

FAQ

Computer Based Systems:

Q. What cable interface should I use?

A. With a properly designed DAC, as described above, none of these cables have a bearing, because all that the DAC expects from them is a truthful transmission of bits. Since all of them can do that I don't expect any sonic differences. However, there are differences in length, cost, universal application. I personally use USB due to it's bandwidth and ability to transfer the highest resolution files available. Since the cable is not transferring an analog signal, the differences you may hear between cables will most likely only be due to shielding.

Q. What software should I use to playback from my computer? Will there be a difference sonically?

A. Again, all a properly designed DAC expects is a truthful shipment of bits. It is true that some applications try to do digital volume control, dither, truncation to 16 bits or even extension from 16 to 24 bits. The trick is to set up the PC so that no bits get lost or manipulated and that can be quite confusing and also quite easy. This is the reason why some applications sound better than others. But if these applications are all set up such that they all generate the same exact bits at their digital outputs they are all going to sound the same.

We recommend finding a software that is somewhat future proof. Something that recognizes DSD 2X files and plays them without conversion is mandatory. For MAC, currently we recommend PureMusic and for PC, we recommend JRiver Media Center.

Q. What file format is best?

A. We strongly feel DSD is the best. It is higher resolution than other formats and is incredibly efficient. It takes much less time to download a DSD vs. PCM file. Also, DSD files use less hard drive space.

For PCM, a properly designed DAC makes that all irrelevant as long as we don't lose any bits. If you have large hard drive capacity and do not care about space use no compression such as wav files.

Q. Is there any reason why a Pro DAC would be better than an Audiophile DAC?

A. Many Pro DACs actually sound worse. They need to have many more features to be functional in studios and they are often designed with much more limited budgets in mind. People do not want to pay for music anymore and since the studios are not making the money they used to, they cannot afford the better equipment. Also, as is always the case in audio, the “KISS Principle” is in effect, “less is more” and if you can spend a little more money on things that do matter even only by a small amount then you end up with a better product. Stay with audiophile products and pay the premium, they are generally better sounding.

Q. What makes one DAC a better choice for computer-based audio than another? Jitter reduction, chip sets, power supply, etc?

A. Noisy environments like PC's, USB etc. need a “2-dimensional” DAC. Standard “1-dimensional” DACs allow way too much clock jitter to get through which destroys the sonics.

Q. What do you see as being the most important factor in getting the best sound in computer-based audio?

A. An external “2-dimensional” DAC with proper power supply separation that eliminates “jitter”.

Q. What do you see as being the most important factor in NOT getting the best sound in computer-based audio? That is, what can have the greatest potential to adversely affect the sound in computer-based audio?

A. A DAC that does not address jitter at its root.

Q. Would I benefit from a computer dedicated for audio?

A. With a “2-dimensional” DAC you can use any PC and it will not make a difference.