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db The Sync Track

The Truth About Digital Audio

● Every year around this time, **db Magazine** likes to offer its readers a little something extra, beyond the restrictions of its usual format.

This year, our subject is digital technology. Our research staff has recently discovered that there is actually no such thing as digital audio. Rather, it is all part of a well-planned plot to raise the price tags of conventional analog audio hardware. We have found that once the term "digital" is stencilled on the face plate of any signal processing device, it is possible to raise the list price by at least one order of magnitude ($\pm 3\text{dB}$).

In the past, our ever-watchful staff has uncovered other misleading practices, such as the well-known cardioid microphone fallacy. Our research has demonstrated that the so-called cardioid polar pattern is actually kidney shaped. However, the term "cardioid" sounds more respectable, and therefore more expensive.

And so it goes. In order to eliminate any confusion over the current rash of digital expressions, we offer here a collection of the most-often-seen terms, together with their proper analog definitions. Once these terms are properly understood, it will be seen that there is

really nothing at all to digital electronics. And remember, you read it here first.

A/D Converter

A device used to convert an audio signal into a series of useless pulses.

D/A Converter

A device used to convert a series of useless pulses into an audio signal.

Flip-flop

A mild heart condition, brought on by failure of a digital delay line during a live concert.

Disc Memory

Trying to remember who took the test pressings home.

(continued)

HE RE HE'S IN A MECHANIC FOR HIS UNCLE HARRY BECAUSE HE LEARNED IT FROM HE UNCLE SAM.

Training Programs in the Guard and Reserve are helping many men and women do better in their civilian jobs. Thousands of people are learning new skills. Or sharpening ones they already have.

A lot of what Guard and Reservists learn has business applications. And that is one reason employers and supervisors should support the Guard and Reserve and urge their employees to join.

Those local Guard and Reserve units make up nearly 30% of our defense force at a cost of only a small fraction of the defense budget. Another good reason for lending your support to the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program. Most employers are behind us. Won't you join them? Contact Employer Support, Arlington, VA 22209 for details.



the sync track (cont.)

Fan-Out

A frequent problem with studio air conditioning systems.

Integrated Circuit

A circuit in which at least twenty per cent of the electrons are minority carriers.

Logic

A quality rarely found in digital electronics circuits.

Buffer

Someone who can explain digital electronics to an analog engineer.

Multiplexing

A digital logic circuit that confuses more than three people.

Parity Bit

Trying to con the producer into giving you equal billing with him on the album jacket.

Positive Logic

Your method of arguing with the producer.

Negative Logic

His method of ignoring you.

Ripple Counter

Keeping track of the empty wine bottles.

Random Access

A faulty record button.

Packing Density

Ability to crowd a string section into the isolation booth. Packing density decreases with fan-out.

Truth Table

Sitting around the chief engineer's office, trying to find out who erased the brass tracks.

Low Logic Level

A measure of the producer's ability to explain what he wants.

Sampling Rate

Measure of ability to check out the back up vocalists, after the session.

Bistable Multivibrator

Device used to sample kinky back up vocalists.

Floppy Disc

Leaving the test pressings next to the coffee machine.

Algorithm

A new disco step, introduced by an Algonquin Indian.

Data Block

Nervous condition, which prevents an engineer from understanding binary arithmetic.

Binary Arithmetic

Math for people who have trouble with the two-times table.

PCM

Pretty Confusing Machine. ■