

Which Audio Player?



*Listening to the translated Scriptures:
a review of today's digital
audio players*



Richard Margetts

Fifth Edition

2024



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This document is available for download at:

<http://www.scripture-engagement.org>

Acknowledgements

Thank you very much to Faith Comes By Hearing, MegaVoice, Renew World Outreach, Kivah Distributors, Hope Tech Global and Galcom for providing audio players to test and for all the feedback they have given on this report.

Photos of audio players from FCBH, MegaVoice, Renew World Outreach, Hope Tech Global, Digital Bible Society, Galcom, Talking Bibles, Alibaba.com, and many taken by the author. Smartphone by iStockphoto. Feature phone by ChatGPT/DALL-E.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this article are those of the author, who works in Scripture Engagement in West Africa alongside Bible translation teams. He is not working for any of the organisations producing the audio players.

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*Listening to the translated Scriptures:
a review of today's digital audio players*

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SECTION ONE

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

All around the world, people are listening to the Bible recorded in audio form. Some are listening individually, meditating on God's Word at home or as they go about their daily lives. Others are gathering together in groups, listening for a while and then talking about what they have been hearing. For some, it's the first time they have heard parts of the Bible, and for others they find themselves listening time and time again. It means more access to the Scriptures than ever before, in more languages, reaching young and old, those who can read, those who cannot read, and those who prefer not to read.

It is not hard to convince those involved in Scripture access and Scripture engagement of the importance of audio Scriptures. We want to assist communities in making strategic choices about how best to make them available and how best to encourage people to engage with them. In today's digital world, there are so many more possibilities than just a few years ago. And the methods we use for audio distribution continue to change. I remember copying audio recordings onto cassette tapes, and then onto CDs, but we don't do that anymore!

One of the ways people listen to the Bible today is using a digital audio player. But since there are so many different audio players to choose from, how do we make a good choice? This comparison report is written to help you choose between the different types and models of audio players available today.

What changes are we seeing in the world of audio players?

The first edition of this report, in 2008, compared the Proclaimer, MegaVoice Ambassador and Saber. In 2014, we compared the Proclaimer, MegaVoice Envoy, MegaVoice Storyteller, Audible, Papyrus and Saber. In 2019, we added the MegaVoice Envoy 2, the Torch, the Kulumi Mini and the Kulumi Sheep.

Since 2019, we have seen the following trends:

1. More features and fewer features

While we have seen players being released or upgraded with additional features, there has been an increasing realisation that more features is not necessarily better, especially if it puts up the unit price of a player and the associated shipping costs. For this reason, we are seeing organizations offering cheaper or more simple versions of their players (e.g. the MegaVoice Companion or Pathway, and the Kulumi X), which are more economical when purchased in bulk quantities.

2. Local availability of digital audio players

A portable radio or speaker that you can buy in the local shops often has a memory card or a USB slot that you can use to play digital audio files. Some are now available with a built in solar panel. Although they can be less durable, provide fewer levels of file navigation and do not protect content from being changed or modified, they do offer a possible alternative to importing audio players from overseas. This can be attractive option when funds are limited, when getting shipments through customs is difficult, and when the focus is on local sustainability.

3. Most people have a phone which plays media

A large proportion of the world's population have their own personal audio player (a feature phone or smartphone) that they carry with them everywhere. Later in this report we consider the advantages and disadvantages of using a phone as an audio player. Perhaps the biggest reason for opting for a dedicated audio player rather than a phone for listening to the Bible is similar to the reason for using a printed Bible rather than one on your phone: it allows you to focus on one thing and avoid being distracted.

4. Players with lamps and flashlights/torches

Several organisations have integrated a light into their player. This includes the Kulumi Mini, MegaVoice Envoy, The Torch, and more recently the MegaVoice LifeLight (which includes a lamp, a torch and a reading light).

5. **Digital displays**

Early versions of the Proclaimer from Faith Comes By Hearing included a digital display, but these disappeared in subsequent versions – and most other players did not include a display. This is likely because of cost. Now we are seeing the return of the display screen on selected models, for example in the MegaVoice LifeLight, the MegaVoice Envoy 3 and the Digital Bible Society's Pearl players.

6. **Collaboration**

Organisations are working together more in design, manufacturing and distribution. They are increasingly using each other's devices or software rather than always seeing the need to do something on their own. For example, MegaVoice, Renew World Outreach and Kulumi (Hope Tech Global) are using the SaberCopy software, developed by Global Recordings Network.

7. **More capacity**

As memory has become cheaper, audio players are seeing an increasing amount of built-in memory. This means that they have the capacity to contain more content and better-quality audio. There is less need to compress audio files to make them as small as possible.

8. **Durability and better battery life**

Today's audio players are more durable than their predecessors. This means better build quality and improved battery technology. In the past, one of the biggest complaints about audio players was the problem of dead batteries after a few months of use. The batteries being used today have a much longer shelf life and will last for longer.

9. **USB charging**

In the past, players would come with a proprietary charging unit, which could be an additional cost. Now, players are charged using standard USB cables. The latest players have USB-C ports, which is becoming the standard for electronic devices in much of the world. MegaVoice is switching all their units over to the USB-C type connectors by the end of 2024.

10. **Power banks**

Some of the players are becoming charging sources themselves (The Torch, Kulumi Mini, MegaVoice LifeLight, MegaVoice Solar Speaker). They act as power banks from which you can charge your phone.

11. **Multilingual players**

There is a trend to see multiple languages on a single player, e.g. translations of the Bible in a selection of languages – very useful for multilingual contexts.

12. **Easier content loading with MP3 files**

In the past, some players required less than common audio file formats, meaning that you had to run file conversion and compression programs before uploading new content. Now most players take standard MP3 files and uploading content is much easier.

13. **Players for children**

The MegaVoice Wildlife Storytellers and the Kulumi Sheep have been designed especially for children.

14. **Digital file creation and sharing**

In most countries of the world, people are interacting with digital media and are familiar with memory cards and MP3 audio files. Not only do they consume this media themselves, but they are creating media, and sharing it with their friends who share it with their friends, and so on.

One size does not fit all in the world of audio players. Different contexts and different types of programme call for different types of player.

All of the players reviewed here have their pros and cons, but they do have one key feature in common: in interacting with the people that produce them, I've been encouraged by the passion and motivation of each one to bring God's Word to those who have not yet heard it. None of the organisations would like to be seen simply as equipment suppliers; they seek rather to be ministry partners, serving alongside others to reach oral communicators with the Scriptures.

What type of player do we need?

Today's audio players can be divided into four categories: multi-purpose audio players, Scripture-fixed content audio players, locally available audio players, and phones.

1. Multi-purpose audio players

MegaVoice Envoy 2, Envoy 3, LifeLight, Companion, Pathway, The Torch, Papyrus, Audible K1, Kulumi Mini, Kulumi X, Kulumi Sheep, Pearl Players, ImpaX player, Compass, etc.



MegaVoice Envoy 2

MegaVoice Envoy 3

MegaVoice LifeLight

MegaVoice Companion

MegaVoice Pathway



The Torch

Papyrus

Audible K1



Kulumi Mini

Kulumi X

Kulumi Sheep

Pearl Players



Galcom ImpaX player

Galcom Compass

These audio players can be used to play any selection of audio: Scripture portions, selected Bible books, the New Testament, the whole Bible, songs, sermons, teaching, drama, stories, etc. They have been designed especially for regions where there is no easy access to electricity, so many of them have built-in solar panels. Another common feature is that they provide a way of securing content, so that users cannot easily replace Scripture with their favourite music tracks.

For these players, you can get the audio content:

- *By doing your own recording.* This can be done with your computer, a microphone, and audio editing software (e.g. Audacity or Adobe Audition). Media specialists can help with this.
- *By making use of existing audio.* For example, Bible and NT recordings, radio programmes, 'The Story of Jesus' (the JESUS film audio version), content from the Global Recordings Network audio library, MegaVoice Audio Cloud, etc.

The advantage of using multi-purpose players to distribute Scripture content is that:

- you have complete control over the choice of content;
- you get to use what you have recorded immediately after you record and edit it;
- you can start small and add further audio as it becomes available (i.e. you don't need to wait until you have a whole New Testament or a full set of stories to record);
- you are free to use a selection of your own material to address specific needs in a community;
- you can make use of local songs and music as they become available.

Multi-purpose audio players can be used as part of any strategy you choose, but you do need to have a strategy. See the article '*Audio Players in Use: 9 ideas for using digital audio players in Scripture Engagement*' for some ideas.¹

2. Scripture fixed content audio players

Proclaimers, Talking Bible, InTouch Messenger, The Treasure



Proclaimers



Talking Bible



In Touch Messenger



The Treasure

These are players which come with fixed Scripture content, rather than being multi-purpose players that you can use for any kind of content. The organisations that provide them are often involved in organising the recording and editing of the audio content. In most cases this will be done when there is a significant body of translated Scripture available, such as the whole New Testament.

For example, the **Proclaimers** are designed to contain the Scripture recordings made by Faith Comes By Hearing (FCBH) or by its partners. It is in active use in many thousands of listening group programmes around the world. As such the Proclaimer has fixed content (usually the whole New Testament) which cannot be removed or changed. You cannot use these players to contain audio material you have recorded yourself. The whole recording and editing process is led by a team of specialists. Although a language team might feel they could do it themselves, they are likely to underestimate the time required for them to do such recording and editing amid all their other responsibilities. Getting it all done professionally in a short time frame is a very attractive proposition.

The **Talking Bible** is another example of this type of player, made to look like a Bible. It contains the single voice narration of a New Testament or a whole Bible, recorded by Talking Bibles. The solar-powered version of the Talking Bible has an SD card slot which can be used for Bible teaching audio.

¹ Margetts, Richard. '*Audio Players in Use: 9 ideas for using digital audio players in Scripture Engagement*' (2011), available for download at <http://www.scripture-engagement.org>

The **In Touch Messenger** contains Bible teaching messages from In Touch Ministries, as well as audio Scripture. The **Treasure** contains audio Bibles and is distributed by Unknown Nations. Both the In Touch Messenger and Treasure are customised forms of MegaVoice Envoy players.

3. Locally available audio players

Radios or speakers with USB or memory card slots



These are the audio players that you can find on sale in the shops, such as an FM radio with a slot for microSD card or a USB memory stick. The advantage of these players is that people might already own one, and if they don't, they are often available to buy locally. At less than \$10 for the most basic device, this is the cheapest of all the audio player options. Some models now have solar panels.

4. Phones

Feature phones and smartphones



This is the portable audio player that you are most likely to find in someone's pocket. They range from the basic feature phone to the latest in smartphone technology, Android or iPhone.

Because of the widespread availability of the mobile phone, some people are asking whether the days of the other audio player categories are numbered. Will the use of phones as audio players mean that there is no more need for the other types of player? The debate is ongoing, but here are some of the pros and cons of the phone as an audio player:

| The Phone as Audio Player | |
|--|---|
| Advantages | Disadvantages |
| <p>The phone is the most widespread audio player, already owned by billions of people. They can listen to Scripture without any extra equipment. There are no shipping costs.</p> <p>It is the one device people carry with them everywhere. Want to get your friend to listen to something? Just take out your phone from your pocket.</p> <p>Share-ability: Using Bluetooth, a microSD card or a Wi-Fi transfer app, your friend can have the same content on their phone which they</p> | <p>Limited speaker volume. Not suitable for listening in big groups.</p> <p>Being a multi-use device has its disadvantages: a Scripture audio player can be left playing for hours (because you can't do anything else with it), but with your phone you'll want to make/answer calls, send messages, listen to music, etc.</p> <p>People might listen to the Scriptures less on their phone than if they had a dedicated Scripture audio player for the family.</p> <p>Battery life: the longer you listen to audio, the</p> |

| The Phone as Audio Player | |
|---|---|
| Advantages | Disadvantages |
| <p>can then share with their friends.</p> <p>Reproducibility: Listening group programmes are not limited by the number of audio players an organisation can afford to buy in their budget.</p> <p>Phones can contain the audio Scriptures in several languages and versions. It's your choice.</p> <p>Smartphone apps can have text and audio together, often with text highlighted phrase by phrase as the audio is playing.</p> <p>The screen facilitates navigation.</p> <p>There is no need to be present to give someone a new physical device to listen to.</p> <p>The audio files can be accessed and downloaded remotely.</p> <p>When the battery gets worn out, you can often find another locally.</p> <p>Local repairers know how to fix phones.</p> <p>When your phone eventually dies, you can transfer the content to your new phone.</p> | <p>quicker your phone battery will run out, and you still want to be able to receive/make calls before the end of the day.</p> <p>Beware of using your phone for a listening group at church. You might be interrupted by a text or a phone call!</p> <p>Scripture content can easily be deleted to make room for the latest songs or videos.</p> <p>It's easy to be distracted by other things on the phone while listening: apps, alerts, emails, messages from friends, etc.</p> <p>Common phones can be hard to manipulate by blind people in terms of selecting Scripture books and chapters.</p> <p>Phones do not have a built-in solar panel for charging.</p> <p>They are less robust than specialist audio players. The screen can get broken easily if dropped.</p> |

What kinds of questions should we ask?

When making decisions about the right digital audio player(s) to choose, here are some good questions to ask:

- **Content**
What kind of content do we want to put on the player? Will it be an 'Audio Bible' only (where all the content is Scripture) or do I want to put other audio onto it like songs, drama, sermons, etc.?
- **Recording**
Would we prefer the flexibility of doing the recording ourselves? Or would we get better results by inviting a partner organisation to help us?
- **Volume**
What volume level do we need? How loud should it be? For small groups? Individual use? Or will it be used in communities where a significant group of people will want to gather round to listen and discuss (often the case in oral cultures)?
- **Size**
Is it important for it to be pocket-sized (even if this means lower volume)? Will people want to listen while on the move, on a journey, on the way to work or when walking while at work (e.g. commuters, cattle herders, nomads)? Or might people need to listen discretely?
- **Charging**
What access do people have to electricity? Is the ability to charge by solar power important? Would people be happy charging by hand-crank? Are 12V car batteries available?
- **Transfer**
How easily do we need to be able to load the initial audio content? Once the contents have been loaded

onto a player, will we ever need to change it later, i.e. by adding new audio materials? How would we do that for people?

- **Security**

How secure do we need the content to be? Are we in a context where people have access to computers and might want to replace Scripture content with their own music?

- **Cost**

How much will a player cost? Don't forget to include shipping costs, import taxes, and any necessary accessories like solar panels, SD cards and mains chargers.

- **Sustainability**

What are the implications for sustainability of shipping audio players into the country from abroad? Would there be advantages in encouraging the use of locally available players and phones?

- **Strategy**

How will the players be distributed? Will they be sold, loaned or given? How will we encourage their use? What happens if a player needs to be repaired? What happens if the battery dies?

SECTION TWO: AT FIRST GLANCE

Here is a first look at each of the players before delving into the details of some of them.

Envoy 2 Series

MegaVoice



MegaVoice regularly updates their range of players. The Envoy 2 players are pocket-sized, very thin and very light. They are charged by a solar panel on the back or via USB cable. You can get MP3 audio files onto them easily and securely, with an internal memory of up to 8 GB.

You have a choice between several members of this family of players: the Envoy 2 E series (Elite, Echo, Equip and Ember), and the Envoy 2 S series (S, S Dual and ST). Options include integrated flashlight, audio recorder, FM radio, bilingual navigation, microSD card slot and playback speed control. Prices depend on the model and order quantity, and can be as low as \$10.95 for the Envoy 2 ST.

<https://megavoice.com/audio-bible/>

Envoy 3 Series

MegaVoice



The latest member of the MegaVoice Envoy family is the Envoy 3 Equip Plus. This has all of the features of the Envoy 2 Equip (playback speed control, flashlight, four levels of navigation), plus a digital display, clock and an AM/FM/SW radio. It is the first MegaVoice audio player with a screen.

This model is currently available for orders of 20 or more units, with prices from \$27.95.

<https://megavoice.com/audio-bible/envoy-3-equip-plus-audio-bible/>

Papyrus

Renew World Outreach



The Papyrus is a solidly built audio player with a large solar panel on the back, smaller than the Saber, but much chunkier than the MegaVoice Envoy or Kivah Audible.

Volume and sound quality are excellent, as is the build quality. It can be used by a fairly large group. Audio files (in MP3 format) can be copied to the Papyrus internal memory (8 GB) using a special USB loading cable or onto an optional removable microSD card.

The Papyrus has a useful battery level indicator to tell you how much charge remains.

<https://renewoutreach.org/papyrus-audio-bible/>

The Torch

Renew World Outreach



The Torch is a solar-powered audio player with a torch/flashlight and lantern. Sound quality is excellent. The keypad, used to navigate content, glows in the dark. It also has a built-in FM radio. The Torch 2.0 was released in 2023.

The Torch is durable and has an internal storage of 8 GB. You can charge your phone with it via the USB output port.

<https://renewoutreach.org/torch-audio-bible/>

KULUMI Mini



The bright yellow KULUMI Mini is a lamp and audio player combined. The LED light has four brightness settings and the player volume is good for a small to medium-sized group. It can be used as a louder speaker by using the supplied cable and connecting it to a phone or laptop. It also has a built-in FM radio.

There are 2 versions of the Kulumi Mini - one with an open microSD card slot and one with an enclosed slot. The microSD cards are 8GB.

Charging is via a solar panel on the back or using an USB cable. The KULUMI Mini can also charge phones via its USB output port. It is available at USD \$24 for 10 or more units, or \$20 for 100 or more units.

<https://kulumi.org/kulumi-mini/>

KULUMI X



The KULUMI X is a pocket-sized solar-powered audio player, weighing just 75g (0.17 lb), designed for individuals and small groups. It has three levels of navigation and an enclosed 8GB microSD card. It is IP65 water-resistant.

Charging is via a solar panel on the back or using an USB cable. It is available at USD \$14 for 10 or more units, or \$10 for 100 or more units.

The KULUMI X is also available in blue. The colour and logo can be customised for bulk orders.

<https://kulumi.org/kulumi-x>

Pearl Players

Digital Bible Society



There are three types of Pearl Player, from Digital Bible Society: the "Pearl Player" for individuals or small groups (\$25), the "Village Pearl" with a 10W speaker for larger groups (\$40), and the smaller "Mini Pearl" (\$18).

All have 8GB internal memory and can contain protected content. The first two have digital displays, lights, FM radio, and can read external memory cards.

<https://dbs.org/bibles/audio>

LifeLight

MegaVoice



The LifeLight from MegaVoice is a solar-powered lantern with a built in audio player, audio recorder, playback speed control, microSD card reader, and AM/FM radio, measuring 23cm or 9 inches tall. It has three lights: a lantern, a torch, and a reading light, each with three levels of brightness.

The LifeLight can also be used as a loud public address speaker when paired with an FM microphone.

<https://megavoice.com/audio-bible/lifelight-audio-bible-lantern/>

Audible K1

Kivah Distributors



The Audible K1 provides very good sound quality and content capacity. This solidly built pocket-sized player has its controls and speaker on the front and a solar panel on the back. Audio files are stored on a microSD card which can be removed and inserted into your computer's memory card reader to change the contents. The files must be in an encrypted format; these are produced with the supplied software using a user-specific password.

The Audible was originally developed by Davar Partners. Now that Davar focusses on audio recording, a new non-profit company, Kivah, was created to distribute the Audible. The player continues to be made by Microtronix.

<https://www.kivah.co.za>

Talking Bible

Talking Bibles International



The passport-sized Talking Bible is made to look like a Bible with a black cover and gold edges. It contains the New Testament or the whole Bible, recorded as single voice narration. It is currently available in over 70 languages.

There are two models: the classic battery-powered model (powered by 3 AA batteries), and a solar-powered model.

The Bible recording is encoded in internal memory, and the solar-powered model also has a microSD card slot for playing additional teaching content. The current cost is \$35 for single units and \$30 for 10 or more units.

<http://www.talkingbibles.org>

Pathway

MegaVoice



The MegaVoice Pathway is a simple lightweight rechargeable player, with a small built-in speaker, 3.5mm stereo audio jack, internal memory and microSD port. It has a simple keypad providing two levels of navigation, a play/pause button and volume controls.

The Pathway takes an AA-sized battery, which can be rechargeable or a standard AA battery. It is available to partners for less than \$15 for larger orders.

<https://megavoice.com/audio-bible/pathway-audio-bible/>

Companion

MegaVoice



The MegaVoice Companion is a different kind of audio player. Light, discrete and compact, it has no speaker and no solar panel. Instead, you listen by plugging in an external speaker or earphones.

Using the special SLS loading cable, you can add content easily to the 4 GB of internal memory. The Companion also has playback speed control and a microSD card slot, which can be open or locked for encrypted cards only.

It is available to partners for less than \$16 each for larger orders. The rechargeable battery can be replaced by any standard AAA battery.

<https://megavoice.com/audio-bible/companion-audio-bible/>

S100 Proclaimer

Faith Comes By Hearing



The S100 Proclaimer is designed for use with *Faith Comes By Hearing* listening groups. Its fixed content will be the whole New Testament in up to four different languages, or the full Bible in two languages.

There are four sizes of Proclaimer: S100, S50, S25 and E10.

The S100 Proclaimer is the largest of the four and is loud enough to support a listening group of 100+ people. Its rechargeable batteries are charged by the built-in solar panel, built-in hand crank, or USB-C charging cable.

<https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/audio-bible-resources/partner-resources>

S50 Proclaimer

Faith Comes By Hearing



The S50 Proclaimer is for *Faith Comes By Hearing* listening groups where the S100 Proclaimer is not needed but the group size is still around 50 people. Its smaller size makes it more portable and shipping less expensive.

Despite its size, the S50 Proclaimer's audio quality and volume are excellent. Like the larger version, it can contain the New Testament in up to four languages.

The battery life and durability are impressive and it can be charged by the built-in solar panel or USB-C charging cable.

<https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/audio-bible-resources/partner-resources>

S25 Proclaimer

Faith Comes By Hearing



The compact-sized S25 Proclaimer is quickly growing as one of *Faith Comes By Hearing*'s most requested devices. Designed to support listening group sizes of 10 to 30 people, the S25 is ideal for families and small groups.

With its simple and intuitive controls, the S25, like the other Proclaimers, is easily used by anyone.

The battery can be recharged using solar power or by USB-C cable.

<https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/audio-bible-resources/partner-resources>

E10 Proclaimer

Faith Comes By Hearing



The E10 Proclaimer is the smallest member of the *Faith Comes By Hearing* family of devices. It has the capacity to contain the whole Bible in one language.

It is designed with an audio jack for individual listening using earbuds but also has an integrated speaker for listening groups of up to 10 people in quiet settings. The small size makes this Proclaimer easy to conceal in settings where discretion is necessary.

The E10 is rechargeable using a USB-C cable.

<https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/audio-bible-resources/partner-resources>

KULUMI Sheep



The KULUMI Sheep, launched in 2019, is an audio player in the form of a very cute and fluffy sheep. The audio controls are integrated into the soft toy. Squeeze its nose to play and pause. Press the ends of its feet to navigate content (front feet for chapters, and back feet for books). To increase or decrease the volume, hold the feet for two seconds or more.

The sound quality is excellent, and so is the build quality – ideal as an audio player for children. It is available at \$24 for 10 or more units, or \$17 for 100 or more units.

<https://kulumi.org/kulumi-sheep/>

Wildlife Storyteller

MegaVoice



The Wildlife Storyteller from MegaVoice comes in the form of a tiger, lion, lamb, elephant, or teddy bear.

Each soft toy has a pocket in which an MegaVoice Envoy or Pathway player can be carried.

It is appreciated by children around the world as a toy and audio player combined.

<https://megavoice.com/audio-bible/the-wildlife-storyteller-audio-bible/>

ImpaX Player

Galcom International



Galcom is known for producing fix-tuned “Go-Ye” radios, radios that are tuned to a specific set of radio stations. The ImpaX player is a fix-tuned radio and an audio player in one.

As a radio it can be tuned to AM, shortwave and FM frequencies (unlike some other players which can only pick up FM radio).

The ImpaX Player has a solar-panel and two AA rechargeable batteries. It has a rugged design, pocket-sized, but thicker than a phone.

<http://www.galcom.org/ministry-tools/impax-player/>

Compass

Galcom International



The Compass is the latest audio player from Galcom. It can be charged by its built-in solar panel or by USB cable.

The FM radio can be fixed tuned to up to 12 frequencies.

Four-level navigation is provided, e.g. language, section, book and chapter. Each level of navigation is indicated by the position of blue lights on the keypad. The navigation help button (?) on the keypad gives the listening location audibly.

<https://galcom.org/ministry-tools/compass/>

In Touch Messenger

In Touch Ministries



The In Touch Messenger is a customised MegaVoice Envoy player, with fixed content provided by In Touch Ministries. It contains a collection of Bible teaching messages together with an audio Bible (or one or two New Testaments).

<https://www.intouch.org/get-involved/messenger-project>

The Treasure

Unknown Nations



The Treasure is a gold-coloured, customised MegaVoice Envoy player, with fixed content provided by Unknown Nations (formerly known as World Mission).

It can contain content such as a full audio Bible, children's Bible stories and daily devotionals.

<https://www.unknownnations.com/treasure/>

Locally available players

Radios with memory card reader and/or USB memory stick port



Radios like this can be powered from mains electricity, battery or by an integrated solar panel. The volume can be loud enough for a large group or for playing in the family courtyard, competing well with other background noises.

In the town in West Africa where I live, you can find models like this for between \$10 and \$20, and a memory card for \$3.

For more information, search for "solar powered audio player" on Alibaba.com.²

Locally available players

Radios with memory card reader and numbered buttons



A popular form of local audio player in West Africa looks like the one in the image above, available for around US \$7. What makes it interesting for playing Scripture is that it has a numerical keyboard which you can use for selecting specific chapters (audio tracks) to play.

For example, if the memory card contains a New Testament, tracks 1-28 will be Matthew, tracks 29-44 will be Mark, etc. Distribute the player with an index card so that people will know which numbers to select for each book and chapter.

For more information, search for "JOC H011UR radio" on Alibaba.com.³

² The player pictured here was available on Alibaba.com, https://www.alibaba.com/product-detail/VNN-096-Solar-Torches-AM-FM_1600164662656.html (accessed 13 May 2024)

³ JOC H011UR radio, https://www.alibaba.com/product-detail/JOC-H011UR-Mini-FM-Radio-MP3_60604732321.html (13 May 2024)

Feature phones



Most entry-level phones have the capacity to play MP3 files and have a small loudspeaker for personal or small group listening. Data is stored on a removable microSD card. With most phones you can transfer audio files from phone to phone using Bluetooth technology.

In rural areas, people can charge their phones via 12V car battery or by solar panel. In some contexts, people prefer feature phones to smartphones because they are cheaper, and their battery lasts significantly longer.

For more ideas about mobile ministry, look at the resources and training courses available from the Mobile Ministry Forum (www.mobmin.org).

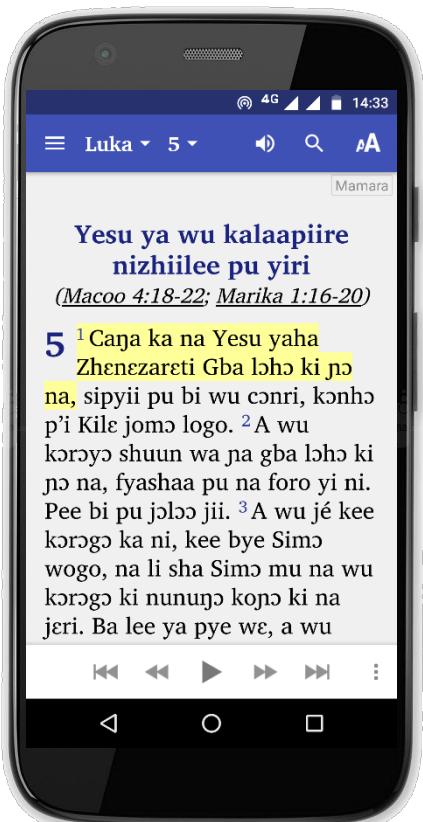
Smartphones



The number of smartphone (Android or iPhone) users continues to rise worldwide.⁴ These devices are ideal for synchronised text and audio, video, social media and streaming content directly from the web.

Popular audio Scripture apps for smartphones include:

- The Bible App (YouVersion), www.bible.com
- Bible.is (Faith Comes By Hearing), www.bible.is
- Language-specific apps built with Scripture App Builder, <https://software.sil.org/scriptureappbuilder>



With **Scripture App Builder**, you can create Android, iOS and Progressive Web Apps containing both Bible text and audio – for distribution online or offline.

Audio and text are synchronised together, so as the audio plays, the app highlights the phrase you are listening to.

You can select the verse you want to start playing from. You can also change the playback speed, making it slower or faster.

<https://software.sil.org/scriptureappbuilder>

⁴ For statistics on numbers of smartphone users, see: <https://www.bankmycell.com/blog/how-many-phones-are-in-the-world> (accessed 13 May 2024).

SECTION THREE

GETTING INTO THE DETAILS

In this section we take an in-depth look at some of the most popular audio players.

Let me take this opportunity to thank Faith Comes By Hearing, MegaVoice, Kivah Distributors, Renew World Outreach and Hope Tech Global for their help in providing players to test, technical details and giving feedback on these reviews.

1. **Proclaimer** – *Faith Comes By Hearing*

The Proclaimer is designed for use with *Faith Comes By Hearing* listening group programmes. There are currently four models:



S100 Proclaimer



S50 Proclaimer



S25 Proclaimer



E10 Proclaimer

The **S100 Proclaimer** is used in contexts where a lot of people are part of the listening groups, such as a church congregation, school classroom or youth group. The **S50 Proclaimer** is for medium-sized groups. The **S25 Proclaimer** is used where the number of people listening is smaller, such as home and family-based groups. The **E10 Proclaimer** (without a solar panel) is used for individual listening or small groups in a quiet setting.

How have the Proclaimers been improved?

FCBH continues to develop and adapt their audio players. The models reviewed here are different from those being distributed a few years ago. Here are some of the changes we have seen over the years:

- The Proclaimers contain audio Scriptures in up to **four different languages**, rather than just one.
- The **names of the Proclaimers have changed**. The “large Proclaimer” is now known as the S100. The “mid-sized Proclaimer” is now known as the S50.

- The **S25 and E10 Proclaimers** are new additions to the available players.
- The latest versions of the Proclaimers have **USB-C** charging ports rather than microUSB.

How big is it?

The S100 Proclaimer is the largest of the players reviewed in this document. The S50 Proclaimer is around the size of someone's hand.



The two largest Proclaimers seen together

(Note: the photos in this section were taken of the previous generation of Proclaimers – the Large and mid-sized Proclaimers. They will be updated in the next edition of the report.)

What kind of content will it play?

A Proclaimer normally contains the **whole New Testament** recorded in **four languages** for use in Faith Comes By Hearing listening groups, or two full Bibles.

In special cases, FCBH may be willing to record portions of the New Testament (such as Luke's Gospel), chronological Bible story sets, Scripture selections from the Old and New Testaments (e.g. a panoramic Bible), or a set of Old Testament books (e.g. Genesis to Deuteronomy, Psalms and Proverbs).

How is the recording done for the content?

The recording will be done by professional technicians. In Africa, for example, this is often members of Theovision, one of FCBH's partner organisations (<http://www.theovision.org>).

Two technicians will come to your language area for the recording. For the whole New Testament, it will take 4 to 8 weeks of intensive recording work. You'll need a minimum of 11 fluent readers (9 men, 2 women). The local team should invite the very best readers and prepare them as best they can.

Although the readers can practice in advance, the final decision on who plays which role is taken when the technicians arrive. If a language has few fluent readers, people can be prompted, i.e. repeating phrases that are read to them. All the readers don't have to be there for the recording at the same time. They are scheduled to come to read their portion when they are needed.

An alternative recording method is to use **Virtual Recording** (<http://virtualrecording.com>) where dispersed individuals can record over the Internet rather than needing technicians to travel to the region. This method can facilitate recording of smaller portions of Scripture, e.g. a book of the Bible rather than the whole New Testament. Virtual Recording has also been effective for Old Testament recordings.

What about background music?

FCBH will normally produce two versions of the audio files: one with background music and the other without. You can choose not to have the background music option if it would be inappropriate for your context.

You can choose the music from one the following options:

1. Use the standard synthesised background music that FCBH has been using for many years;
2. Use a new orchestral background music that FCBH has recently obtained;
3. Use a new West African instrumental background music that was recorded by a group of professional musicians in Burkina Faso in 2019;
4. Produce several hours of your own background music, normally at your own expense. Because of the complexity of doing this, this has been tried very rarely. Some have suggested trying generic music for several languages in a region. Although cultures do have their unique music styles, there is usually an appreciation for music using local instruments even if they are from a mix of neighbouring languages and this would be preferable to Western-sounding music. But if you want to do this, you'll need to take the initiative to organise it.

What are the advantages of recording this way?

- You get the whole New Testament recorded and edited by people who have done it before with other languages and know what they are doing. The result is a professional product.
- Recording the whole New Testament is a big undertaking, and although a language team might feel they could do it themselves, they are likely to underestimate the time required for them to do such recording and editing amid all their other responsibilities. Getting it all done in a couple of months can be a very attractive proposition.
- You do not need to worry at all about the technical side of things or the funding. The technicians come with their own equipment, build a temporary studio with local materials, direct the recording and do all of the post-production work.
- FCBH can make the recording available on other platforms in addition to the Proclaimer:
 - for personal download of **MP3 files** on its website (<https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/audio-bible-resources/mp3-downloads>)
 - on the **Bible.is website** (<http://bible.is>)
 - in the **Bible.is app** (<http://www.bible.is/apps>)
 - in single language **Global Bible Apps**, for distribution online and offline (<https://apk.fcbh.org/>)
 - in **Gospel films** (<https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/what-we-do/gospel-films>)

What are possible disadvantages of recording content in this way?

- Since the recording of the whole New Testament is done in one concentrated block of time, it will be several weeks of very intensive recording, often working long hours every day. This can be exhausting for everyone involved, especially in hot climates in rural locations. Make sure you are well rested before the recording begins, and that you take some time off to recover afterwards.

- There is no scope to add additional extra-biblical content to the recording, e.g. section introductions, songs, etc. FCBH is working to record hundreds of languages and therefore needs to have a standard format. You can however make use of the recordings afterwards as part of radio programmes alongside songs and commentary.
- It can take several months after the recording before receiving the Proclaimers. Compare this to when you do the recording yourself and put it on other types of audio player: you can have audio on the machines as soon as you've finished editing.

How many hours of content can a Proclaimer hold?

The whole New Testament (multi-voice with music) is around 25 hours. A Proclaimer with the New Testament in four languages means approximately 100 hours.



How is it charged?

All of the Proclaimers can be charged by **USB-C cable**.

The S100, S50 and S25 Proclaimers have a built-in a **solar panel**.

The S100 Proclaimer also has a **hand crank** on the side as an alternative method of charging.



What is the build quality like?

The Proclaimers are well built and are not broken easily.

What type of rechargeable battery do the Proclaimers use?

The Proclaimer batteries are Lithium Iron Phosphate (LiFePO₄). If they fail, they can be accessed and replaced. FCBH can provide replacement battery packs if requested and instructions on how to change them.

See page 63 for more information about batteries and battery life.

What kind of language groups is the Proclaimer particularly good for?

- Groups who have the **whole New Testament** translated.
- Where there is the possibility of setting up **listening groups**, for example where there are many communities of believers. Listening groups can be of different sizes according to the context.
- Where colporteurs/promoters can be identified to travel around starting groups and encouraging them in their listening.
- Where there is the capacity to do follow-up and do regular reporting.

How can it be used?

The idea is for local promoters/colporteurs to set up listening groups in churches, homes, schools and hospitals. A Proclaimer is given to each group that commits to listening regularly. At each group meeting, time is given to discuss and ask questions about what they have heard. In this way they can listen to all of the New Testament. The colporteur visits occasionally to encourage the groups to keep going.

If the group perseveres and listens to the whole NT, they get to keep the Proclaimer and to use it as they choose. If the group gives up halfway through, the colporteur has the right to take the Proclaimer away to give to another group.

FCBH also works with teams showing the Jesus film. Listening groups can be started for people who show interest after seeing a projection of the film, thus helping in the vital work of follow-up.

In areas without many churches, the Proclaimer is more likely to be used in people's homes, in the marketplace and by local evangelists.

How loud is it?

A group of 100-200 people should be able to listen to an S100 Proclaimer, so it should be sufficiently loud for most listening groups. This Proclaimer is the loudest of all the players reviewed here.

The S50 Proclaimer has a surprisingly loud volume considering its size, enough for medium-sized listening groups.

Using the 3.5mm headphones socket, the players can be plugged into an amplifier for much larger crowds. You can plug headphones into the headphone socket for personal listening.

How do you get the audio into the machine?

In the past, Proclaimers arrived pre-loaded with the content installed on an internal memory chip. More recently, FCBH has started to send the content on microSD cards which need to be inserted into the Proclaimers' card slot.

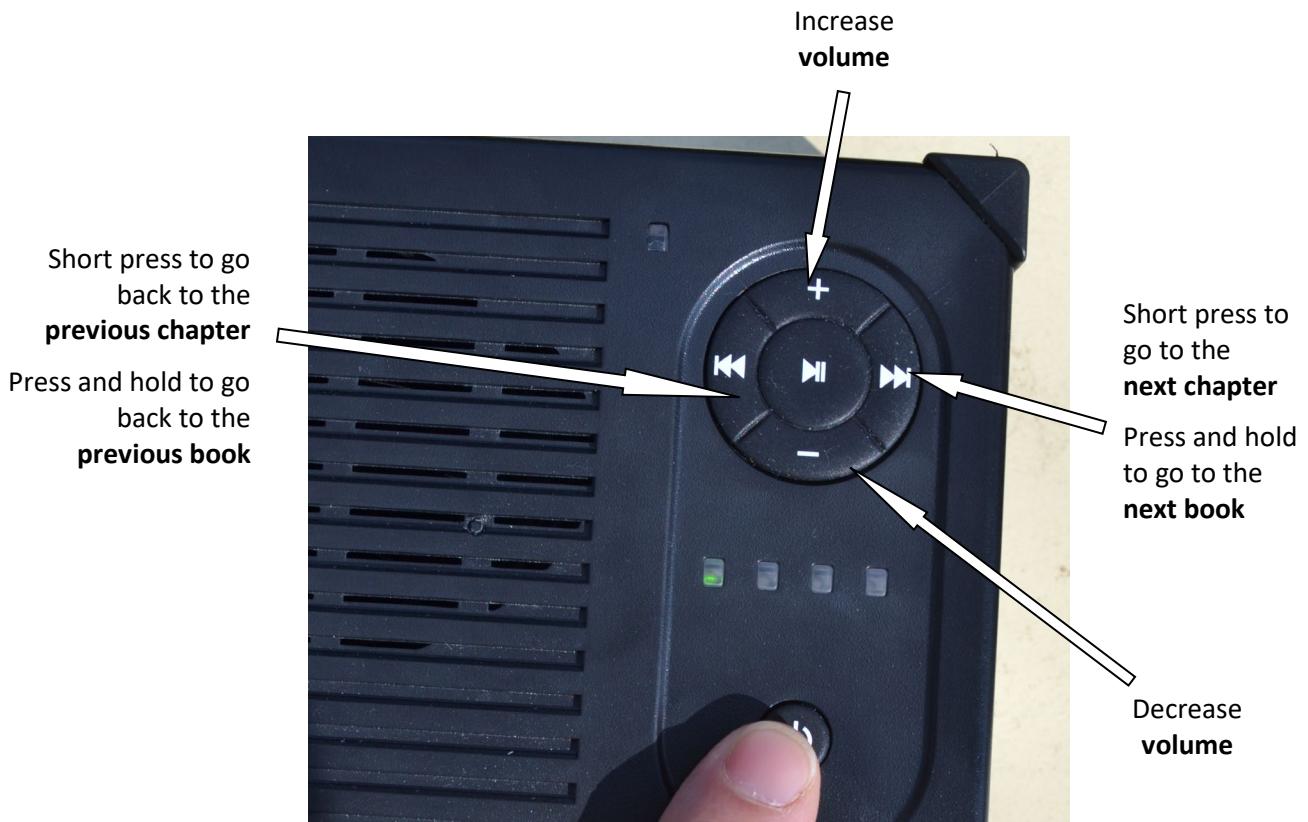
Can you change the audio that is on a machine?

No, you cannot change the content on the Proclaimer. It will only read memory cards that have been pre-loaded with audio Scriptures by FCBH. Proclaimers are designed as Bible audio players, rather than for playing multi-purpose content.

How does content navigation work?

Move back and forward between chapters with short presses and move back and forward between books with longer presses. This needs to be explained to users since it is not obvious.

Use the + and – buttons to change the volume. The middle button is used to play and pause the audio.



Navigation controls on the Proclaimer



Side view of the largest Proclaimer, with the language button

The controls on the S50 Proclaimer are similar to those on the large model.



Navigation controls on the mid-sized Proclaimer

Are there any disadvantages with the Proclaimer as an audio player?

- Using the same back and forward buttons for two levels of navigation (short presses for chapters, long presses for books) takes some getting used to and needs to be explained to users. It is easy to get it wrong and end up going forward a chapter when you want to go forward a book.
- Unlike many of the other audio players reviewed in this report, you cannot add content to the Proclaimers yourself. The content is loaded by FCBH before it is sent to you.

How much does it cost?

The cost of the Proclaimers, shipping and customs duty is included in the funding project for the Faith Comes By Hearing programme. The size of the programme can vary widely depending on the size of the language group. FCBH programmes range in size from five listening groups to hundreds of listening groups.

The Proclaimers are made available provided that they are being used by committed listening groups and followed-up from time to time. You will have the opportunity to discuss these details with FCBH as you seek to find the best strategy for your local context.

Any other things to be aware of with this programme?

- In terms of the funds a language project needs to find, the FCBH programme and Proclaimers can be the least costly of all the programmes and products reviewed in this report since FCBH is often able to supply a quantity of Proclaimers to you each year. It really depends on the partnership agreement your organisation has with FCBH, and the relationship and trust you build up over time.
- As is common with funded projects, you will be responsible for sending regular reports every quarter during the life of the programme (three years or more). This can be a great privilege as you see progress and record testimonies from those who are listening, and it does force you to do good follow-up – but it might not work well if you are unable to commit to this level of administration and organisation. Just as ‘Faith Comes By Hearing’, you need to be aware that ‘Proclaimers Come by Sending Good Reports’!

Frequently Asked Questions

Can the Proclaimer be given to an individual?

The S100, S50 and S25 Proclaimers are intended for listening groups rather than individuals. The E10 Proclaimer would be ideal for individuals.

Can the Proclaimer be purchased by an individual or church?

Yes, this is possible if a special order is made.

<https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/store>

In local communities, it is unlikely that many people will want to buy a Proclaimer, especially since they can get one for free by having a listening group.

Can we also get the NT recording in MP3 format?

Yes. And the audio files will also be made available for download on the web.

<https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/audio-bible-resources/mp3-downloads>

Are we free to broadcast the NT recording on the radio?

Yes.

Where can I get more information?

For more information, contact the coordinator of the local Faith Comes By Hearing listening group programmes where you are, or refer to the Faith Comes By Hearing website:

Web: <http://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com>

2. Envoy 2 Series – from MegaVoice



If you're looking for security and portability, the Envoy 2 players from MegaVoice excel. They are the smallest, thinnest and lightest of the solar-powered players reviewed here, fitting easily into a pocket.

You can choose from a range of players, each offering a specific set of features and memory capacity so you can select which is most appropriate for your context.

Envoy 2 E Series



Envoy 2 Ember

*8 GB memory
microSD card slot
Flashlight
Playback speed control*



Envoy 2 Echo

*8 GB memory
microSD card slot
Flashlight
Audio Recorder
Playback speed control*



Envoy 2 Equip

*8 GB memory
microSD card slot
Flashlight
FM Radio
Playback speed control*



Envoy 2 Elite

*8 GB memory
microSD card slot
Flashlight
Audio Recorder
FM Radio
Playback speed control*

Envoy 2 S Series



Envoy 2 S

4 GB memory



Envoy 2 S Dual

*4 GB memory
Bilingual (Cross navigation)*

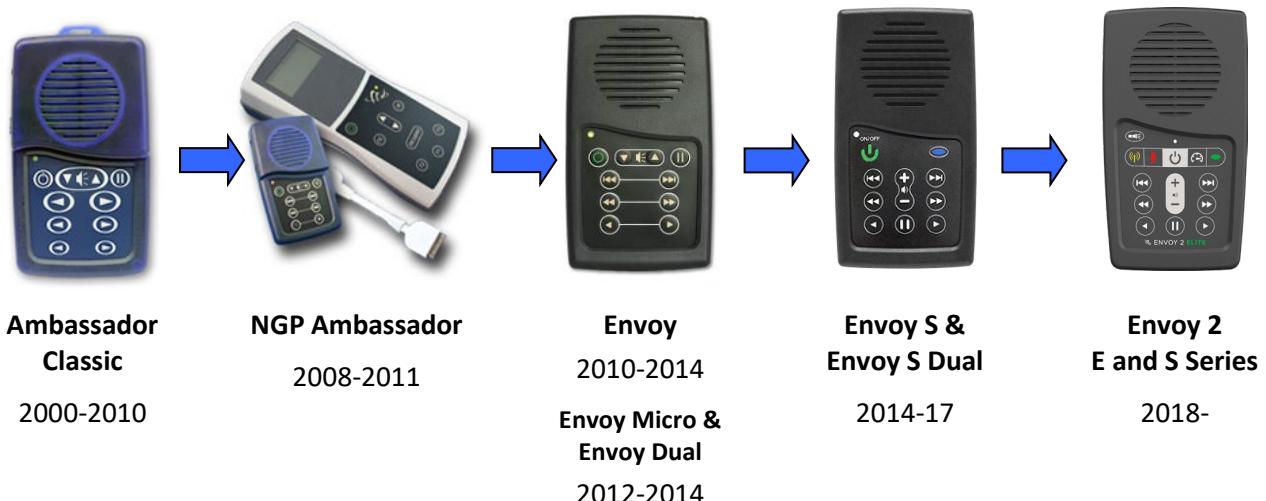


Envoy 2 ST

*4 GB memory
2-level navigation
(rather than 3-level)*

How has it been improved?

There has been a significant evolution of MegaVoice player specifications over the past twenty years and since earlier versions of this comparison report. We have seen changes in design, battery technology, waterproofing, memory capacity and ease of programming. Several new features have been added, such as the flashlight, playback speed control, microSD card slot, audio recorder and FM radio.



How big is it?

Width: 60 mm (2.3 inches)
Height: 107 mm (4.2 inches)
Depth: 11 mm (0.4 inches)
Weight: 63 g (2.2 ounces)

The Envoy 2 players are light and small enough to fit in your pocket or hang around your neck: not much bigger than a feature phone and smaller than a smartphone.



At 11mm, the Envoy 2 is the thinnest of the players reviewed in this report

What kind of content will it play?

The Envoy 2 can contain **any selection of audio** you choose: Old Testament passages, New Testament passages, whole NTs, whole Bibles, individual verses, Chronological Bible stories, drama, songs, sermons, teaching, health and community development materials – or any combination of these. More than one language can be used. The files are in MP3 format.

How many hours can one of these machines hold?

The Envoy 2 E Series players have an internal memory of **8 GB**. This can hold between 160 and 800 hours of audio (depending on how much you compress your files), enough for four full Bibles. The E series players also have an external microSD card slot, which can read cards up to 128 GB, so the potential capacity is endless.

The Envoy 2 S, Envoy 2 S Dual and Envoy 2 ST have **4 GB** of internal memory.

You do not have to fill up the player, so you could just have 30 minutes of audio to begin with.

How does content navigation work?

The player has **raised buttons** to aid the blind and the visually impaired. It enables users to change chapters and volume while the player stays hidden in their pocket.

There are **3 levels of navigation**: chapter, book and section.



You could say that there are 4 levels of navigation if you take into account the **verse buttons**. The buttons at the bottom are called verse buttons as they navigate through the verses approximately 10 seconds at a time. MegaVoice has the capability of doing verse-by-verse navigation, but they would need verse marker files. They are working on this for the blind in the United States, with a couple of English translations.

The **Envoy 2 S Dual** adds an additional button at the top to navigate between languages or sections:



The orange button on the Envoy 2 S Dual allows you to cross-navigate between the same content in different languages

The Envoy 2 S Dual is available in two versions. The first version can be loaded with two identical messages in two different languages and the player can cross-navigate between the languages. The second version can be loaded with two sets of different audio where there is no relation between the two, such as Bible and Bible Teaching, or content in two different languages. The second version has no cross navigation feature.

Here's an example of how the cross-navigation could be used:

- An English New Testament could be under the green button, and a Swahili New Testament under the orange button. Press the green button and find John chapter 3 in your English NT then press the orange button to hear John 3 in Swahili. This would allow you to compare two different translations and would also help you to find a passage for someone who spoke a language you didn't understand.

How is it charged?

The Envoy's rechargeable battery is charged by its built-in solar panel, or via USB cable to the mains or a computer.



The solar panel on the back of the Envoy 2

According to MegaVoice, using the solar panel, the Envoy will charge fully in 6-8 hours of bright sunlight, or 6-8 hours under a 60W incandescent bulb. For a quicker charge, it will take 1-2 hours using a mains charger or 3-4 hours via the USB port of a computer.



*View of the bottom end of the Envoy 2 Elite:
3.5mm headphone socket, microUSB charging port, flashlight, microSD card slot*

What type of rechargeable battery does it use?

The Envoy players use Lithium-Ion batteries which should last for several years if they are treated well. MegaVoice advises users: "Before storing the player for prolonged periods, make sure the battery is at least partially charged. If stored for extended periods, you should fully recharge the player every 6 months; otherwise the battery may lose its ability to recharge."

MegaVoice can supply replacement rechargeable batteries.

See page 63 for more information about batteries and battery life.

What is the build quality like?

The build quality is very good. The Envoy players are rugged and water-resistant, with no moving parts.

When you press the buttons on the keypad, you can sometimes hear a faint sticky, squelching sound as the keypad label interacts with the plastic below. However, this does not affect the use of the player and it the keypad is securely fastened to the unit.

How loud is it?

The volume is very good for a pocket-sized player and is fine for personal use. But you should not expect the same volume as you get with the Proclaimer or Papyrus. In a quiet setting, a group of around 20 people should be able to listen to an Envoy. In noisier conditions, a smaller number of people would need to gather closer to listen.

It comes equipped with a standard 3.5mm phone jack. You can plug in headphones for personal listening. External, self-powered, amplified speakers, can be plugged into the phone jack for louder volume and larger group listening.



The **MegaVoice Solar Speaker** can be used to amplify the output from your phone or one of the MegaVoice Envoy players, making it loud enough for a large group to hear. It can also be paired with a Bluetooth-enabled device, such as a headset transmitter or a smartphone. You can plug your phone or audio player into it to charge.

For more details: <https://megavoice.com/audio-bible/solar-speaker-for-audio-bibles/>

How do you get your audio files into the players?

Full instructions can be found here:

<https://megavoice.com/audio-tools/sabercopy-loading-system-for-audio-bibles/>

You will need:

- a proprietary USB cable, the **SLS cable**, from MegaVoice. Ordinary USB cables will not work for loading, but they can be used for charging.
- the **SaberCopy program**, developed by Global Recordings Network.
<http://globalrecordings.net/en/sabercopy>
- a computer with a USB port.

To load your audio files onto the Envoy 2:

1. Convert your files to **MP3** format if they are not already. It is for you to choose the level of compression you need.
2. Organise the MP3 files into a hierarchy of folders representing sections and books. The folders should be named sequentially with three-digits, e.g. 001, 002, 003, etc.
3. Connect the Envoy 2 to your computer with the SLS cable. The player will appear as a normal removable drive on your computer.
4. Launch the **SaberCopy** program and follow the instructions to select and copy the files you want onto the Envoy 2. It is easy to use.

If you have a lot of Envoy 2 players to program, the software allows you to **copy to several players at once**. For this you'll need a **USB hub**. Powered 7-port hubs are available quite cheaply (around \$20) from computer accessory suppliers.

Can you change the audio that is on a machine?

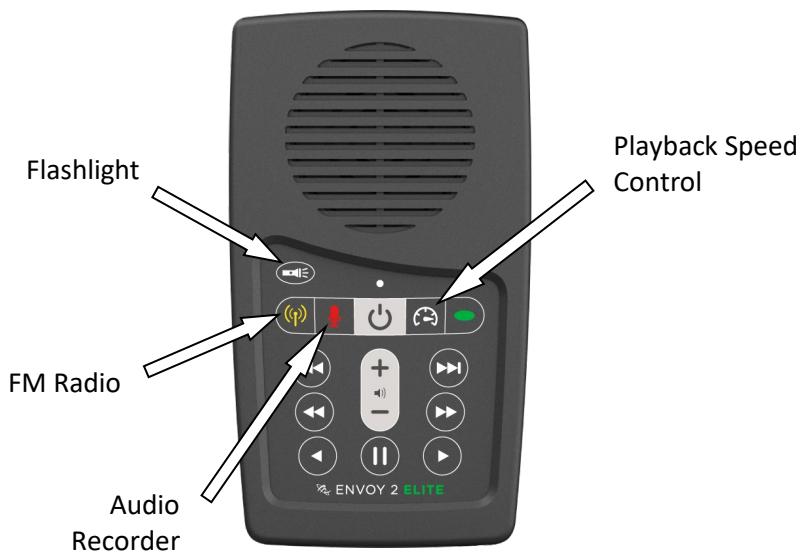
Yes, using the SaberCopy software and the SLS cable, you can erase the contents of the player and upload additional or alternative content.

Ordinary users have no way of changing the **internal contents** of the player unless they have the special USB cable. Connecting the player to a computer via a standard USB cable will not work; users will not be able to see or modify the contents.

In addition to the internal memory, the Envoy 2 E series players (Echo, Elite, etc.) have a **microSD card slot** which can contain any content of the user's choice.

Any other interesting features?

The Envoy 2 E Series players have the option of the following features:



Flashlight: Press the flashlight button to turn on the flashlight. Press it again to increase the brightness, and again to increase it even more. Another press of this button will turn off the flashlight.



FM Radio: Press the Radio button for two seconds to turn on the FM radio. A yellow LED will appear. Use the book navigation buttons to select the station you want to listen to. Press the green button for two seconds to exit the radio mode and return to playing the player's audio content. It is possible for users to bookmark their favourite stations.

Audio Recorder: To enter recording mode, press on the Recorder button for two seconds. A red LED will appear. Press the Recorder button again to start and stop recording. The red LED will flash while recording. The audio will be saved to the external microSD card if it is present, otherwise to internal memory. While in Recorder mode, press the green button to play the recorded files, starting with the most recent. Press the green button for two seconds to exit the recording mode.

- This feature would be useful for recording testimonies, feedback on translations, and local stories – the kinds of things for which you would use a voice recorder. Do not expect it to give you the kind of quality you would want for distributable Scripture products.

Playback speed control: Press the Playback Speed Control button for two seconds to enter the speed control mode. The LED will flash green and red. Use the + and – volume buttons to change the speed. The + button speeds it up, and – slows it down. Press the Playback Speed Control button again to save the speed setting and exit the speed control mode.

- Slowing down the audio would be useful for those learning to read. They could follow along with a printed text, choosing the playback speed that works best for them.
- Speeding up the audio would be useful for those who are listening to teaching content and who feel that the presenter is speaking too slowly for them.

You can see each of these features explained in a demo video on the MegaVoice website:

<https://megavoice.com/audio-bible/envoy-2-e-series-audio-bible/>

How much does it cost?

The following prices are estimates and do not include shipping costs or import taxes. They are subject to change with fluctuations in component prices.⁵

| Model | Price |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| Envoy 2 ST | \$10.95 |
| Pathway | \$10.95 |
| Companion | \$11.95 |
| Envoy 2 S | \$15.95 |
| Envoy 2 S Dual | \$17.95 |
| Envoy 2 Encore | \$18.95 |
| Envoy 2 Ember | \$19.95 |
| Envoy 2 Echo | (special orders only) |
| Envoy 2 Equip | (special orders only) |
| Envoy 2 Elite | \$21.95 |
| Envoy 3 Plus | \$23.95 |

These prices are for major partners with large orders. Prices for your organisation can be agreed with MegaVoice, depending on quantity.

Here are the estimated prices for accessories:

| Model | Price |
|-----------------------|---------|
| SLS Programming Cable | \$4.95 |
| USB Charging Cable | \$2.55 |
| Earphones | \$1.55 |
| Solar Speaker | \$31.95 |

⁵ Prices received from MegaVoice on 14 May 2024.

Normally, you will need to find your own source of funding, although sometimes MegaVoice is able to raise funds for specific projects.

MegaVoice has regional **Media Centres** in several countries of the world (Ghana, South Africa, India, China, Singapore, Papua New Guinea and Australia). Some of these act as MegaVoice player assembly points where the components are put together, hence reducing manufacturing costs and helping to reduce distribution prices.

Are there any disadvantages with this player?

- For their size, the Envoy 2 players have an impressive volume. But because the speaker is small, if you try to push it to its highest volume you are likely to get some sound distortion. It is best suited to small groups in quiet settings and individual use.

You can address this by connecting an external speaker, such as the [MegaVoice Solar Speaker](#). This combination gives you a much louder sound.

You'll need to decide whether it would be better to have an all-in-one larger device for large groups, or whether you go for the Envoy 2 plus speaker combination. Opting for the combination will give you flexibility but will also mean that users have two devices to charge and look after.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are the audio files encrypted before they are copied across to the player?

No, there is no encryption. The files are protected from access by others since the end users will not have a MegaVoice SLS cable. If they try and use an ordinary USB cable to change content, they will not be able to see the internal memory.

For file copying, why use the SaberCopy program rather than just copying files across using Windows Explorer?

The SaberCopy program does two things: (i) it ensures that files are transferred across in the right order, and (ii) it enables you to copy to several players at once. You might find the Envoy 2 gets confused if you try to copy across the files manually rather than using the SaberCopy program.

How does the MegaVoice Companion player compare to the Envoy 2 players?

The MegaVoice Companion is another player from MegaVoice which shares a few features with the Envoy, such as:

- Secure content can be stored in internal memory (4 GB) and loaded using the special SLS cable and SaberCopy software.
- Users can listen to additional content using an external microSD card.
- There is playback speed control, as in the Envoy 2 E Series.
- Navigation controls are similar to the Envoy, with section, book, chapter and verse buttons.

What makes the Companion different from the Envoy is that:

- It has no built-in speaker. You listen by plugging in earbuds, headphones or an external speaker.
- It has no solar panel. The rechargeable battery is charged by a USB cable. When the rechargeable battery in the Companion dies after a few years, it can be replaced by any standard AAA battery.
- The player weight (with Li-Ion battery and belt clip) is just 29 g (1 oz).

- The player dimensions (without belt clip) are 95 x 32 x 21 mm (3.75 x 1.25 x 0.81 inches), which makes it fatter and narrower than the Envoy.
- Available to partners for less than \$16 each with larger orders.



More information about the Companion can be found at:
<https://megavoice.com/audio-bible/companion-audio-bible/>

Where can I get more information?

For more information and video demos, see the MegaVoice website or write to the email address below:

Web: <http://www.megavoice.com>

Email: info@megavoice.com

3. Audibile K1 – from Kivah Distributors



The Audibile is an attractive audio player, with excellent volume and sound quality. Its content is very secure, and it has the capacity to contain hundreds of hours of audio.

The Audibile was originally developed by Davar Partners International (<https://www.davarpublishers.com>). In 2017, when Davar made the decision to concentrate more on recording audio Scripture content, they provided the Audibile IP (intellectual property) to Microtronix Manufacturing who previously manufactured the Audibile for Davar. Microtronix then created a non-profit company called Kivah Distributors (<https://www.kivah.co.za>) who now distributes the Audibile. It's the same product, made and distributed from the same premises in South Africa. The team loves being more "involved in getting the Word of God out".

How has it been improved?

The first Audibile, reviewed in previous versions of this report, had a flat printed button panel with Braille markings on the side of the unit. This has now been replaced by rubber buttons which have a much more satisfying feel to them. Braille markings are on the buttons themselves.



Audibile (original version)

2010-15

Audibile K1

2015-

In general, the Audible K1 has a much better look and feel and appears more solid compared to the previous generation.

Other improvements include:

- There is a **larger solar panel** which enables the unit to charge the battery faster. The solar panel is mounted directly on the outside of the back housing, so the sun does not need to penetrate through the clear plastic housing first and therefore charges faster.
- A **blue rubber seal** was included to prevent water splashes and dust from entering the unit enclosure. It also serves as a shock absorber.
- **Improved microSD card door:** Previously the Audible used special screws on the housing that could only be opened with a special screwdriver which was included in the software kit. But some users would break open the unit to access the microSD card and sometimes these went missing. The card door has now been improved by using a clip-in door instead of a clear door and screw. The new door sits flush with the housing. This works better as most users do not know how to open the door or even notice it. The door can be opened with a blunt tool such as a pair of tweezers or a small flat screwdriver.
- Kivah provides a **16 GB SanDisk microSD card** with each Audible, which allows much more content to be loaded.
- There used to be a charge for the **Audible software**, but it is now provided free of charge.

How big is it?

Width: 74 mm (2.9 inches)
Height: 119 mm (4.7 inches)
Depth: 22 mm (0.8 inches)
Weight: 135 g (4.7 ounces)

What kind of content will it play?

It can contain **any selection of audio** you choose: Old Testament passages, New Testament passages, individual verses, Chronological Bible stories, drama, songs, sermons, teaching, health and community development materials. More than one language can be used.

How many hours can one of these machines hold?

The Audible comes with a 16 GB SanDisk microSD card, which has the potential to contain 320 to 1,600 hours of audio content.

You do not have to fill it up, so you could just have 30 minutes of audio to begin with.

How does content navigation work?

There are three levels of navigation:

- Chapter level: next/previous chapter
- Book level: next/previous book
- Collection level: next/previous set of books, such as translations in different languages or different types of content such as Scripture and songs.



How is it charged?

The Audible has a built-in solar panel which is charged by sunlight. In full sunlight, it takes around 5-6 hours to charge from empty to full.



The solar panel on the back of the Audible K1

There is also a 5V DC input, for charging from the mains with an optional charger. It takes approximately 2½ hours to charge from empty to full. The charger is an AC 100-220V, 7VDC, 150mA, round 2 pin charger with a 3.5mm barrel connector and 1.2m cable.

What type of rechargeable battery does it use?

The battery used is one of the newer Lithium Polymer types. This kind of battery does not build up a memory and can be charged often for small amounts without having a negative effect on battery life. See page 63 for more discussion on batteries and battery life.

What is the build quality like?

The Audible K1 has a very good, solid feel, with no moving parts. It is water-resistant and its rugged design means that it is unlikely to get broken easily.

The assembly is done in Johannesburg, South Africa, with Kivah's quality assurance.

How loud is it?

The volume is good for a pocket-sized player. A group of around 20 people should be able to listen to an Audible, so it should be sufficiently loud for small group settings, especially inside a building where it is reasonably quiet. In noisier conditions, a smaller number of people could gather closer to listen.

Using the 3.5mm headphones socket, it can also be plugged into an amplifier or external speaker for larger groups.

You can plug headphones into the headphone socket for personal listening.

How do you get your audio files into the machine?

To program the Audible with audio content:

1. Arrange your files in a hierarchy of folders and rename files if necessary.

The Audible will play files in alphabetical order, so rename files and folders starting with 001_, 002_, 003_, etc. You can have 3 levels of hierarchy, e.g. title, book, chapter.

Files can be in WAV, MP3 or Ogg Vorbis format.

2. Use the Audible software to bundle your files together as an encrypted file.

This is very straightforward. You just need to tell the software: (i) the location of the parent folder of the content; (ii) the name of the file to create; (iii) the audio quality; and (iv) your encryption key. A single Audible content file (with an .aba extension) will be created.

Audible uses Ogg Vorbis audio format, so if the files were in WAV or MP3 format, they will be converted as part of this process.

3. Remove the microSD card from the Audible.

The door can be opened with a blunt tool such as a pair of tweezers or a small flat screwdriver (2-5 mm).



The SD card slot is hidden by a plastic cover which is not obvious to users or too easy to open

4. Insert the microSD card into an SD card adaptor and insert into your computer's card slot.



Many computers today have a card reader slot which reads SD cards. To allow your computer to read the smaller format microSD card, you might need an SD card adaptor. These are often available in mobile phone shops.

For high volume duplication, a standard microSD card duplicator can be used.

5. Copy the Audible content file to the SD card.

This is just a matter of using Windows Explorer to copy across the file.

6. Remove the SD card from the computer and reinsert into the Audible player.

Replace the plastic cover, and all is ready for use.

Can you change the audio that is on a machine?

Yes, assuming you have the software and know the encryption key, you can reprogram the microSD card, by changing the audio files or adding additional ones. You could swap out the existing card and replace it by another card which you have already programmed.

Ordinary users cannot change the contents of an Audible. They could remove the microSD card and try to put their own audio files onto it, but they would not succeed. The contents of the microSD card needs to be encrypted using the Audible software plus an encryption key. The Audible will not play unencrypted audio files.

How much does it cost?

Kivah has a sliding scale depending on the quantity you order and partnership agreements.

| Number of units | Unit price |
|---|------------|
| Small quantities | \$30.00 |
|  | \$27.80 |
| | \$26.80 |
| Larger quantities | \$25.80 |

These prices include a 16 GB SanDisk microSD card in each Audible.

Please contact Kivah for a quote.

Are there any disadvantages with this player?

- The charging port requires a special cable, rather than a standard microUSB charging cable used by a lot of phones and several other audio players.
- The Audible would struggle to make itself heard in a noisy courtyard. It works best for small groups.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I get a sample Audible?

Yes, Kivah can provide sample Audibles with preloaded audio content.

Can I get Biblical content in local languages for the Audible?

Yes. Kivah, has partnerships with several organisations to provide content in hundreds of languages.

Where can I get more information?

For more information, see the Kivah website or write to the email address below:

Web: <https://www.kivah.co.za/audible-k1/>

Email: info@kivah.co.za

4. Papyrus – from Renew World Outreach



The Papyrus is an attractively designed and solidly built multi-purpose player from Renew World Outreach. Its sound quality and volume are excellent for its size. It is easy to add content using the USB cable or via microSD card.

How big is it?

| | | |
|---------|--------|---------------|
| Width: | 70 mm | (2.76 inches) |
| Height: | 120 mm | (4.72 inches) |
| Depth: | 28 mm | (1.10 inches) |
| Weight: | 181 g | (6.4 ounces) |

How has it been improved?

The Papyrus has been around for several years now. It has seen a few improvements:

- It now takes audio files in the popular **MP3 format** rather than WMA files.
- The **internal memory** has been increased to 8 GB.
- For external storage, instead of the larger SD cards, it now takes **microSD cards**.

What kind of content will it play?

The Papyrus can contain **any selection of audio** you choose: Old Testament passages, New Testament passages, individual verses, Chronological Bible stories, drama, songs, sermons, teaching, health and community development materials. More than one language can be used.

How many hours can one of these machines hold?

The Papyrus has the potential of containing hundreds of hours of audio. With its **internal memory** of 4 GB, it can store 80-400 hours of audio (depending on the extent to which your files are compressed). In

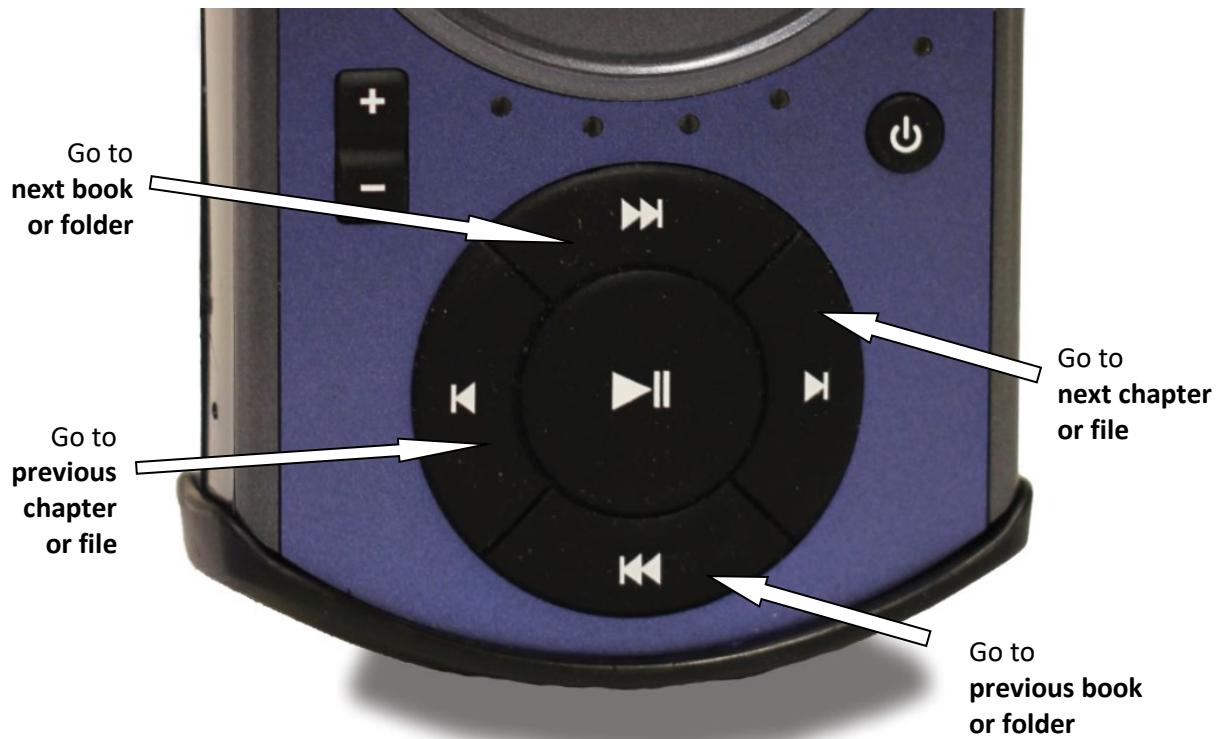
addition, it can read **external microSD cards**. With a collection of memory cards to be switched in and out, the capacity is endless.

You do not have to fill it up, so you could just have 30 minutes of audio to begin with.

How does content navigation work?

There are two levels of navigation:

- File/Chapter level: next/previous chapter or file
- Folder/Book level: next/previous book or folder

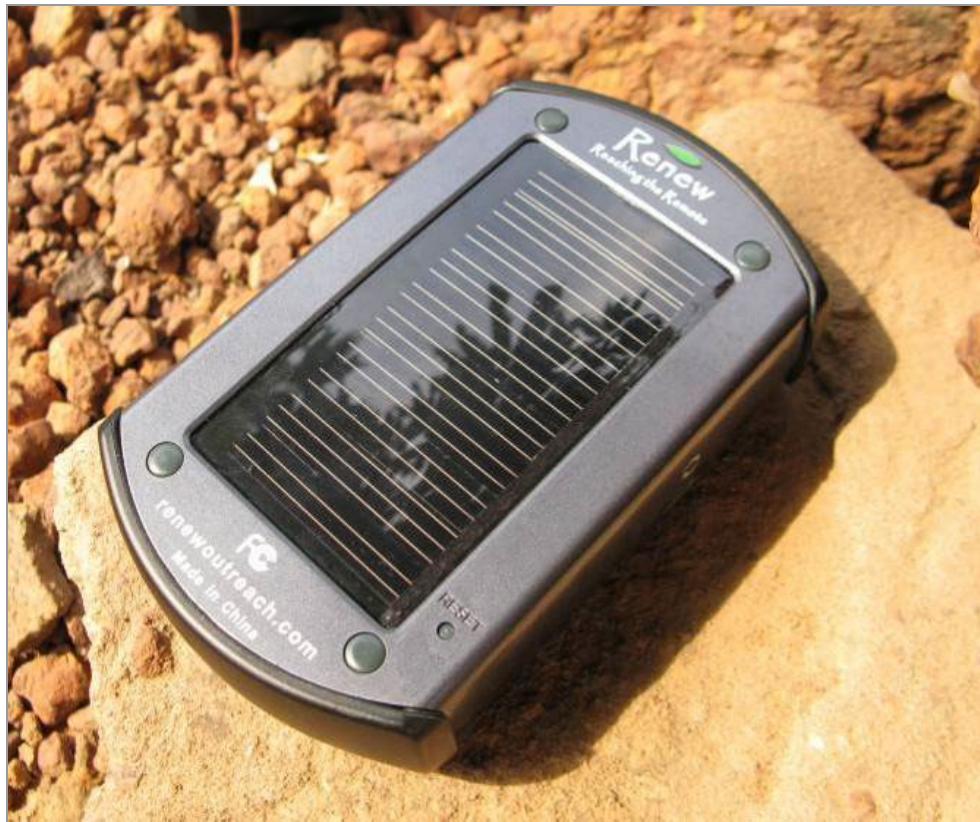


How is it charged?

The Papyrus is charged by its built-in solar panel, by AC mains charger or via the USB cable.

Renew's field tests have found that:

- From a full battery, the Papyrus will play for 6.5 hours at its loudest volume or 14 hours at a volume appropriate for a small group.
- Play time after solar charging depends on the quality of the sunshine (according to latitude, season, and weather) and the volume level. After a day of charging in the sun, the Papyrus will play for 2.5 hours at its loudest volume or 5 hours at a volume appropriate for a small group.



The solar panel on the back of the Papyrus

What type of rechargeable battery does it use?

The Papyrus has a lithium iron phosphate (LiFePO4) battery. This is a newer battery chemistry that claims to last for 5 to 10 years and 2,000 cycles. Renew say they chose this technology because it can withstand high temperatures (important for a solar-charged device) and it has a longer life expectancy than Lithium-Ion and NiMH batteries.

See page 63 for more discussion on batteries and battery life.

What is the build quality like?

The Papyrus has a very good, solid feel and an attractive appearance.

Renew writes, “As far as reliability, we have had reports of the Papyrus being left in the rain for several days and still working and being left near a fire, melting and still working. If they work initially after they arrive here, we rarely have complaint of them not living out their expectancy for use. The life expectancy is 3-5 years.”

How loud is it?

The volume is impressively loud for a pocket-sized player. A group of around 50-100 people should be able to listen to a Papyrus, so it should be sufficiently loud for both family settings and for medium-sized listening groups in churches. It is louder than the MegaVoice Envoy and Audible.

Using the 3.5mm headphones socket, it can also be plugged into an amplifier for much larger crowds.

You can plug headphones into the headphone socket for personal listening.

How do you get your audio files into the machine?

This is very easy with a Papyrus.

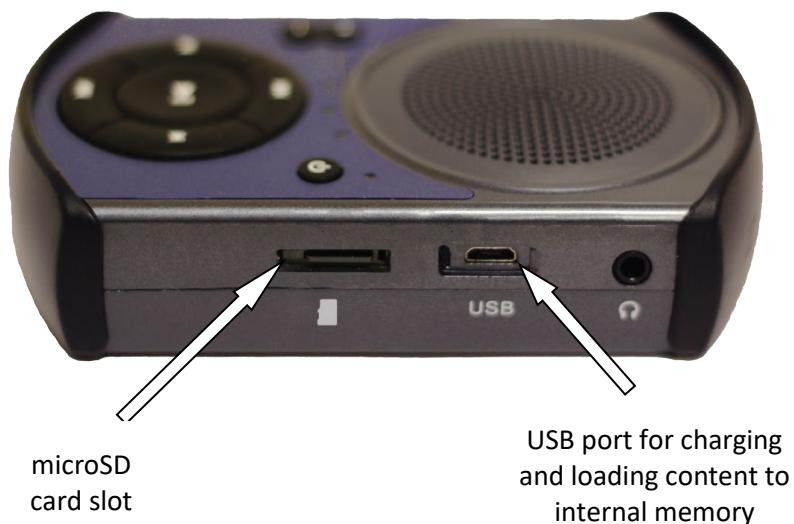
1. Organise your files into folders (e.g. create a folder for each book of the Bible).
2. Use the [SaberCopy](#) program to copy the files to either the internal memory of the Papyrus or to a microSD card. To do this, see below.

Copy files to internal memory - by USB cable:

- i. Connect the Papyrus to your computer with the Papyrus USB cable. This is a special proprietary USB cable. The Papyrus will appear as a separate drive letter.
- ii. Launch the [SaberCopy](#) program and follow the instructions to copy the content from your computer onto the Papyrus.

Copy files to a microSD card:

- i. Insert the card into your computer's card reader slot. Any microSD card can be used.
- ii. Launch the [SaberCopy](#) program and follow the instructions to copy the content from your computer onto the memory card.
- iii. Insert the card into the Papyrus.



Can you change the audio that is on a machine?

Yes, you can add and delete files to and from the internal memory using the USB cable, and the contents of the SD card can be changed. You could supply users with a series of SD cards containing different content.

Ordinary users will not be able to change the contents of the internal memory, since it requires a special USB programming cable which they are very unlikely to be able to find.

Any other interesting features?

- The Papyrus has a 4-LED battery life indicator. Simply press the power button and the lights will tell you how much charge the unit contains (1 light = running low, 4 lights = full).



- The Papyrus has raised navigation buttons which are useful for blind and visually impaired users.
- Renew Outreach partners with Faith Comes By Hearing, so that when you order a Papyrus you can ask for them to pre-load one of the dramatised NT recordings from FCBH's ever-growing library.
- Having both a permanent and a removable media source can be an advantage for delivering the Bible to sensitive areas. The internal memory can be loaded with something such as children's music while the Bible is contained on the SD card.
- Renew have produced Papyrus players with no markings at all for use in sensitive contexts.

How much does it cost?

Prices do not include shipping or import taxes. See the Renew website for up to date information.⁶

| Number of units | Unit price |
|-----------------|------------|
| 1-9 | \$69.00 |
| 10-99 | \$67.00 |
| 100-999 | \$63.00 |
| 1,000+ | \$59.00 |

Are there any disadvantages with this player?

- Excellent audio quality and volume comes at a price. The Papyrus is at the more expensive end of the price spectrum.
- The Papyrus is rather too fat and a little too heavy to be a shirt pocket-sized player.
- There are only 2 levels of folder hierarchy, i.e. book-chapter, or album-song. Compare this to the 3 levels offered in several other players.

Response: *The potential to store additional media sources on removable SD cards or to switch between internal memory and a single SD card using the source switch button adds a third level of organization.*

Where can I get more information?

For more information, see the Renew World Outreach website or write to the email address below:

Web: <https://renewoutreach.org/papyrus-audio-bible/>

Email: info@renewoutreach.com

⁶ These prices were obtained from the Renew website on 14 May 2024.

5. The Torch – from Renew World Outreach



The Torch 1.0

The Torch 2.0 (2023-)

The Torch comes with an integrated torch/flashlight, lamp, FM radio and a phone charging port. It is growing in popularity and has overtaken the Papyrus as Renew World Outreach's most popular player.

In 2023, The Torch 2.0 was released, featuring a new design, enhancing volume and durability. The photos in this review were taken with the original version.

Pressing the green torch button cycles between four lamp modes: (i) flashlight, (ii) lamp with three LEDs, (iii) lamp with just one of the three LEDs, (iv) off.



The flashlight and three-LED lamp modes

How big is it?

| | Torch 1.0 | Torch 2.0 |
|--------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Width | 75 mm (2.9 inches) | 76 mm (3 inches) |
| Height | 180 mm (7.0 inches) | 186 mm (7.3 inches) |
| Depth | 25 mm (1.0 inch) | 47 mm (1.85 inches) |
| Weight | 272 g (9.6 ounces, or 0.6 lb) | 266 g (9.38 ounces) |

What kind of content will it play?

The Torch can contain **any selection of audio** you choose: Old Testament passages, New Testament passages, individual verses, Chronological Bible stories, drama, songs, sermons, teaching, health and community development materials. More than one language can be used.

How many hours can one of these machines hold?

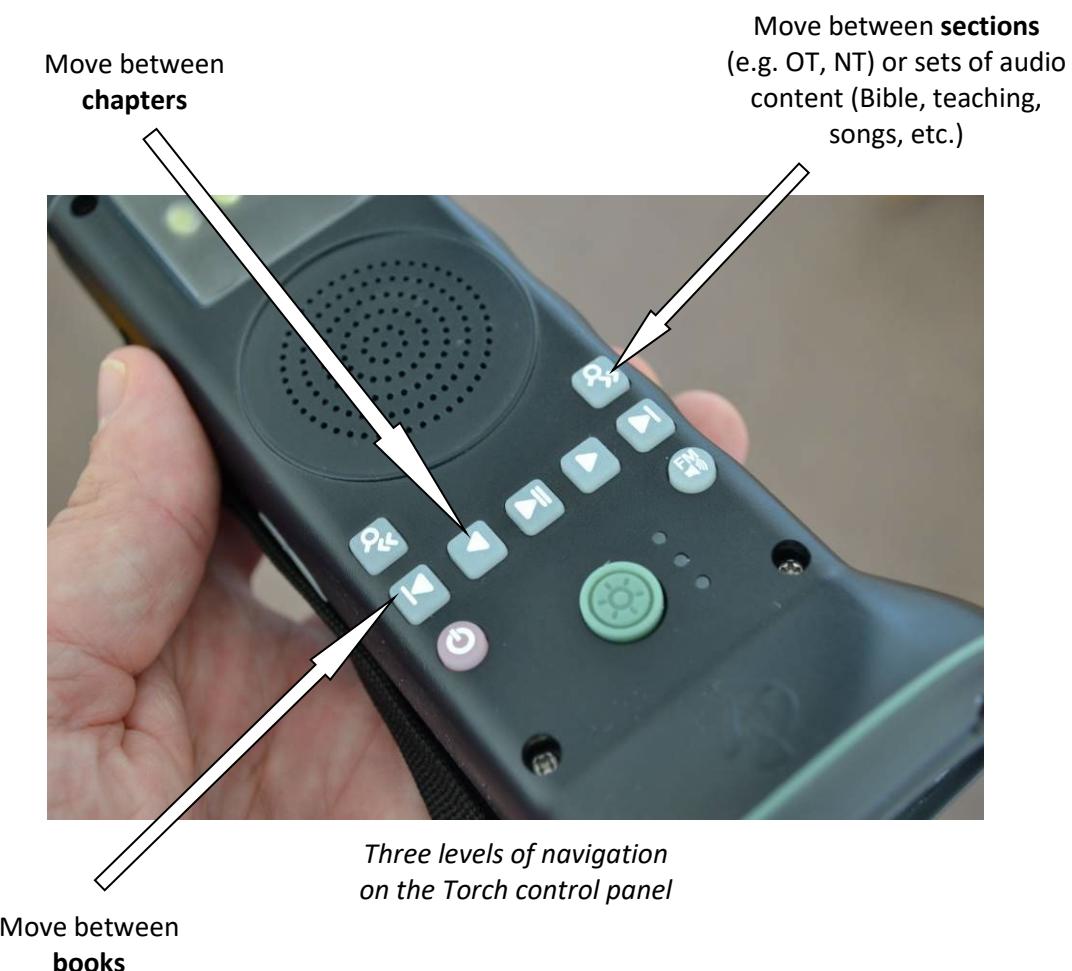
The Torch has the potential of containing hundreds of hours of audio. It has an internal memory of 8 GB, enough to store 160-800 hours of recordings, depending on the extent to which your files are compressed.

You do not have to fill it up, so you could just have 30 minutes of audio to begin with.

How does content navigation work?

There are three levels of navigation:

- Chapter level: next/previous chapter
- Book level: next/previous book
- Collection level: next/previous set of books, such as translations in different languages or different types of content such as Scripture and songs.



How is it charged?

The Torch is charged by its built-in solar panel, or via USB cable to the mains or a computer.



The solar panel fills the back of The Torch

What type of rechargeable battery does it use?

The Torch has a lithium iron phosphate (LiFePO4) battery.

See page 63 for more discussion on batteries and battery life.

What is the build quality like?

The Torch has a very good, solid feel and an attractive appearance.

How loud is it?

The Torch's speaker is loud enough for a group of 30-40 people, so it should be sufficiently loud for both family settings and for small or medium-sized listening groups in churches. If you need a player for larger groups, the Papyrus would be a better choice.

Using the 3.5mm headphones socket, it can also be plugged into an amplifier for much larger crowds.

You can plug headphones into the headphone socket for personal listening.

How do you get your audio files into the machine?

This is very easy with the Torch.

1. Organise your files into folders (e.g. create a folder for each book of the Bible).
2. Connect the Torch to your computer with the USB cable. This is a special proprietary USB cable, not a common type of USB connector. The Torch will appear as a separate drive letter.
3. Launch the [SaberCopy](#) program and follow the instructions to copy the content from your computer onto The Torch.



The Torch with the USB input cable, the other end of which you plug into a computer

Can you change the audio that is on a machine?

Yes, you can add and delete files to and from the internal memory using the USB cable.

Ordinary users will not be able to change the contents of the internal memory, since it requires a special type of USB cable which they are very unlikely to be able to find. There is no SD card input.

Any other interesting features?

- There is no obvious organisational branding on the Torch.
- The Torch can be used to charge phones using the USB output port.



Plug in your phone to charge it from the Torch

How much does it cost?

Prices do not include shipping or import taxes. See the Renew website for up to date information.⁷

| Number of units | Unit price |
|-----------------|------------|
| 1-9 | \$59.00 |
| 10-99 | \$57.00 |
| 100-999 | \$53.00 |
| 1,000+ | \$49.00 |

Are there any disadvantages with this player?

- The Torch is twice as expensive as some of the other players.

Where can I get more information?

For more information, see the Renew World Outreach website or write to the email address below:

Web: <https://renewoutreach.org/torch-audio-bible/>

Email: info@renewoutreach.com

⁷ These prices were obtained from the Renew website on 14 May 2024.

6. Kulumi Mini – from Hope Tech Global



The Kulumi Mini is a torch and an audio player combined, together with an FM radio and phone charger. According to Hope Tech Global, “the name, KULUMI, was derived from two words, *N'kulu N'kulu* which is a Zulu word for great and *Lumen* which means light. Together it means the Great Light.”

The torch is very bright and has four levels of brightness.



The Kulumi Mini's torch

How big is it?

Width: 82 mm (3.2 inches)
Height: 136 mm (5.3 inches)
Depth: 33 mm (1.3 inches)
Weight: 195 g (6.9 ounces)

What kind of content will it play?

The Kulumi Mini can contain **any selection of audio** you choose: Old Testament passages, New Testament passages, individual verses, Chronological Bible stories, drama, songs, sermons, teaching, health and community development materials. More than one language can be used.

How many hours can one of these machines hold?

The Kulumi Mini comes with an 8 GB microSD card, enough to store 160-800 hours of recordings, depending on the extent to which your files are compressed.

You do not have to fill it up, so you could just have 30 minutes of audio to begin with.

How does content navigation work?

There are three levels of navigation:

- Chapter level: next/previous chapter
- Book level: next/previous book
- Collection level: next/previous set of books, such as translations in different languages or different types of content, e.g. Scripture and songs.



How is it charged?

The Kulumi Mini is charged by its built-in solar panel or via the USB cable.



The solar panel on the back of the Kulumi Mini

What type of rechargeable battery does it use?

The Kulumi Mini has a Lithium Iron Phosphate (LiFePO4) battery. This is a newer battery chemistry that claims to last for 5 to 10 years and 2,000 charge cycles. It can withstand high temperatures (important for a solar-charged device) and it has a longer life expectancy than Lithium-Ion batteries.

See page 63 for more discussion on batteries and battery life.

What is the build quality like?

The player is solidly built and is unlikely to be broken easily.

How loud is it?

A group of around 50-100 people should be able to listen to a Kulumi Mini, so it should be sufficiently loud for both family settings and for small or medium-sized listening groups in churches.

Using the 3.5mm headphones socket, it can also be plugged into an amplifier for much larger crowds.

You can plug headphones into the headphone socket for personal listening.

How do you get your audio files into the machine?

The Kulumi Mini does not have an internal memory. Content is provided on a microSD card.

To add content to the microSD card:

1. Arrange the files in a 3-level structure on your computer, with sections, books, and chapters, e.g.

\OT\01\gen01.mp3

\OT\01\gen02.mp3

\NT\01\mat01.mp3

\NT\01\mat02.mp3

\NT\02\mrk01.mp3

\NT\02\mrk02.mp3

2. Remove the microSD card from the Kulumi Mini and insert it into a card reader on your computer.



The content is stored on a microSD card, which can be protected from tampering

3. Launch the [SaberCopy](#) program and follow the instructions to copy the content from your computer onto the microSD card.
4. Reinsert the microSD card into the Kulumi Mini.

Can you change the audio that is on a machine?

The Kulumi Mini has anti-tampering features, used to prevent people playing their own microSD cards or replacing the content of the provided microSD card.

Two versions of the player are available - one with an open microSD card slot and one with an enclosed microSD card slot. The open version is suitable for fieldworkers who need to swap cards regularly. The enclosed version is suitable to give to end users.

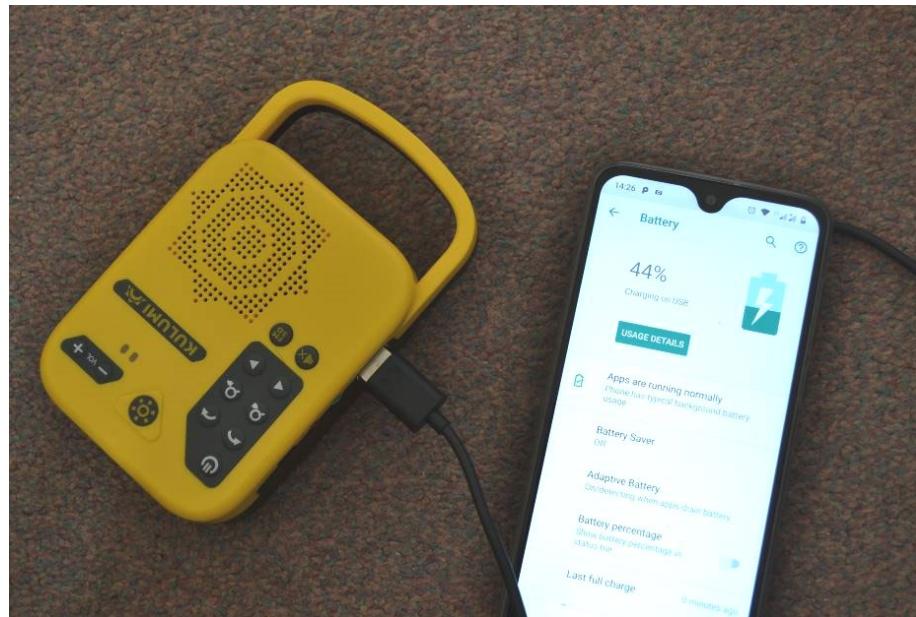
You can choose between six levels of anti-tampering, depending on your context:

1. **No protection:** The device will work regardless of content.
2. **Card protected against tampering:** The SD card provided will be locked so its contents cannot be changed.
3. **Must contain any card:** The device will only work with an SD card inserted. The SD card is not locked and so its contents can be changed.
4. **Must contain a locked card.** The device will only work with a locked SD card inserted.
5. **Must contain a card with correct content.** The device will only work with a SD card inserted. The card must contain a certain file, otherwise the player will not play the audio.
6. **Must contain a locked card with correct content.** The device will only work with a locked SD card inserted. The card must contain a certain file, otherwise the player will not play the audio.

microSD cards can be **locked** using the **MegaVoice SAFE** (<https://megavoice.com/audio-bible/safe/>) or the **Lightstream Pocket** from Renew World Outreach (<https://renewoutreach.org/equipment/lightstream-wifi-hotspot/>)

Any other interesting features?

- The Kulumi Mini can be used to charge phones using the USB output port.



You can plug your phone into the Kulumi Mini to charge it

How much does it cost?

Prices do not include shipping or import taxes. See the Kulumi website for up to date information.

| Quantity | Unit price |
|----------|------------|
| 10+ | \$24.00 |
| 100+ | \$20.00 |

If you would like to test the Kulumi Mini, you can apply for some pilot units at:
<http://hopetechglobal.com/pilot>

Are there any disadvantages with this player?

- The yellow block-shaped design does not make it the most stylish looking audio player.

Where can I get more information?

For more information, see the Kulumi website:

Web: <https://kulumi.org/kulumi-mini/>

Email: Use the contact form on the website.

7. Kulumi Sheep – from Hope Tech Global



The Kulumi Sheep is an audio player fully integrated into a fluffy sheep. Navigation, play/pause and volume controls are in its nose and feet.

How big is it?

Width: 210 mm (8.3 inches)
Height: 180 mm (7 inches)
Depth: 145 mm (5.7 inches)
Weight: 125 g (4.5 ounces)

What kind of content will it play?

The Kulumi Sheep can contain **any selection of audio** you choose, such as children's songs, Bible stories, and Bible readings. More than one language can be used.

How many hours can a Kulumi Sheep hold?

The player has an internal memory of 4 GB, enough to store 80-400 hours of audio (depending on the extent to which your files are compressed).

You do not have to fill it up, so you could just have 30 minutes of audio to begin with.

How does content navigation work?

Navigation controls are integrated into the body of the sheep.

- To start playing the audio, pinch the sheep's nose.
- To pause, pinch the nose briefly. A longer pinch will turn it off.

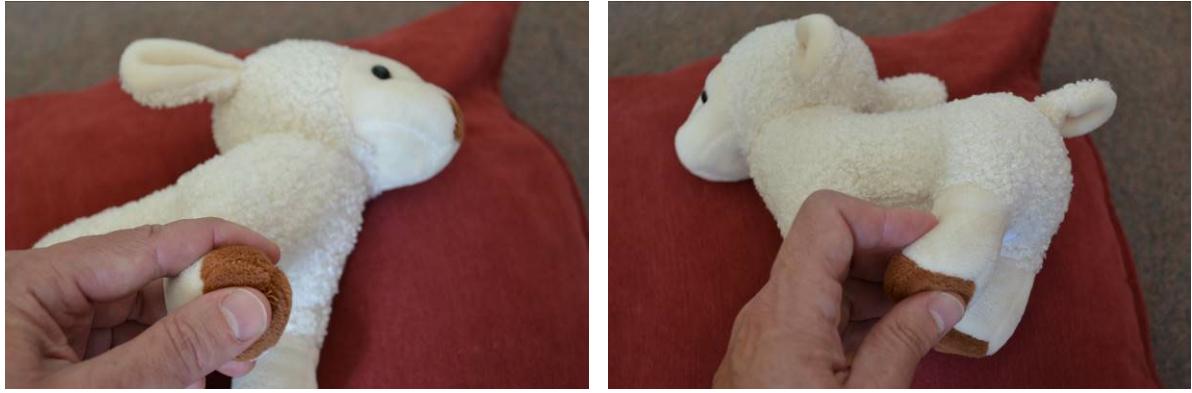


Pinch the sheep's nose to turn on/off, play and pause



A red light in the sheep's neck appears when the audio is playing

- To move to the next track: press the bottom of the front left foot.
- To move to the previous track: press the bottom of the front right foot.
- To move to the next book/folder: press the bottom of the back-left foot.
- To move to the previous book/folder: press the bottom of the back-right foot.



Navigate between files and folders using the sheep's feet

How is it charged?

The Kulumi Sheep is charged by USB cable.

What type of rechargeable battery does it use?

The Kulumi Sheep has an integrated Lithium-Ion battery which handles 500 charge cycles. It can play for 8 to 12 hours of use when fully charged.

See page 63 for more discussion on batteries and battery life.

What is the build quality like?

The Kulumi Sheep is well made and gives the impression of being a quality product.

How loud is it?

The built-in speaker is loud enough for a small group to gather around and listen.

How do you get your audio files into the machine?

To program the sheep with audio content (MP3 files):

1. Arrange the files in a folder structure on your computer, e.g.

\01\story01.mp3

\01\story02.mp3

\02\song01.mp3

\02\song02.mp3

2. Connect the sheep to your computer with the special USB programming cable.



*Open the underside of the sheep to find the USB input port
(in the pilot versions of the sheep, this was closed with velcro, but is a zip fastener on later models)*



Attach the USB cable between the sheep and your computer

3. Use Windows Explorer to delete any existing files in the sheep's memory.
4. Follow the instructions on the Kulumi Sheep website (<https://kulumi.org/kulumi-sheep/>), which explain how to copy your files and folders to the sheep. There is an instruction video to help you.

Can you change the audio that is on a machine?

Yes, as long as you have the special USB programming cable.

If users connect a normal USB cable to the sheep, they will not see the content and cannot change it.

How much does it cost?

Prices do not include shipping or import taxes. Please see the [Kulumi Sheep website](#) for up to date information.

| Item | Unit price |
|---|------------|
| Order from Amazon.com (sold by a partner organisation) | \$39.99 |
| Order qualities of 10+ | \$24.00 |
| Order qualities of 100+ | \$17.00 |

The link to the Kulumi Sheep (“My Little Lamb”) on Amazon is:

<https://www.amazon.com/One-Peace-My-Little-Lamb/dp/B07YLD94F6>

Are there any disadvantages with this player?

- Once children see it, you are unlikely to have enough of them to meet the demand! You will need to have a clear distribution or pricing strategy.
- Although the Kulumi Sheep is very light (125g), it is much bulkier to ship than a pocket-sized audio player.

Any other interesting features?

If you want to wash the sheep, you can open it up and remove the player. The cables can be unplugged from the player to allow you to soak the sheep in water.



Removing the player from the Kulumi Sheep



Unplugging the cables from the Kulumi Sheep

Where can I get more information?

For more information, see the Kulumi Sheep page on the Kulumi website:

Web: <https://kulumi.org/kulumi-sheep/>

Email: Use the contact form on the website.

A note about batteries and battery life – for all players

The players reviewed in this report use one of three rechargeable battery technologies:

- **Lithium Ion Polymer** – used in the Audible, MegaVoice Envoy, as well as in most mobile phones.
- **Lithium Iron Phosphate (LiFePO4)** – used in the Proclaimer, Papyrus and Kulumi Mini.

You can get a lot more technical information about each of these battery types by doing a search on the web, such as in Wikipedia.

For rechargeable batteries to last, they need to be maintained well, i.e. charged on a regular basis. If a player is sitting unused, the amount of charge its battery is holding will slowly decrease. This is especially true in hot climates where batteries lose their charge more quickly. Some batteries have a lower discharge rate than others and can be kept in storage longer without losing so much of their charge.

Although there are built-in protection circuits which will shut the battery off if the voltage level gets too low, it is important not to leave the batteries in this state for too long, otherwise natural battery discharge can permanently damage the battery.

Older audio players (such as the Saber from Global Recordings Network) used Nickel-Metal-Hydride (NiMH) batteries. This type of battery does not like it when their level of charge is left at a very low level. They like to be given a full discharge/charge cycle every 2-3 months, otherwise they can lose capacity. If you have players in storage waiting to be put to use, take them out and charge them from time to time. All the audio players being made today have moved away from this technology in favour of the Lithium battery options.

Although they are not perfect, the Lithium-Ion Polymer and Lithium Iron Phosphate (LiFePO₄) batteries are said to be more resilient than NiMH batteries. As well as being lighter, they can undergo more charge cycles and have a longer storage life.

All the organisations I have spoken with see battery life as an important issue. When you place an order, ask about what you need to do in order to preserve battery life.

SECTION FOUR

VIEWED TOGETHER

These images give you an idea of how the different players compare in terms of size and appearance:



SECTION FIVE: THE FINAL ROUND-UP

| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| | Proclaimer | Envoy 2 | The Torch | Papyrus | Audible K1 | Kulumi Mini | Kulumi Sheep | Locally available audio players |
| Organisation | Faith Comes By Hearing | MegaVoice | Renew World Outreach | Renew World Outreach | Kivah Distributors | Hope Tech Global | Hope Tech Global | Various manufacturers |
| Type | Scripture-only | Multi-purpose | Multi-purpose | Multi-purpose | Multi-purpose | Multi-purpose | Multi-purpose | Locally available |
| Weight | S50: 190 g (6.7 oz) | 65 g (2.3 oz) | 266g (9.38 oz) | 181g (6.4 oz) | 135 g (4.7 oz) | 195 g (6.9 oz) | 125 g (4.5 oz) | Various |
| Dimensions | L120 x 80 x 32 mm | 60 x 107 x 11 mm | 76 x 186 x 47 mm | 70 x 120 x 28 mm | 74 x 119 x 22 mm | 136 x 82 x 33 mm | 210 x 180 x 145 mm | Various |
| Unit Price (US dollar, not incl. shipping) | Normally free as part of a listening group programme | Prices from \$10.95 (ST) and \$21.95 (Elite), depending on model, quantity and partner org. | \$59.00 (1-9 units) \$57.00 (10-99 units) \$53.00 (100+ units) \$49.00 (1000+ units) | \$69.00 (1-9 units) \$67.00 (10-99 units) \$63.00 (100+ units) \$59.00 (1000+ units) | Prices from \$30.00 to \$25.80 depending on quantity and org. Includes a 16 GB SanDisk microSD card | \$24.00 (10+ units) \$20.00 (100+ units) | \$24.00 (10+ units) \$17.00 (100+ units) | From around \$6 for the cheapest players. Ask around in town. |
| Charging methods | Solar panel USB cable | Solar panel USB cable | Solar panel USB cable | Solar panel Mains adaptor USB cable | Solar panel Mains adaptor USB cable | Solar panel USB cable | USB cable | USB cable Some have solar panels |
| Battery type | Lithium Iron Phosphate (LiFePo4) | Lithium-Ion Polymer (300 mAh) | Lithium Iron Phosphate (LiFePo4) | Lithium Iron Phosphate (LiFePo4) | Lithium-Ion Polymer | LiFePo4 (3.2V / 1500mAh) | Lithium-Ion (3.7V / 500mAh) | Various recharg. or non-rechargeable |
| Torch | - | Yes (E Series only) | Yes | - | - | Yes | - | Some |
| FM Radio | - | Yes (Equip & Elite) | Yes | - | - | Yes | - | Yes |
| Recorder | - | Yes (Echo & Elite) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Speed Control | - | Yes (E Series only) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Navigation Levels | 3 (4 for S Dual) | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | Depends on model, but could be 1 or 2 |
| SD Card Slot | - | Yes (E Series only) | - | Yes | (Yes, but protected) | Yes | - | Yes |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| | Proclaimer | Envoy 2 | The Torch | Papyrus | Audible K1 | Kulumi Mini | Kulumi Sheep | Locally available audio players |
| Group Size | Medium | Small | Small to Medium | Medium | Small to Medium | Small to Medium | Small | Medium / Large |
| Content capacity | Whole NT in 4 languages or 2 full Bibles | Depends on model. E Series: 8 GB S, S Dual, ST: 4 GB | 8 GB internal (i.e. 160-800 hours depending on MP3 file compression) | 8 GB internal, or external SD card (up to 16GB), i.e. 160-800 hours built-in, or 1,600 hrs with card. | Comes with 16 GB microSD card (i.e. 320-1,600 hours of content). | 8 GB external microSD card (i.e. 160-800 hours depending on MP3 file compression) | 4 GB internal (i.e. 80-400 hours depending on MP3 file compression). | Depends on capacity of SD card or USB thumb drive (2 GB, 4 GB, 8 GB, etc.) |
| Content transfer method | <i>Shipped with content already installed on microSD cards.</i> | Use SaberCopy software to copy MP3 files to the Envoy's internal memory - via a special USB cable. | Use SaberCopy software to copy files across to The Torch using proprietary USB cable. | Use SaberCopy software to copy files across to the Papyrus using proprietary USB cable, or SD card. | Encrypt files using Audible software and copy onto a removable microSD card. Insert card into the Audible. | Use SaberCopy software to copy MP3 files and folders to the microSD card. | Use SaberCopy software to copy files across to the Kulumi Sheep using proprietary USB cable. | Use Windows Explorer to copy MP3 audio files to SD card or USB port. Can be done in Internet cafés. |
| Pros | Normally provided for free to partners as part of a FCBH listening group programme. Professional Scripture recording. Secure content. Loud enough volume for medium-sized group. | Pocket-sized: very thin and light. Lots of feature options (FM radio, recorder, playback speed, flashlight). Secure content. High capacity. 3/4-level navigation Back/forward 10 seconds. | Flashlight and lamp FM radio Good sound quality and volume High potential content capacity. Battery indicator. Phone charger port. 3-level navigation. Durable design. | Loud volume. Excellent sound quality. Secure internal content. High potential content capacity. Attractive and solid build. Attractive and solid build. Battery indicator. | Pocket-sized. Vast potential content capacity. Secure encrypted content. High potential content capacity. Attractive and solid build. Good sound quality. 3-level navigation. | Bright torch. Low unit cost. FM radio. 3-level navigation Phone charger port. High potential content capacity. Anti-tampering options. | Cute and fluffy, designed for children. Content navigation is integrated into its nose and feet. Excellent sound quality. Low unit cost. Secure content. | Cheap price. Available for immediate purchase locally. No shipping, customs costs. Very small and light (for certain models) or loud volume (for others). Easy to copy content using microSD card or via the USB port. |
| Cons | Cannot contain custom content (songs, teaching) Content navigation by long and short presses is less intuitive. | Volume not loud enough for larger groups unless used with an external speaker. | High unit price. | High unit price. No torch or radio. | No torch or radio. | Less cool and stylish than some of the other players. | Bulkier to ship than pocket sized players. No solar panel. | Content not secure. Build quality issues with cheap players. Often without multi-level navigation. |

CONCLUSION

Aiming for Scripture Engagement

Putting Scripture on an audio player is just the beginning. However good the technology, unless it is put to use, it will be just as effective as a book gathering dust on the shelf. What we are looking for is real Scripture engagement as people listen, reflect, respond, discuss, share, pray, change, and are radically transformed by God's living and active Word.

Which is the best audio player?

The best audio player is the one being used by people to encounter God's Word in life-changing ways.

The audio player technology needs to be chosen in the light of how people will be using the players to interact with the audio Scriptures. It might be that you will need more than one type of player in your context, and very likely a combination of solar-powered players and mobile phone technology.

May the Lord give you wisdom as you choose the audio players *and* the audio strategies which are right for your context and see them put to use for His glory.