



Above Audiolab 7000N Play in silver finish

7000N Play network audio player

Audiolab's 7000 Series Wi-Fi/Ethernet streamer builds on the award-winning 6000N Play to deliver high-performance wireless streaming to any home audio system.

Cambridgeshire, England – Affordable, effective and delivering class-leading sound quality, **Audiolab's** 6000A Play has won multiple awards since its 2019 arrival as a smart way to add network streaming to any audio system. Four years on and **Audiolab** is adding another network audio player to its range, building on the 6000N Play with a range of updates and enhancements whilst adding only £50 to its RRP.

The new **7000N Play** offers a significant step up from its still-current forebear. It similarly combines the versatility of the DTS Play-Fi wireless audio platform with **Audiolab's** sonic know-how to deliver a great-sounding network streaming solution that is simple to set up and use, incorporating the latest Play-Fi module, extra features and a DAC upgrade in return for the modest additional outlay. Users can stream from any source connected to their home network – smartphones, tablets, PCs and Macs, as well as NAS drives and music servers – utilising the **7000N Play's** dual-band, dual-antenna Wi-Fi. It also connects wirelessly with other Play-Fi-equipped devices, enabling a fully synchronised multi-room set-up.

There are three ways to stream once the **7000N Play** is connected to a broadband router via Wi-Fi or Ethernet cable. The first is via the Play-Fi app, which gives access to a variety of online streaming services including Tidal, Spotify, Amazon Music, Qobuz and Deezer, plus thousands of internet radio stations and podcasts, as well as streaming content stored on local DLNA-compliant devices. The second is Spotify Connect, which enables streaming direct to the **7000N Play** using the Spotify app rather than the Play-Fi app. And the third is AirPlay 2, which gives access to Apple Music and other streaming platforms when using an iPhone, iPad, Mac or Apple TV as the source/control device. AirPlay 2 is a new feature added to the **7000N Play**, and an important one for Apple users.

Upgraded internals

The **7000N Play** incorporates a high-quality DAC (Digital-to-Analogue Converter), upgrading the ES9018K2M Sabre32 chip found in the 6000N Play to the new-generation ES9038Q2M – as used in **Audiolab's** new 7000A integrated amp. This is accompanied by proprietary circuitry to make the most of ESS Technology's HyperStream II architecture and Time Domain Jitter Eliminator for ultra-low noise and high dynamic range. Hi-res audio streaming is supported to 24-bit/192kHz over Wi-Fi and Ethernet cable.

The inclusion of a DAC stage ensures the **7000N Play** can be used with any audio system – simply connect the stereo RCA analogue output to a regular integrated amp or preamp, or a pair of active speakers. Alternatively, take a digital feed (optical or coaxial) to an external DAC, or an amp with digital inputs such as **Audiolab's** new 7000A. Naturally, the 7000A is an ideal partner for the **7000N Play**; when these two components are paired digitally, an optical or coaxial cable is used to convey the audio signal while the supplied USB control cable enables the 7000A's volume to be adjusted via the Play-Fi app.

The circuit design also draws inspiration from **Audiolab's** new 7000CDT CD transport, incorporating the same isolated power supply with a high-efficiency, low-noise toroidal transformer to maintain optimum signal purity – all of which contributes to the **7000N Play's** excellent sonic performance.



Left A colour display, AirPlay 2 and upgraded internals are among the enhancements over the 6000A Play

Few network streamers around the **7000N Play's** price include a colour display – or any display at all – but **Audiolab's** new streamer sports the same 2.8in IPS LCD display and attractive GUI as the other **7000** Series components. This shows a variety of information, including the currently connected streaming service, track details and format/sample rate, and provides access to functions such as balance control, auto-standby settings, fixed or variable output, and 12V trigger activation for system control. The menu also facilitates digital filter selection – the same five settings provided by the 7000A integrated amp – offering a degree of sonic tailoring to suit the source material and the user's personal taste.

The display can even be set to show a VU meter in 'analogue' or 'digital' form, presenting real-time signal levels for the left and right channels – a satisfying graphical representation of the music as it plays. As with the other **7000** Series components, animations can be turned off and brightness adjusted, and the display can be set to activate only when a function is accessed and switch off after a defined period, as the user prefers.

The GUI can be navigated using the included remote or the six buttons to the right of the display, four of which also double as 'preset' selectors. These presets operate like those on a DAB or FM radio tuner; simply select an internet radio station, or a playlist from a streaming service, and store it as a preset for speedy access at the press of a button – no app required.



Left The 7000N Play's menu system is navigated by six front panel buttons or the included remote control

More about Play-Fi

DTS Play-Fi is an app-controlled platform enabling high-quality, whole-home wireless audio, capable of streaming hi-res music up to 24-bit/192kHz and supported by a greater range of established audio brands than any other wireless platform. The free Play-Fi app (available for iOS, Android and Kindle Fire devices, Windows PCs and Apple and Android smartwatches) is an intuitive gateway to a wealth of music services including Spotify, Tidal, Amazon Music, Deezer, Qobuz, HDtracks, TuneIn, iHeartRadio and SiriusXM. It is also your trusty music butler, able to serve up a streaming library stored on any DLNA-compatible NAS drive or media server on the same home network.

Play-Fi supports a wide variety of file formats, including MP3, MP4A, AAC, FLAC, WAV and AIFF, and provides two main listening modes. The default Critical Listening mode delivers optimal sound quality when streaming to a single device like the **7000N Play**, supporting hi-res PCM up to 24-bit /192kHz over Wi-Fi or Ethernet cable without transcoding or down-sampling. The second mode prioritises bandwidth for multiroom operation by capping audio at 16-bit/48kHz – essentially CD quality – for seamless, simultaneous streaming to as many as 32 Play-Fi-compatible audio devices in different zones.

The versatility of the Play-Fi ecosystem is enhanced by the sheer variety of audio devices that support it, from portable speakers and TV soundbars to all-in-one music systems and high-end audio components, from a wide range of respected brands. All Play-Fi-compatible audio devices work perfectly together, providing an extensive range of options to customise your home entertainment experience.

Play-Fi can even be integrated into TVs, including the latest models from Philips, enabling them to stream latency-free audio over Wi-Fi to Play-Fi-equipped devices including the **7000N Play** – all perfectly synchronised with the action on screen, no cables required.

DTS launched Play-Fi in 2012; it was highly innovative at the time and even now continues to break new ground in wireless home audio. Play-Fi Home Cinema for Speakers, which arrived last year, is a case in point – this enables all manner of wireless soundbar, speaker and subwoofer combinations in surround configurations up to 7.2.4, seamlessly synced over Wi-Fi. This continual thirst for progress has earned Play-Fi a CES 2023 Innovation Award, more than 10 years after it launched.

The Play-Fi app regularly evolves through automatic updates. Important recent enhancements such as gapless playback, and the ‘transfer’ function which enables streaming without the need to keep the control device on the Wi-Fi network, are all fully compatible with the **7000N Play**. And because **Audiolab’s** new streamer incorporates the latest Play-Fi module, you can be sure this will be the case with future updates too.

The **Audiolab 7000N Play** network audio player is available from March in a choice of silver or black, at an RRP of £549. The **7000** Series is completed by the 7000A integrated stereo amplifier and 7000CDT CD transport, which launch concurrently with the **7000N Play**.



Left While the 7000N Play can be paired with any amplifier, Audiolab’s 7000A is an obvious aesthetic and sonic match