



## **BARKING OWL AUDIO FAQs**

and audio tips

### **Q We have a remote, unmanned heritage site, probably will have 12V power available. Can we use Barking Owls for audio displays here?**

Our automatic Barking Owl Audio Players would be perfect for your site – a hidden outdoor Audio Player V2.0 would be all you need. It comes with one CD-quality speaker (you won't need stereo, although you can add another speaker if you wish) which can be sited where you like, hidden with the Player or at some distance away.

Audio is triggered by a passive infrared sensor picking up visitors nearby, generally up to 4-5m away – further sensing picks up moving vegetation, birds etc. Visitors are also near enough to hear the audio as soon as it switches on. It can also switch off when they move away.

12V power is perfect, but we can supply a mains transformer or solar package if needed. If you are already using 12V power, you won't need an electrician to install the Players - a handyman will do. Each Audio Player requires very little power, as well – you could even use a medium-sized car battery. One battery charge would give about 2 weeks of normal audio use.

### **Q Our site gets frosty in winter and really hot in summer. Can Barking Owls stand up to these conditions?**

Each outdoor Barking Owl Audio Player has an inner weather-sealed unit containing the electronic circuits. When hidden inside another housing (or seat, wall, etc) it can handle rain, frost, snow and sun (from -20° C up to 55°C air temperature) – it's robust and tough.

The New Zealand Department of Conservation used a Barking Owl Audio Player in Scandrett Regional Park, Mahurangi, North Island New Zealand. It was installed over four years ago and is still happily talking away, hidden in an old radio in an isolated cowshed. We've designed the Audio Players to require no maintenance and to be very reliable, using industrial-quality components to achieve this. See the website for more Barking Owl installation sites.

### **Q I'm personally a bit worried about vandalism – will the Audio Players be safe inside our unmanned kiosk?**

So far to our knowledge, over 36 audio installations, Barking Owl Audio Players have not been damaged by vandalism. The Barking Owl Audio Player is all-in-one (speaker, sensor and audio chip circuit board), although the speaker can be separated from the rest, disguising where the actual

Player is hidden. The sensor picks up movement 4 to 5 metres away, so is quite localised – again, it can be installed at some distance from the actual Player.

So you can install the Player out of harm's way, such as just inside your building above the main entrance, in the ceiling or under the roof – it is quite small. Or hide it in (fixed) furniture such as under tables or chairs, inside cavity walls, under floors, etc. Damage to walls or furniture is very unlikely to damage the small Player inside.



[www.barkingowl.com.au](http://www.barkingowl.com.au)

**Q I am an interpretation designer, based in New Zealand. It looks like you have exactly what I'm looking for; do you know if anyone offers this in NZ (I can do the audio file, just need the 'Player' you are describing)?**

Barking Owls have been developed by an electronic engineer and myself (our first installation was 10 years ago), because I couldn't buy anything like it anywhere! The nearest thing before then was an industrial quality CD player (which broke down after a year).

We've decided to make it available to other communication designers, who would be having the same problem. Currently we are assessing potential agents and distributors in several parts of New Zealand and Australia, but the best thing to do is contact us via our email or website – we can direct you to your closest distributor as they are appointed.

Let us know about the environment you are planning to use it in (eg interior/exterior, weather conditions, existing building structures, power, etc), then we can provide suggestions and quote.

**Q Could we hide the Audio Players under seating?**

An enclosed seat is a great idea to hide the Player under - see the Technical Summary page on the website for the Audio Player size. A cavity wall (such as hollow bricks, timber framing etc) is also fine. The Audio Player only requires one 5-cent piece hole for the sensor to 'see' through and several smaller holes in front of the speaker. It comes with a simple manual for installation.

Seating is suggested for audio displays of more than one minute or so, for visitor comfort. You can have up to an hour of audio pieces if you want (you can program the Player to random or sequential play using a small switch on it) or play just one. The Player comes with a Flash card allowing 3 hours of audio (minimum, more available) - so that you can update the audio displays easily on a computer.

**Q I need another Player to run another audio at a site about 20 metres away... could I possibly feed off this one?**

Each Audio Player allows for up to two speakers, so you could have another speaker 20m away. However, there's only one sensor, so visitors triggering the sensor may not hear the speaker 20m away (only one volume setting for both) unless both speakers were set at really loud. They would be playing the same audio track too, which could get repetitive.

The infrared sensor senses visitors up to about 5m away, which is also the clear hearing limit for them (louder volume settings can detract from the display as a whole). Visitors 20m away wouldn't trigger the sensor, but you can position the sensor at an entrance to the whole area.

The optional second speaker is really designed for atmospheric soundscapes, where it's desirable to fill a sizeable space with natural sounds, music, etc. Interviews and commentary are best kept to a smaller and more intimate area, as they can be more intrusive.

A second Audio Player would solve things neatly - they are designed to be site-specific rather than catering for several sites at once.



**Q Can we reuse some of the Audio Player files on our website? Or make podcasts available?**

Yes, Barking Owl Audio Players play MP3 and WAV audio files, which are standard these days for podcasts, website audio, etc.

**Q We want to have the main Player some distance from the actual sensor and speaker/s.. about 12m- 15m. (This is to do with having the Player closer to the power source.) Is that possible or is the sensor in the Player?**

The sensor is normally built into the Player but we can supply it outside the Player at no extra cost. We can't guarantee normal function of sensor and speaker over 18m away, but anything under that should be fine.

**Q Also, we don't have power on quite yet.. are we able to run it off battery temporarily until we get the 12 v sorted?**

Absolutely - a medium-sized car battery will be fine, and will run each Audio Player for around 2 weeks between charges, assuming average Barking Owl usage (ie not on all day constantly). Each Player requires very little power – which is why it works well using the optional solar package.

**For further enquiries, contact us at:**

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