**FULL REVIEW**

The sleekly designed audio player, Apacer Audio Steno AU581 MP3, comes with 2GB of flash memory, an FM radio with recording feature, and non-customizable seven preset equalizers (EQ). It has a basic four-way directional pad, a center LCD display and a two-way button for EQ and recording on the front. The power button, headphone and mini USB port are both located on the sides.

The AU581 plays MP3, WMA and wave files. The interface is basic and straightforward. However, there is a slight delay every time the button is pressed. Also, we were let down by lack of user function. Playback just stopped when switching to menu and did not resume the track when returned to the main screen. Tracks are played back in Direct Play or Faster mode but playback feature is left out. The track browsing could have been better as it shows only one track at a time. With drag and drop support, transferring 161 MB of songs took 5 minutes and 16 seconds which is slower for a USB 2.0 device.

The sound quality is average. The preset EQ helps with normal mode, impressing the most. The earplugs bundled fared well to deliver with muddy bass and muddled highs. The FM radio with no auto scan worked just fine. Voice recording is good enough for casual recording. The rated battery life is 9 hours and the battery is non-removable. If you don’t mind the non-detachable interface and suggest controls, the AU581 is a decent basic MP3 player with average performance.

—Leetshish Fekhalu