

# → **Fast Facts**



## **Digitizing wax cylinders**

The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts is in the process of digitizing fragile wax cylinders containing audio recordings including the Mapleson Cylinders, a collection of hundreds of early recordings of the Metropolitan Opera. Using an “Endpoint Cylinder and Dictabelt Machine, a custom-built piece of equipment made specifically for safely transferring audio from the cylinders, the library is embarking on an ambitious preservation project: to digitize not just the Mapleson Cylinders, but roughly 2,500 others in the library’s possession.”

Jeremy Gordon, “Wax Cylinders Hold Audio From a Century Ago. The Library Is Listening,” *The New York Times*, January 2, 2023, sec. Arts, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/02/arts/music/new-york-public-library-wax-cylinders.html>.



## **Record sales**

“According to the Recording Industry Association of America’s (RIAA) annual revenue report, vinyl records outsold CDs in the US last year for the first time since 1987, selling 41 million units against 33 million for CD. Vinyl record sales have consistently increased over the last 16 years according to the RIAA report . . . now accounting for 71 percent of all physical music format revenue.”

Jess Weatherbed, “Vinyl Overtakes CD Sales for the First Time since 1987,” *The Verge*, March 10, 2023, <https://www.theverge.com/2023/3/10/23633605/vinyl-records-surpasses-cd-music-sales-us-riaa>.



## **Book sales**

“After two years of surprisingly strong sales during the pandemic, unit sales of print books fell 6.5 percent in 2022 compared to 2021 at outlets that report to NPD BookScan. Unit sales totaled 788.7 million last year, down from 843.1 million in 2021. Adult fiction was the only one of the major categories to have a sales increase last year over 2021, with print unit sales up 8.5 percent.”

Jim Milliot, “Print Book Sales Fell 6.5% in 2022,” *PublishersWeekly.com*, January 6, 2023, <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/financial-reporting/article/91245-print-book-sales-fell-6-5-in-2022.html>.



## **Attacks on free speech**

“This year, we’re seeing a wave of bills targeting drag performances, where simply being gender nonconforming is enough to trigger the penalty. We’re

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also seeing a wave of bills regulating what can be in public or K-12 school libraries,” said Joe Cohn, legislative and policy director with the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression. “On college campuses, we have been tracking data about attempts to get faculty members punished or even fired for speech or expression and the numbers are startling—it’s the highest rate that we’ve seen in our 20 years of existence.”

Rebecca Boone, “Experts Say Attacks on Free Speech Are Rising across the US,” AP NEWS, March 15, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/first-amendment-free-speech-censorship-mccarthyism-815865bafa52bb821400be15fdf76119>.



## **AI misinformation**

“Despite OpenAI’s promises, the company’s new (artificial intelligence) tool produces misinformation more frequently, and more persuasively, than its predecessor. Two months ago, ChatGPT-3.5 generated misinformation and hoaxes 80 percent of the time when prompted to do so in a NewsGuard exercise using 100 false narratives from its catalog of significant falsehoods in the news. NewsGuard found that its successor, ChatGPT-4, spread even more misinformation, advancing all 100 false narratives.”

Lorenzo Arvanitis, McKenzie Sadeghi, and Jack Brewster, “NewsGuard’s Misinformation Monitor: GPT-4 Produces More Misinformation than Predecessor,” *NewsGuard* (blog), March 2023, <https://www.newsguardtech.com/misinformation-monitor/mar-2023>.