Subject: New DAC
Posted by gofar99 on Sun, 09 Feb 2020 02:06:55 GMT
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Hi Everyone. There are DACs everywhere and at all prices. Some are #$@%& and some sweet. Price is no guarantee of quality. I finally needed one and picked up a SMSL M8A. They run about $200US. A tiny thing about half the size of a paper back book. Nearly idiot proof...I tried. USB, optical and coax inputs. Simple to set up once you realize that it needs a driver file for the PC (a bit tricky to find on the site). They are supposed to work with nearly anything(MAC, LINIX, Android etc), that I can't verify. The driver is on the web and installs and runs fine. The sound is quite nice, it has about 6 different filter types and 9 sonic signatures you can use (tubes, SS, others). I like the smooth roll off and maximum linear phase setting with no sonic mods. Looking at the graphs they provide it seems that any filter/roll off combo ought to be fine, but then I'm not running DSD512 or PCM at 768K. My biggest complaint is that the display shows what you set the device for, not necessarily what it found as a file to convert. The setting is software controlled and you need to go to the Windows device manager to change it. This is not documented in the guide. A good device, just the one quirk. I use the 24/192 setting, it seems fine will all my files that range from 16/44 to 24/192.

BTW I use an older SIIG CE-70011-S1 24-96/192 to do the A-D conversion of LPs. I feed it from a Sim Audio Moon phono preamp (very analytical,very quiet but not my usual preamp for listening). The WAVs played back via the SMSL are quite nice.

Subject: Re: New DAC
Posted by Madison on Thu, 20 Feb 2020 05:21:40 GMT
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I'm glad you found a good one and I appreciate your walking us through the process of getting it up and running. $200 is a good price.

I've tried two different DACs. One was budget-friendly and was such a disappointment that I saved a bit and bought a high-end model. Neither one was impressive to me. Maybe I gave up too early. I certainly didn't tweak a bunch of settings like you did, but I also don't remember having a problem getting things set up, so tweaking might not have helped. I sold them on Craigslist shortly afterwards. Of course, that was several years ago and gadgets are always changing so maybe things are better now. If I ever decide to throw money at one again I'll get the same model you have.

Subject: Re: New DAC
Posted by Leot55 on Thu, 20 Feb 2020 18:23:19 GMT
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I have the Dragonfly Red which I bought for about the same price and I'm happy with it. Their cobalt model is supposed to be even better, but I couldn't justify spending more for a nicer DAC at the time. I know how you feel though, Madison. I threw money at expensive headphones before

and was disappointed in their output. All the reviews were excellent, but I didn't think they were special at all.