

# What is an MP3 Player?

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'MP3' is the abbreviation for 'MPEG Audio Layer III' ('MPEG' stands for 'Motion Pictures Expert Group'). It's a compressed digital audio file. A player stores these files on a memory chip so that you can play it back at your leisure.

## Features and benefits of an MP3 player

- Contains a miniature hard disk drive, which can store huge quantities of data.
- MP3s usually contain music, but the format is also used for general audio files such as audiobooks and [podcasts](#).
- MP3s can be listened to with earphones or headphones, or played through speakers via an external amplifier - for example, a 'dock' with speakers or through a stereo system.
- MP3 players allow the user to play music, podcasts and so on anywhere.
- Music is easily stored and managed on the MP3 player, including skipping tracks or, on some models, arranging playlists.

## History of the MP3 player

- The MP3 project began in 1977 in Germany, and the patent for its use was finally granted in 1989.
- The first MP3 player was produced in Korea in 1998.
- Apple produced the iPod in 2001. It has since become the most popular MP3 player in the world, although it actually converts MP3 files into its own file format.

## The different types of MP3 player

- Memory flash players: small, easy to use and relatively inexpensive, ideal for joggers but have a limited storage capacity. Batteries are replaceable.
- Micro hard-drive players: smaller than hard drive players but more portable.
- Hard-drive players: much larger capacity, holding thousands of tracks, but their rechargeable batteries can't be replaced.
- Multimedia players: larger and heavier, but allow the user to watch movies; usually have a large colour screen.

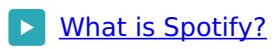
## Choosing an MP3 player

- Some of the most popular brands of MP3 player are iPod, Philips, Zen and Archos.
- Many of these are available in the micro format – for instance, iPod mini and Zen Micro.
- An interesting alternative is the Eco-Media Player Revolution. This has a wind-up facility – a one-minute wind of the handle gives 45 minutes of play time.

**Chris Quartermaine is a Digital Unite tutor for Chester, South Wirral and north-east Wales.**

## Next steps

- [What is an iPod?](#)
- [How to create a playlist in YouTube](#)
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