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Subject: Windows XP warning

Posted by [Adveser](#) on Thu, 30 Dec 2010 17:24:06 GMT

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Hey guys. Even though sound cards and drivers are different, Direct Sound just isn't. When it comes to Windows XP, sound is ultimately processed through the Kernal Mixer and if using Direct Sound, applies certain quality filters.

This is bad I have discovered. Back in the olden days of 16-Bit, 48Khz max sound cards, these filters were very much necessary. Back in the Windows 98 days, the Headphones filter sounded incredible with my then setup, for instance and until recently I had assumed the "Stereo Desktop Speakers" filter to be expected and necessary.

If you don't know what I'm talking about:

Control Panel/Sounds and Audio Devices

Go to the Volume Tab and Click the advanced box.

A couple months ago I was running the Audio Test Bench by HigherFi.com and noticed several notch filters that I had not seem on an older computer, so I assumed it was built in and specific to the card.

For some reason, I decided to change the filter settings to see what would happen. After selecting "no speaker" (off) the 50Hz notch filter disappeared altogether.

These filters do a lot more. I had previously turned it off and realized how poorly some material sounded and changed it back. After a second attempt, I'm convinced. The bottom line is this: These filters may smooth over the sound so it all sounds more rounded off, but the albums that were recorded and mixed very well are going to sound far worse.

My advice is that if you listen to music on your computer, use the audio test bench to see what is being done specifically on your chip and software and change the filter settings to the most passive one you can find (which is always off)

The sound now is incredibly detailed in a hard to define way. It's like the sonic signature of the mixes in question are their own now. Before it was like everything sort of sounded the same. Now the timbre is far far far more accurate. Give it a shot. It'll take less time than reading this post did

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Subject: Re: Windows XP warning

Posted by [audioaudio90](#) on Mon, 03 Jan 2011 14:41:32 GMT

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That was interesting. I have 7, not XP, so the steps were a bit different but I disabled "SRS enhancements" and now everything sounds more present and less tinny than it had.

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Subject: Re: Windows XP warning

Posted by [Adveser](#) on Mon, 03 Jan 2011 16:04:02 GMT

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audioaudio90 wrote on Mon, 03 January 2011 08:41 That was interesting. I have 7, not XP, so the steps were a bit different but I disabled "SRS enhancements" and now everything sounds more present and less tinny than it had.

I haven't used Win7 since the release candidate beta was out, but If you can find the speaker settings, set them to "none" or "no speakers" if applicable. I never liked SRS myself.

I've noticed watching the oscilloscope from one of the DSPs that the sounds are much more lively. I think direct sound is adding compression to the signals too. Now, the volume compresses instead of getting louder at a high SPL, like it is supposed to.

I'm really shocked that for some reason these settings seemed to be ruining the signal chain when they were critical in the past.

The only side effect is that certain, but few, albums from the 80's sourced from second generation vinyl masters put on a CD sound a little "telephony." However that is the way they were meant to sound, so it is hardly a "problem"

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