playerctl Media player remote

playerctl command → D-Bus → **MPRIS** session bus → selects → **Player** Spotify, VLC... → plays → **Audio** output

CONCEPTS

playerctl talks to any MPRIS media player over D-Bus (Spotify, VLC, mpv with a plugin, browsers), so one command controls them all.

Without -p, the command acts on the first player that supports it; playerctld (below) makes that the most recently active one.

Volume is a fraction from 0.0 to 1.0, not a percentage, and position is in seconds.

PLAYBACK

playerctl play
Start playing

playerctl pause
Pause playback

playerctl play-pause
Toggle play and pause

playerctl stop
Stop playback

playerctl next
Next track

playerctl previous
Previous track

PLAYBACK (cont.)

playerctl position 30+
Seek 30 seconds forward

playerctl position 90
Jump to 90 seconds

playerctl position
Print the position in seconds

playerctl open *<uri>*
Open a file or URL in the player

playerctl loop None|Track|Playlist
Set the loop mode

playerctl shuffle On|Off|Toggle
Set or toggle shuffle

VOLUME

playerctl volume
Print the volume (0.0 to 1.0)

playerctl volume 0.5
Set volume to 50%

playerctl volume 0.05+
Raise volume by 5%

playerctl volume 0.05-
Lower volume by 5%

Not every player accepts volume changes; use pactl for the system volume.

CHOOSING PLAYERS

playerctl -l
List running players

playerctl -p *<name>* *<cmd>*
Control a specific player

playerctl -p vlc,spotify *<cmd>*
Try players in order

playerctl -a *<cmd>*
Apply to all players

playerctl -i *<name>* *<cmd>*
Ignore a player

playerctl -p %any,*<name>* *<cmd>*
Use %any as a fallback slot

playerctl -s *<cmd>*
Suppress diagnostic messages

playerctld daemon
Start the activity-tracking daemon

METADATA

playerctl status
Playing, Paused or Stopped

playerctl metadata
Print all track metadata

playerctl metadata *<key>*
Print one value

METADATA (cont.)

playerctl metadata artist
Current artist

playerctl metadata mpris:artUrl
Album art URL

playerctl -a status
Status of every player

FORMAT AND FOLLOW

playerctl metadata -f "{{artist}} - {{title}}"
Custom output line

playerctl -F metadata -f "{{artist}} - {{title}}"
Print on every change

{{ playerName }}
{{ status }}
Player name and status variables

{{ position }}
{{ volume }}
Position (microseconds) and volume

{{ duration(mpris:length) }}
Format microseconds as mm:ss

{{ trunc(title, 30) }}
Cut text to 30 characters

FORMAT AND FOLLOW (cont.)

{{ default(artist, "unknown") }}
Fallback for a missing value

{{ markup_escape(title) }}
Escape markup for bars like polybar

Quote the format string so the shell leaves the braces alone.

RECIPES

Status bar line

```
playerctl -F metadata \
  -f '{{ emoji(status) }}
{{ artist }} - {{ title }}'
```

Pause everything, then play one

```
playerctl -a pause
playerctl -p spotify play
```

Keyboard media keys (i3 config)

```
bindsym XF86AudioPlay exec
playerctl play-pause
bindsym XF86AudioNext exec
playerctl next
bindsym XF86AudioPrev exec
playerctl previous
```

Notify the current track

```
notify-send "$(playerctl
metadata -f '{{artist}} -
{{title}}')"
```