

Home > Hi-Fi > Reviews > Digital Audio Convertors >

Chord Mojo 2 Portable DAC/Headphone Amplifier Review

Chord has got its Mojo working (again)

by [Simon Lucas](#) Jun 26, 2023

Review Specs Discussion (51)

HI-FI review

51

Hi-Fi

Chord Electronics



CHORD ELECTRONICS MOJO 2 DIGITAL AUDIO CONVERTOR (2022)

MSRP: £495.00

10 SCORE

Recommended

Chord Electronics
Mojo 2

OUT OF 10

amazon.co.uk

£495
£395

Latest Movie & TV News

READ MORE

AVForums Podcast: Movies Edition - In... Avatar 2 4K, Ronin 4K, Cruise 4K, Secr...

Chord Mojo 2 Portable DAC/Headphone Amplifier Review

It's taken seven years, admittedly, but Chord has managed to improve on what was the best pound-for-pound desktop-friendly DAC/headphone amp around.

The good

- Fortright, articulate and thoroughly engaging sound
- Plenty of input options
- Great specification
- Can power two pairs of headphones at once

The not so good

- Wilfully unintuitive user interface
- Not quite as portable as the word 'portable' might suggest

Share:



What is the Chord Electronics Mojo 2?

The Chord Mojo 2 is the £449 portable DAC-cum-headphone-amplifier that replaced the original Chord Mojo portable DAC-cum-headphone-amplifier a mere seven years after it was introduced

and when it was still the best-sounding portable DAC-cum-headphone-amplifier around.

Anyone even vaguely familiar with this manufacturer will fancy they know what to expect in terms of performance, in terms of design and in terms of ergonomics. But the success of the original Mojo inspired an absolute slew of imitators, which means Mojo 2 finds itself up against considerably stiffer opposition than its predecessor ever had to deal with...

HI-FI news



Chord Electronics introduces Mojo 2 DAC/headphone amplifier

by Andy Bassett · Jan 31, 2022

Chord Electronics has launched the Mojo 2, the replacement for the company's original pocket friendly DAC/headphone amp combo.

125

Design, Connections and Control

First things first: what does the word 'portable' mean to you? Because although Mojo 2 is by strict definition a 'portable' device, it's fair to say that everything's relative - and at 23 x 83 x 62mm (HxWxD) and 185g, Mojo 2 is far from the most portable product of its type around.

BB ... Mojo 2 finds itself up against considerably stiffer opposition than its predecessor ever had to deal with

Still, those relatively chunky proportions at least means there's enough space for Chord to do its long-established 'H.G. Wells meets Alan Moore' design thing on Mojo 2 - it seems fair to say you'd never mistake this for a product of any other manufacturer. It's a chunk of anodised aluminium, with a selection of inputs and outputs at either end and four big, bold and variously coloured polycarbonate 'control spheres' sunk into one side. As a member of an industry seldom recognised for the individuality of its industrial design, Chord is to be commended for ploughing its own furrow. Especially if you're not the one who has to learn how to use the thing.

But before the excitement of 'control', let's consider the rather more orthodox area of 'connections'. The Mojo 2 has a few options.



Mojo 2 connection options



The Mojo 2 features dual headphone outputs

Inputs run to microUSB, USB-C, digital optical and 3.5mm digital coaxial (the latter is capable of dealing with sample rates of up to 768kHz), and there's also a microUSB dealing with battery charging. Yes, microUSB is an anachronism and yes, the USB-C input looks like it was welded on as an afterthought - but because Mojo 2 needs to be compatible with 2017's dedicated 'Poly' streaming module, microUSB soldiers on and USB-C has had to be tucked out of harm's way. That's one end of the Mojo 2's casework - the other features a pair of 3.5mm unbalanced

headphone outputs. Romantically, these can both be used at the same time. They both operate at a common volume level.

See also:

HI-FI review



Chord Electronics Poly Review

by Ed Selley · Nov 3, 2017

The Poly is the latest Chord Electronics product but it defies easy description, making it the device you may never knew you needed?

27

8

What it doesn't have, though, is any wireless functionality. Your source of music must be hard-wired to Mojo 2, and in turn you're required to use wired headphones. Obviously, this cuts further into its 'portable' credentials. Perhaps best to just consider Mojo 2 a desktop device and leave it at that.



The Chord Electronics Mojo 2 DAC/headphone amplifier

Anyhow, onto those 'control spheres'. As I indicated, there are four - and they cover 'power on/off', 'plus', 'minus' and 'menu'. And as I mentioned, each is made of polycarbonate - which means they're capable of illuminating in a quite startlingly wide range of colours. For instance, the 'power on/off' sphere can glow in any one of 11 different colours in order to indicate the sample rate of the incoming digital audio file. The 'menu' sphere is even more versatile - it can dictate 'high' or 'low' volume ranges or, depending on how many times you press it, it can cycle through 'tone control' settings (there are four equalisation DSPs: lower bass; mid-bass; lower treble; high treble) that can each be adjusted in 18 1dB increments using the 'plus' and 'minus' buttons. Or it can

adjust crossfeed levels. Or it can do other stuff, which I won't go into here for the sakes of both brevity and sanity. You'll need to commit the meaning of this sphere's eight different colours to memory if you want to know what it's up to. But this pales next to the 'plus' and 'minus' spheres, which can be one of 19 (count 'em!) different colour combinations to indicate their particular state of play.

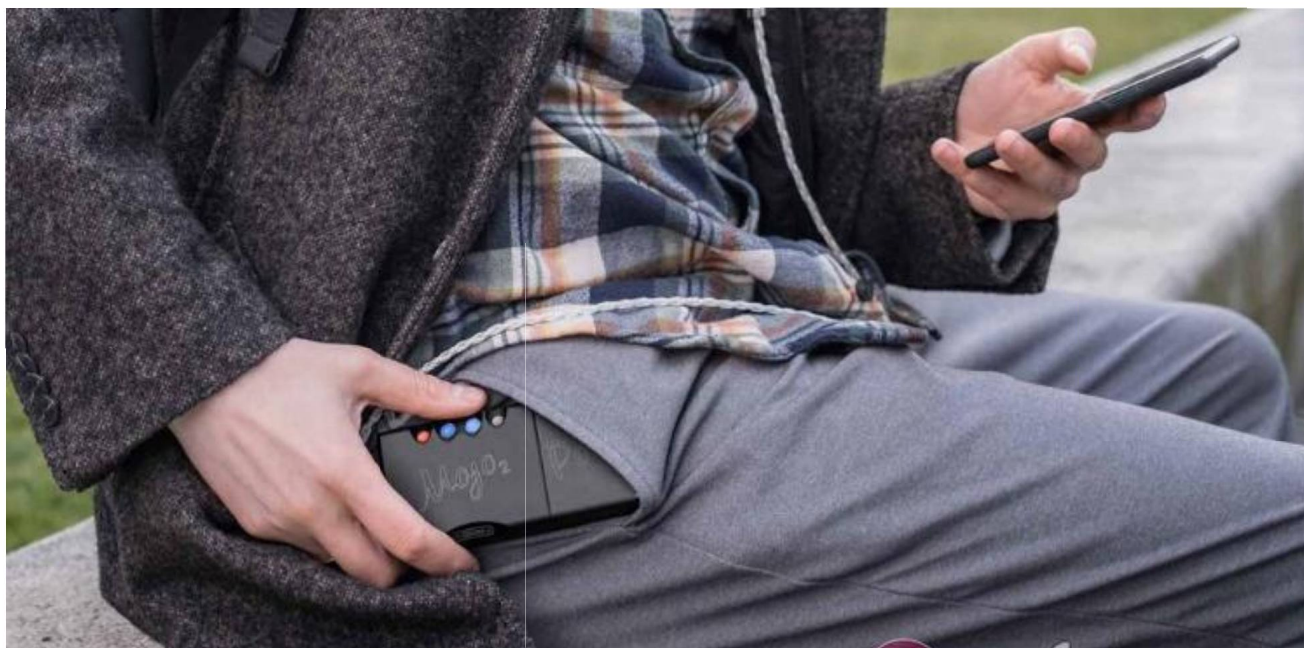
BB ... Mojo 2 is far from the most portable product of its type around

It's complicated enough when you attempt to write it down. Actually trying to understand what Mojo 2 is doing without constant reference to the instruction manual is, I reckon, only feasible for those of us who were piano virtuosos by the age of five or something like that. I'm sure Chord could have made this interface even less intuitive and even more stressful - but off the top of my head I'm not sure exactly how.

Features and Specifications

The original Mojo was (and remains) an extremely well-regarded product, but it was not without its shortcomings - operability or the lack thereof is a given, of course, and that's something that has not been addressed by Mojo 2. In other respects, though, Chord has applied itself to righting some of Mojo's perceived wrongs.

Battery management has been improved, for example, so Mojo 2 charges more quickly than the product it replaced - and battery capacity is up by very nearly 10 per cent. Eight hours is eminently achievable from Mojo 2 between charges - and it can charge while in use with no discernible drop-off in audio performance. And unlike the original, Mojo 2 merely gets a bit warm when it's running - which is a big improvement over the 'alarmingly warm' levels Mojo routinely used to achieve.





The Mojo 2 is a tad bulky but can be used as a portable device..

The major technical advances are all slightly more esoteric. Sonic accuracy is what Chord is striving for, and to that end it's introduced its 'UHD DSP' - the company reckons it's the world's first lossless digital signal processor, and it's intended to offer customisable digital-to-analogue conversion with no degradation of signal quality. A proprietary 104-bit processor allows for all of those adjustments in tone and crossfeed already alluded to. And, of course, the most serious business is taken care of by Chord's 'field programmable gate array' circuits. Custom coding provides what the company unblinkingly refers to as 'the most advanced digital-to-analogue conversion performance in the world', and the deletion of coupling capacitors along with improvements to the '4e Pulse Array' DAC further enhances the Mojo 2's 'sonic accuracy' credentials.

How Was the Chord Electronics Mojo 2 Tested?

Because, as we have long since established, 'portable' is a distinctly relative term, the Chord Mojo 2 was tested when attached to an Apple MacBook Pro (2020) via its USB-C input - the laptop runs Colibri software to allow the use of authentically high-resolution digital audio files. At the other end, Mojo 2 drives both a pair of [Sennheiser IE900](#) in-ear monitors and a pair of [Bowers & Wilkins Px8](#) (using the USB-C -to- 3.5mm cable supplied in the headphones' packaging).

Performance

Here's where all the ambivalence and snippy comments about the control interface and portability (or the lack thereof) get parked, and instead talk turns to the Mojo 2's sonic prowess. Which is - spoiler alert! - profound.

In every circumstance - which for the purposes of this test means a listen to everything from a 320kbps file of John Martyn's *Small Hours* to a DSD64 file of Wham!'s *Everything She Wants* - the sound delivered by the Mojo 2 compares to the unassisted sound of the laptop in the same way a service station sandwich compares to three courses plus coffee at a Michelin-starred restaurant. The influence the Chord can bring to bear on digital audio files of all types really has to be heard to be properly appreciated.

***BB** Your source of music must be hard-wired to Mojo 2, and in turn you're required to use wired headphones*

Its powers of analysis, for instance, its ability to identify, reveal and contextualise even the finest, most transient details of a recording is remarkable. No shred of information eludes it, no matter how fleeting or how deep in the mix - the Mojo 2 will tease it out and position it precisely in the

overall presentation. This forensic level of insight is not at the expense of entertainment or musicality, you understand - the Chord is not laboratorial tool of analysis. It's an engaging and spirited listen - but it makes sure every scrap of detail involved in a recording is brought along for the ride.



... but is probably more at home on a desktop

Leave the numerous tone and crossover options well alone and the Mono 2's tonality is natural in a sort of organically instinctive way - it's confidently balanced from the bottom of the frequency range to the top, and plays absolutely no favourites. The line from the bottom end to the top is smooth and clean - no area of the frequency range is overstated or underplayed, and every area transitions into the next seamlessly. When it comes to giving an impression of unity, of wholeness and of commonality to a recording, the Mojo 2 is without meaningful competition at anything like this asking price.

BB *The influence the Chord can bring to bear on digital audio files of all types really has to be heard to be properly appreciated*

Low frequencies are full-figured and robust, with fanatically straight edges described at the attack of bass sounds and decay handled with similar attention. There's heft and momentum apparent in equal measure, and the sort of rhythmic expression that can make even the most reticent recordings reveal their dancefloor credentials. The midrange is eloquent to an almost indecent degree, the Chord allowing singers of all competences and all characters to communicate unequivocally. And the top of the frequency range shines purposefully, never threatening to

become hard or abrasive no matter how loud you like to listen but with all the bite and crunch a particular recording might demand.

Soundstages are described explicitly, with just as much distance apparent in the 'front/back' plane as the 'left/right' - the Mojo 2 organises a layout to the point that every element of a recording has the space within which to express itself. Definition is such that the listener could conceivably sketch an accurate picture of a song's layout if so required.

Conclusion

Chord Mojo 2 Portable DAC/Headphone Amplifier Review

Should I buy one?

If you want to put a rocket up your mobile listening experience when using a smartphone and some wireless headphones, the all-wires-all-the-time Mojo 2 isn't for you. But if you've pockets big and strong enough to accommodate a music player, Mojo 2 and the cables required for connecting these things to some headphones, the sonic rewards might almost be enough to make up for the ruination of your tailoring.

BB... the Mojo 2 is without meaningful competition at anything like this asking price

If, on the other hand, you want to take your desktop audio experience to the next level (and the level after that, to be fair), you simply cannot do better than the Chord Electronics Mojo 2 - not on a pound-for-pound basis, anyhow. It's the most eloquent, engaging and open-sounding DAC/headphone amp you can buy for anything like this money.

What are my alternatives?

If you accept that the Chord Electronics Mojo 2 is best suited to working as a desktop DAC/headphone amp, then that makes the (bigger, more expensive) Cambridge Audio DACMagic 200M a viable alternative. It's better equipped, it's a sight easier to operate and it sounds great - perhaps not as detailed or as authoritative as the Mojo 2 - but great nonetheless.

You might also like:

HI-FI review



Cambridge Audio DacMagic 200M Review

by Ed Selley · May 21, 2021

The latest member of a long-standing dynasty of DAC's riffs on the formula with some new features and capabilities but does it warrant a space in your system?

 17

8

HI-FI review



Chord Mojo DAC & Headphone Amp Review

88

by Ed Selley · Oct 19, 2015

Chord Electronics says that their latest DAC stands comparison with products at any price and yet it's one of the most affordable they've ever made - can it really be true?

9



Scores

<i>Build quality</i>	10
<i>Connectivity</i>	10
<i>Ease of use</i>	4
<i>Features</i>	9
<i>Audio performance</i>	10
<i>Value for money</i>	9
<i>Verdict</i>	10

Chord Electronics Mojo 2



amazon.co.uk



£495

£395

View offer



£495

View offer

We check 1,000s of prices on 1,000s of retailers to get you the lowest new price we can find. AVForums may get a commission from these offers. Read more here.

10
OUT OF 10

 SCORE

Our Review Ethos

Read about our review ethos and the meaning of our review badges.

To comment on what you've read here, click the **Discussion** tab and post a reply.

Review [Specs](#) [Discussion \(51\)](#)

Share this page



Related Content

 [Astell & Kern AK HC3 Headphone Amplifier/USB DAC Review](#)
By Simon Lucas · Published Apr 10, 2023

 [Khadas Tea Portable DAC Review](#)
By Ed Selley · Published Dec 10, 2022

 [iFi Audio Go Bar Portable DAC Review](#)
By Ed Selley · Published Oct 2, 2022

 [iFi Audio ZEN Air Series Review](#)
By Ed Selley · Published Aug 24, 2022

 [iFi Audio ZEN One Signature DAC Review](#)
By Ed Selley · Published Jun 1, 2022

Latest Headlines

 [Wharfedale set to launch Elysian 3 loudspeaker](#)
By Ian Collen · Published Jun 29, 2023



Bowers & Wilkins launches 800 Series Signature speakers

By Ian Collen · Published Jun 28, 2023



Musical Fidelity set to launch its new M3x DAC

By Ian Collen · Published Jun 27, 2023



Wilson Audio launches the new and improved Sasha V loudspeaker

By Ian Collen · Published Jun 23, 2023



Klipsch launches new pair of Reference Series powered speakers

By Ian Collen · Published Jun 21, 2023

Current competitions



- Forums
- Sitemap

- Advertising Team
- Advertisers' User Accounts

ORGANISATION

- About
- Rules and Terms
- Privacy policy
- Change cookie consent
- Contact us

FORUM INFORMATION

- Home
- Help & FAQ
- Trading Rules
- Style: Light Mode

SOCIALISING



THE HUBS

- TVs
- Home Cinema
- Hi-Fi
- Movies & TV Shows
- Tech
- Gaming

Europe's busiest forums, with independent news and expert reviews, for TVs, Home Cinema, Hi-Fi, Movies, Gaming, Tech and more.

AVForums.com is owned and operated by M2N Limited,
company number 03997482, registered in England and Wales.

Powered by Xenforo, Hosted by Nimbus Hosting, Original design Critical Media
Ltd.

This website uses the TMDb API but is not endorsed or
certified by TMDb.

Copyright © 2000-2023 **M2N Limited** E. & O.E.