows broadcasters to play and talk to listeners over the radio. Although radio is nothing new, the way in which it is transmitted has drastically changed. Equipment and software now allows for much more control and versatility.
* Analog Mixing Board: Although digital boards may seem superior, analog boards are still heavily used in the industry. The analog board was a major upgrade from recording individual tracks on a ADAT tape machine, and allows for refined control of the analog signal.
* Digital Mixing Board: These interact cohesively with the DAW, and allow for greater manipulation. The board interacts immediately with the software, and vice versa.
* Studio Monitors: Nearly a flat frequency response, this high quality form of playback allows for a more refined sonic spectrum, and provides an accurate representation of playback for audio engineers to mix professionally. These act as a form of playback connecting to the audio interface, and through to the computer.