

Glossary

1/4" Jack

A kind of jack connector with a diameter of approximately 1/4".

2.1 Sound

An audio format which uses the traditional left and right of stereo but adds a subwoofer. The subwoofer does not have its own discrete channel, but rather is fed the lower frequencies of the left and right signal via a crossover.

3.5mm Jack

Also known as mini-jack. A kind of jack connector with a diameter of approximately 3.5mm. Most commonly used by consumer headphones.

5.1 Surround Sound

A surround sound format which uses 6 speakers: left, centre, right, left surround, right surround and subwoofer.

7.1 Surround Sound

A surround sound format which uses 8 speakers: left, centre, right, left surround, right surround, left back surround, right back surround and subwoofer.

AB

A stereo microphone technique where two omnidirectional microphones are placed apart from each other, where their placement adheres to the 3:1 rule. This technique provides a very wide stereo image.

Ableton Live

A digital audio workstation which is very popular with electronic musicians due to its focus on real time interaction.

Acoustic Instrument

A musical instrument which creates sound without the need for electrical power, for example, an acoustic guitar, drum or piano.

ADAT Lightpipe

An optical digital data transfer connection, capable of transferring 8 channels of high quality audio at once.

Additive Synthesis

A synthesis method that builds waveforms by adding sine waves together.

ADR

An initialism of 'automatic dialogue replacement'.

ADSR

Attack, decay, sustain and release are the four stages of an envelope that describe the shape of a sound over time.

AFL

An initialism of 'after fade listen', used to solo a channel after the fader.

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After Touch

A force that is applied by a performer to the key on a controller after it has been initially pressed.

.aif

A file suffix (also known as .aiff) used for AIFF files.

AIFF

An acronym of 'audio interchange file format'. This file format is considered high quality as it is a lossless format. It has largely been superseded by Wav in the interest of compatibility.

AKG C1000

A rugged condenser microphone, often used in live situations to amplify drum kits.

AKG C414

A high quality large diaphragm condenser microphone with a switchable polar pattern, mainly used in studio situations for instruments such as acoustic guitars, pianos and vocals.

AKG C451 \ AKG C451B

A small condenser microphone with good balance between quality and price. Often used for stereo miking acoustic guitars or drum kits.

AKG D112

An industry standard dynamic microphone most commonly used for recording kick drums.

Algorithm

A code supplied to a computer for the purpose of solving a problem, such as how to create artificial reverb.

Aliasing

A digital audio term for 'ghost' frequencies' created when trying to record frequencies greater than one-half the system's sample rate.

All Notes Off

A message sent to a MIDI device to instruct it to cease generation of all MIDI notes.

Ambience

The sound that a room or space adds to the original sound source.

Ambient

The ambience features highly in the sound.

Amp/Amplifier

An electrical or electronic device which increases the amplitude of a signal.

Amplitude

The measurement of the change in atmospheric pressure caused by sound waves.

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Analogue

Constantly varying. Refers to audio devices which are not digital.

Analogue Synthesis

The method of sound synthesis which relies on standard waveforms to create new sounds. The amplitude, frequency and harmonic content of these waveforms can be manipulated to produce an infinite number of differing results.

App Store

An abbreviation of 'application store', an online cloud based service which provides access to new applications. Many software companies use an application store, such as Apple, Microsoft and Google.

Arpeggiator

A device which takes the notes of a chord and plays them sequentially.

Arrange Window

The main area of a DAW which enables the user to organise and edit audio clips.

Artist Manager

The person or company who looks after the interests of the artist. This might include negotiating their contracts, managing finances, organising transport and other logistics or managing their diary to ensure they are in the right place at the right time.

Attack

Attack represents the time the sound takes to rise from an initial value of zero to its maximum level. On a compressor or gate the attack control is used to define how much of the audio signal's transient is allowed to pass before the device reacts.

Attenuate

To make quieter.

Audio File

An audio recording in digital format, most commonly on a computer system.

Audio Interface

The computer peripheral which enables the user to input and output audio from a computer, converting the analogue sound into digital when recording, and the digital back into audio when played back.

Audio Track

A type of channel in a DAW which is used for recording or playing back audio files.

Automatic Dialogue Replacement

The process of replacing dialogue on a video. This is common when the location sound is unusable due to background noise, so the actors are called into the studio to rerecord just the audio for their lines. These will then be synchronised with the visual performance.

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Automation

The function which automates the variation of settings in a DAW or high level mixing desk.

Automation Track/Lane

A type of channel view in a DAW which shows the automation recorded to that channel. In most DAWs the automation is overlaid on top of the recorded audio or other channel content.

Aux

An abbreviation of 'auxiliary'.

Auxiliary

This refers to the function of a mixing desk which can send part of a signal in a channel to an additional destination. Often used for sending a varying amount of signal to a reverb or other effects.

Auxiliary Track

A type of channel in a DAW which is used purely for routing and processing audio.

Backup

A copy of the materials from a project, created to ensure that nothing is lost if the originals are damaged.

Balanced

A type of connection between two devices which uses a twin core and screen cable, using common mode rejection to reduce external interference. Commonly uses either XLR, 1/4" jack or bantam connectors.

Bandpass Filter

A type of filter which removes frequencies above and below a determined frequency.

Bandwidth

The range of audio frequencies which directly influence the fidelity of a sound.

Bass Guitar

A kind of guitar with a register that is one octave below a traditionally pitched guitar. In its most common 4-string format, the pitching mirrors the lowest four strings of a traditional guitar.

Bass Reflex Speaker

A speaker design which features a port on the front or back, tuned to a certain range of frequencies. This allows the signal from the rear of the speaker to resonate around the cabinet and leave the speaker through the port, reinforcing the tuned frequencies.

Binary

A mathematical term used in digital electronics. A binary number is a number expressed as either a 0 or 1, referring to 'off' and 'on', or in simple terms 'there is no electricity' or 'there is electricity'.

Bit

One binary digit.

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Bit Depth

The accuracy with which the amplitude of a signal can be measured when sampling. A higher bit depth achieves better quality.

Bluetooth

A wireless connection technology, mainly used for consumer peripherals such as connecting mice or keyboards to computers or connecting mobile telephones to handsfree devices.

Boost

To raise the level of an audio signal, or part of an audio signal in the case of equalisation.

Bounce

The creation of a new mix file from the audible elements of a session.

Broadband absorber

A type of acoustic treatment which absorbs a wide band of frequencies.

Budget

An amount of money invested to fund a project.

Buffer

An area of temporary storage in the computer systems RAM. Commonly used in DAWs to help the processor keep up with the required tasks, minimising playback errors. The buffer size can be changed, larger buffers enable more processing but cause a longer latency.

Bus

An internal connection in a mixing desk that carries the signal from one place to another. Also emulated in DAWs, sometimes referred to as 'sends'.

Buzz

An unwanted noise which has high harmonic content. It will sound higher pitched than a hum.

Cable

A wire which connects two devices, normally coated in rubber or plastic for durability.

.caf

A file suffix used for CAF files.

CAF

An acronym of 'core audio format'. This is a file format developed by Apple, to enable users to create large file sizes for example, long audio recordings.

Capacitor

An electronic component, containing two opposing conductive plates with a voltage potential difference across them. A capacitor is a core component in a condenser microphone.

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Cardioid

A microphone polar pattern. Cardioid pattern mics are most sensitive to sounds in front of the mic, rejecting sounds from the rear.

Cashflow

A way of tracking how much money is available over time. Cash Flow is different to a budget as it takes account of any money coming in as time passes.

CD

An abbreviation of 'compact disc'.

CD-ROM

An acronym of 'compact disc read only memory'. CDs can store both audio for playback on consumer CD players, or data for retrieval by computers using a CD-ROM drive.

Cello

A wooden stringed-instrument with four tuned strings. Commonly used in classical music as well as many other genres. It is larger than a viola, giving it a deeper sound and lower pitch.

Channel (MIDI)

One of 16 different paths of data that can be used to carry MIDI messages.

Channel (Mixing Desk)

A default signal path through a mixing desk. A mixing desk will have a set number of channels, each of which will be numbered.

Chord

A musical collection of notes played at the same time to form harmony.

Chord Progression

A sequence of chords.

Chorus

An effect which makes a single sound appear to sound like an ensemble. The signal is duplicated and delayed slightly, with a subtle variation of pitch. These time and pitch differences are controlled by a low frequency oscillator (LFO) to provide a subtle variation to the sound.

Chrome

An internet browser created and developed by Google.

Close Miking

A microphone technique where a microphone is placed close to an instrument, so as to minimise the spill from other instruments or the effects of the room reverberation.

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Cloud Storage

An area of file storage based on a remote server, which can only be accessed via an internet connection. This makes it possible to share or work on files from any location with an internet connection, greatly aiding collaboration.

Coincident Pair

A type of XY stereo microphone technique where the capsules are as close together as possible.

Collaboration

A method of working which involves working with others with the shared goal of achieving something greater than what may have been achieved in isolation.

Comp

An abbreviation of 'compositing'.

Compact Disc

An optical digital audio medium used for sharing music. Compact disc was the largest selling music medium from the late 80's to early 2000s and remains widely used. A CD can hold 74 minutes of stereo audio or up to 700MB of data.

Composite

To take the best parts of multiple takes of a performance and edit them together to create a perfect version.

Compression Blending

A compression technique which splits a signal in two, with a different compressor used on each version. The two compressed channels are then mixed together.

Compression Pumping

An effect achieved by using a compressor's sidechain input to trigger high ratio dramatic compression on the rest of a track, using a kick drum or other fast transient audio signal. The effect of this pumping can be adjusted with the compressor's attack and release controls.

Compressor

An audio device which reduces the dynamic range of a signal.

Computer

The hardware which hosts the DAW software, typically an Apple Macintosh or Windows PC.

Computer Keyboard

A computer peripheral used for entering letters into a computer. It can also be used with certain software applications to trigger shortcut functions.

Condenser

A microphone design which uses a capacitor and requires 48v phantom power. Achieves a crisp and clear sound.

Console

Also known as mixing desk or mixing console.

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Constructive Interference

When two or more waveforms are combined, a new waveform is produced which is a sum of the originals.

Continuity Meter

A diagnostic device which checks whether a connection is working.

Continuous Controller

A type of MIDI message that is generated by the movement of a variable controller such as the pitch bend or modulation wheel.

Contrabass

A wooden stringed-instrument with four tuned strings. Commonly used in classical music as well as many other genres. It is larger than a cello, giving it a deeper sound and lower pitch. It is commonly

transposed up an octave due to the notes it is capable of, requiring excessive ledger lines making it difficult to read.

Contract

An optional written agreement between two parties which outlines their commitments to each other in relation to a project.

Control Room

The part of a recording studio where the sound engineer will operate the equipment, such as the mixing desk.

Controller Keyboard

An emulation of the piano which is unable to generate sounds on its own. It will generally be MIDI enabled, so will use the MIDI protocol to trigger sounds on a synthesiser.

Copy

A computer software function, common to most software which takes a selected proportion and copies it to the clipboard (RAM).

Copyright

A legal term for the right to copy intellectual property. To copy IP without approval from the copyright owner would be breaking the law (depending on the country or territory).

CPU

An abbreviation of 'central processing unit'. A silicon chip that performs calculations and acts as the 'brain' of a computer.

Crossover

An electronic device which divides up the frequency spectrum so that the different frequency ranges can be sent to different speakers, for example, a tweeter for high frequencies and woofer for lower frequencies.

Cubase

A digital audio workstation (DAW) created and developed by Steinberg.

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Cut

Another name used for mute, used to silence signal paths on a mixing desk, e.g. channel or auxiliaries. Also used to refer to a reduction in level when using equalisation.

Cut

A computer software function, common to most software which takes a selected proportion and copies it to the clipboard (RAM) while simultaneously deleting it from its original location.

D-Sub

A kind of connector used in computing and audio applications, which has multiple pins. There are numerous sizes, the most common of which in audio technology would be the DB-25, which has twenty five pins capable of carrying 8 channels of balanced analogue audio (either 8 in one direction or 4 in and 4 out). It may also be used in digital audio applications using the TDIF standard.

DAT

An abbreviation of 'digital audio tape'.

DAW

An abbreviation of 'digital audio workstation'.

De-esser

A device which is used to balance out the sibilance in a performance. It combines a compressor and EQ in one device. The EQ is used to boost the sibilant frequencies of the input (normally a vocal) which causes the compressor to compress these frequencies more than the others.

Deadline

The agreed time by which a project must be delivered.

Decay

In synthesis, decay is the time taken for the signal to fall to the sustain level.

Delay

An echo effect.

Delete

A computer software function, common to most software which removes a selected portion.

Destructive Editing

The editing of an original file or recording which cannot be undone.

DI Box

An abbreviation of direct injection Box. This box is used to connect devices of difference impedance, for example, connecting balanced and unbalanced devices.

Diffuser

A type of acoustic treatment which prevents standing waves by scattering the sound reflections through the room.

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Digital

A digital device uses binary to function.

Digital Audio

Audio recorded to a digital device such as a computer.

Digital Audio Tape

A linear medium which uses tape to record sound as digital data. Introduced in 1987, it was once the industry standard for recording final mixes before sending to be duplicated.

Digital Audio Workstation

Music production software for recording and editing MIDI and audio data. Examples include Cubase, Logic, Pro Tools, Garageband and Ableton Live. The DAW can be used for recording audio, editing audio, cutting up and rearranging audio recordings and loops, mixing, creating MP3 files and many other functions.

Digital Signal Processing

The action of a computer processor altering an audio signal. DSP can be native (using the computer's CPU) or using a dedicated DSP hardware for example, in high end Pro Tools systems or UAD peripherals.

Digital Synthesis

Artificial sound synthesis, generated using a digital system.

DIN

A five pin plug or socket, most commonly used by MIDI devices but can also carry audio when connected to audio devices.

Direct Monitoring

A way of overcoming latency, which bypasses any computer processing and feeds the input directly to the output. This is quite often available on audio interfaces and some DAWs offer a similar function.

Distortion

When the maximum sound level of an analogue device is exceeded. Unlike digital clipping, analogue distortion can be appealing for example, when overloading a guitar amplifier.

DJ

A performer who plays back pre-recorded material, crossfading between tracks. A modern DJ may also create content of his own for playback and interact with the music.

Drum Editor

A piano roll style DAW editor but tuned to enable easier drum editing.

Drum Kit

A rhythmic instrument commonly used in modern music, featuring a combination of drums and cymbals.

Drum Machine

A hardware device or software instrument used to create drum patterns.

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Dry

With no effects added to the signal.

DSP

An initialism of 'digital signal processing'.

Duck

When the duck function is active, the signal arriving at the key input causes the signal at the input to lower in level.

Duplicate

A computer software function, common to most software which takes a selected portion and replicates it immediately after the original instance.

DVD

An initialism of 'digital versatile disc'. An optical format much like a CD, but with far greater storage capacity. This made it the standard for consumer video playback.

DVD-ROM

DVDs can be used to store video content for playback on consumer DVD players, or data which can be retrieved by computer systems using a DVD-ROM drive. This is a cost effective medium for sharing large session files with others, if a network transfer isn't practical.

Dynamic

A microphone design which uses electro-magnetism to convert acoustic energy into electrical energy.

Dynamic Range

The difference in decibels between the quietest and the loudest points in a signal, or the noise floor and the maximum level an audio system can handle.

Dynamics

The variation in perceived level of a mix.

Ear

The part of the human body which enables us to hear sound. It converts acoustic energy into electrical nerve impulses for the brain to interpret as audio.

Echo

When a sound bounces off a surface and returns to the listener later than the original sound. Emulated in audio production using a delay effect.

Editing

The process of altering the arrangement of recorded audio or MIDI data in order to composite a more favourable version.

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Effects

Hardware devices or plugins which are used to enhance or alter the sound such as reverb, delays, chorus, flange, phasing and many others.

Electric Guitar

A guitar which uses an electromagnetic pickup to convert the vibrations in the strings to waves of electricity, which is then amplified to create sound.

Electrical Sound Source

A source of sound which is created through electrical means, for example, a synthesiser.

Electronic Drum Kit

A set of MIDI triggers which are arranged like a real drumkit, allowing a drummer to perform quietly using artificial synthesised sounds.

Electronic Drums

A synthesised drum kit, which can be played using specialist triggers such as an electronic drum kit or pads.

Electrostatic

Another name given to a condenser or capacitor microphone.

Emulation

The effect of recreating something analogue in the digital domain, for example, a software instrument piano is an emulation of a real piano.

Envelope

Changes in sound over time: attack, decay, sustain and release.

Envelope Generator

A device which generates an attack, decay, sustain and release signal for processing in synthesis.

EQ

An abbreviation of 'equaliser', a function which alters the tone of the input signal.

Equalisation

The process of changing the frequency content, tone or timbre of an audio signal.

Error Correction

A process undertaken by a digital audio system to replace missing data from a waveform.

Ethernet

The name given to the networking standards of LAN devices. It most commonly uses an RJ45 cable.

Event Editor

A DAW editor window which enables the editing of individual MIDI events using text.

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Glossary**Expander**

An audio device which works much like the opposite of a compressor in that it increases the dynamic range of a signal, so that the quiet signals are made even quieter. It can be used instead of a gate to achieve a more natural effect.

Expenditure

Money that is spent on a project.

Fade In

To gradually increase an audio signal from nothing to its normal level.

Fade Out

To gradually reduce the level of a signal until it disappears.

Fader

The component on a mixing desk which adjusts the channel level. Faders are also emulated in DAWs.

Fault

A problem with a device or connection.

Fidelity

The degree of exactness of reproduction. A high fidelity recording is very close to the original sound in the room.

Filter

A type of equaliser that removes certain frequencies, depending on the type of filter.

Finder

The area of the Apple OSX operating system which enables users to organise files and folders.

Firefox

An internet browser created and developed by Mozilla.

Firewire

A peripheral connection with two different versions available; Firewire 400 and 800. The number represents the speed in Mbps. It may also be referred to as IEEE 1394.

FL Studio

A digital audio workstation, originally called 'Fruity Loops' but renamed as it grew more popular. Created and developed by Image-Line.

FLAC

An acronym of 'free lossless audio coding'. A lossless audio format which features a smaller file size than Wav, but without losing quality like MP3.

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Flange

A modulation effect which uses a delayed version of the signal mixed in with the original, with the time difference altered over time by a low frequency oscillator.

Foley

Sounds which are added to enhance the realism of the visuals, for example, footsteps, clothes rustling, clock ticking.

Frequency

The rate at which something vibrates, measured in cycles per second (Hertz/Hz). In sound, the higher the frequency of a sound wave then the higher the pitch that we hear.

Fundamental Frequency

The core frequency within a sound which determines its musical pitch.

Gain

A function of an amplifier circuit, which makes the signal louder. Among other places you will find it at the input stage of a mixing desk channel to control how much signal is entering the console.

Garageband

An entry level digital audio workstation, created and developed by Apple. Currently supplied free with every new Apple Macintosh computer.

Gate

An audio device which helps to remove unwanted signals below a certain threshold, for example, to remove the sound of the cymbals from a snare microphone.

Gigabit Ethernet

A standard of ethernet which is capable of speeds of up to 1 gigabit per second.

Graphic Equaliser

A type of equaliser which divides the frequency spectrum into bands, typically by octaves or 1/3rd of an octave.

Groove Templates

Quantisation templates which are not rigid to the beat, but have a rhythmic feel to them such as swing.

Ground Loop

A hum caused by having two or more pieces of equipment connect with a clear path from the earth of one to the earth of another. Commonly cured by removing the earth connection in one of the mains plugs, although this can be highly dangerous and is not recommended! There are other ways of curing ground loops which vary depending on the system in question.

Guitar Pickup

The component of a guitar which converts the vibration of the string into electrical energy using an electromagnetic field.

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Haas effect

A psychoacoustic effect identified by Helmut Haas, which describes how we can identify the location that a sound is coming from. This can be demonstrated by splitting a mono signal across two channels panned left and right, then delaying one signal. The sound will seem to be coming from the side which has not been delayed. This can be used to create a false stereo effect, although it can cause problems with mono compatibility.

Half Normalled (Patch Bay)

When a patch bay is half normalled, the top socket and bottom socket of the row are connected together unless a cable is inserted into the bottom socket.

Hard Disk

Also referred to as 'hard drive' or 'hard disk drive'. This is the local storage in a computer system, where files are saved to be retained after the computer has been switched off.

Hard Drive

Also referred to as 'hard disk' or 'hard disk drive'. This is the local storage in a computer system, where files are saved to be retained after the computer has been switched off.

HDD

An initialism of 'hard disk drive'.

Headphone

A portable pair of speakers which can be worn on the head.

Headphone Volume

The function on a device which alters the volume specific to the headphones. This control would be independent of the volume sent to the main monitor speakers in a studio.

Headroom

The difference between the signal level and the maximum output that a system can handle before distorting.

Hertz

The unit of frequency, cycles per second, abbreviated 'Hz'.

High Fidelity

High quality audio.

High Pass Filter

A filter which allows all frequencies above a set threshold to pass but removes everything below that frequency.

High Pass Filter

A type of equalisation which allows the engineer to remove all frequencies below a defined frequency, allowing the higher frequencies to pass.

High Shelf

A type of equalisation which allows the engineer to boost or cut all frequencies above a set frequency.

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HPF

An initialism of 'high pass filter'.

Hum

A generally unwanted low frequency sine wave, commonly produced by electrical interference.

Hz

An abbreviation of 'hertz'.

Infinite Baffle Speaker

A speaker design which is mounted in a surface with a large space behind it.

Insert Point

The point in a signal chain where a device can be inserted. On some mixing desks there is a dedicated insert point before or after the EQ, which enables the signal to be sent to an external device such as a compressor. The insert concept is emulated in a DAW as a plugin slot.

Internet

The global system of connected computers which use a standard communication protocol.

Internet Explorer

An internet browser created and developed by Microsoft.

Isolation (Acoustics)

Limiting the amount of sound which can pass from one space to another, for example, sound isolation would be recommended to prevent road noise from outside entering a recording studio so that the noise isn't recorded.

iTunes

An application created and developed by Apple for purchasing, organising and listening to music files. It can also be used for managing the content on Apple's smart devices such as iPhones, iPods and iPads, and stream content to Apple TVs.

iTunes Store

Apple's online music and multimedia purchasing/rental service. Music, film and TV shows can be purchased/rented and downloaded immediately. The user will be required to set up an Apple ID.

Jack Connector

A male connector commonly used in patch bays, line level equipment and guitar connections.

Jitter

Inaccuracies in the PCM process caused by a poor time clock in the digital system.

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Key Input

An input on a gate or expander. The gate or expander uses the key input as its trigger, making it possible to have the gate react to something other than the signal that is being processed. For example, you could have a synth pad playing through the gate with a hi-hat fed into the key input, meaning that the synth would only be heard when the hi-hat is played.

Keyboard

An electronic version of a piano, regarded as an artificial sound source as it requires a synthesiser to make sound.

Keyboard Split

A keyboard or sampler function which enables the user to trigger different sounds on the left and right halves of the keyboard. The split point can be changed.

Knee

A function of a compressor which determines how severely the dynamics of a signal are affected when they exceed the threshold.

LAN

An acronym of 'local area network'.

Latch Mode (Automation)

An automation mode which allows existing automation to be altered during playback. When alterations are complete the final altered value is retained.

Latency

The delay in an audio system caused by computer processing. This can be problematic in studios, particularly when recording.

Launchpad

A part of the Apple OSX operating system which provides a shortcut to all the installed applications.

Layering

Recording additional parts over the top of existing parts, so that they sound like one part when they are mixed together. For example, a string section playing the same melody as a piano.

LCD

An initialism of 'liquid crystal display'. Most commonly found as small screens.

Level

The absolute volume of an audio signal in electrical terms.

LFE

An initialism of 'low frequency effects', which refers to the subwoofer used in surround systems.

LFO

An initialism of 'low frequency oscillator'.

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License

A license is the approval to use music in accordance with copyright law.

Limitter

A type of compressor which reduces the dynamic range drastically, using a very high ratio above the set threshold.

Line Input

Used for connecting line level devices, such as synthesisers or outboard equipment.

Line Level

The nominal reference level of an audio system, which could be -10dBv or +4dBu.

Linear Editing

The historical editing process which involved cutting tape in order to make edits. This was very limiting, and has since been superseded by non-linear editing.

Live Room

The part of a recording studio where the performance takes place and microphones are used to record.

Lo-Fi

An abbreviation of 'low fidelity'. Sometimes used for creative effect.

Local Area Network

A network of computer systems connected by ethernet in a contained location, for example, within a studio complex or home.

Local On/Off

A mode on a keyboard which connects or disconnects the controller element from any synthesiser element.

Logic Pro

A digital audio workstation, originally created by a company called C-Lab, and now owned and developed by Apple.

.logicx

The file suffix for a Logic Pro X session file.

Loop

A repeating pattern of MIDI data or segment of audio.

Loop Recording

The function that some DAWs offer to record a defined section over and over again, with each version being retained for editing later. Each DAW has its own name for this functionality.

Lossless

A type of file format which maintains the original quality of the audio recording, for example, Wav, AIFF, FLAC.

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Lossy

A type of file format which by making the file size smaller, it also has a negative impact on the quality of the audio itself. For example, MP3, AAC.

Low Fidelity

Low quality audio. Sometimes used for creative effect.

Low Frequency Oscillator

A device used in synthesis to alter the audio signal at a relatively slow pace when compared to a signal generating oscillator.

Low Pass Filter

A type of equalisation which allows the engineer to remove all frequencies above a defined frequency, allowing the lower frequencies to pass.

Low Shelf

A type of equalisation which allows the engineer to boost or cut all frequencies below a set frequency.

LPF

An initialism of 'low pass filter'.

Machine Room

The part of a recording studio where any noisy equipment is stored. This will generally only be found in commercial studios, with large mixing consoles which require noisy power supplies.

MADI

An acronym of 'multichannel audio digital interface'. A high quality digital audio transfer protocol, which is capable of carrying up to 64 channels of audio and at samples rates of up to 96kHz. You are unlikely to find this level of technology in a home studio, but far more likely in a professional studio or in high end location recording.

Marker

A way of labeling time or arrangement locations in a DAW project, for example, verse 1, chorus, middle 8 etc.

Master

The final output. This could refer to the main output of a mixing desk/DAW, or the final version of the mix which is to be shared with the listener.

Mastering

The final process of the production process which provides final tweaks to prepare the audio for distribution to the consumer.

Memory Stick

A term used to describe a USB flash based storage device. The term memory stick was initially used by Sony, but has since become a term used for all such devices.

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Metronome

A device which emits a regular click in time with the tempo and time signature.

Mic Level

An abbreviation of microphone level. Due to their design microphones output only a small amount of current, which requires the input circuitry to be very sensitive.

Microphone

A transducer, which converts acoustic sound into electrical signal.

Mid-Side

A stereo microphone technique where a figure of 8 microphone is placed at 90 degrees to a cardioid. The figure of 8 microphone is used to collect left and right, while the cardioid is focused on the subject. The figure of 8 microphone's signal is split, panned left and right, with one side phase inverted. As the left and right will then be canceled out when summed to mono, this makes the technique very good for mono compatibility without requiring remixing.

MIDI

An acronym of 'musical instrument digital interface'. The protocol used to transmit and receive musical information between MIDI devices. This could be used for many purposes, including triggering notes on a synthesiser and adjusting settings on an effects processor.

MIDI Clock

A MIDI message which acts like a metronome for MIDI data. The 'tempo' of the MIDI clock is fixed at the frame rate of the recording session, and bears no relation to the tempo of the music.

MIDI In

The MIDI input connector of a device.

MIDI Interface

A device which enables MIDI devices to be connected to a computer. Some MIDI devices now use USB to avoid the need for a MIDI interface.

MIDI Keyboard

A piano like electronic device for triggering a MIDI synthesiser, or recording into a DAW.

MIDI Merge

A device which combines the MIDI output of two devices into one input of another.

MIDI Message

An instruction sent between MIDI devices for control purposes.

MIDI Out

The MIDI output connector of a device.

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MIDI Pickup

A guitar pickup which can convert the vibration of the strings into MIDI note data, making it possible to play synthesized sounds with a guitar.

MIDI Port

A female MIDI connector on a MIDI device which enables connection to other MIDI devices using a MIDI cable. Ports include 'in', 'out' and 'thru'.

MIDI Thru

A MIDI connector which enables MIDI devices to be chained together. All data that arrives at the MIDI input of the device is replicated at the MIDI thru port for passing on to the next device.

MIDI Time Code

Used for synchronising MIDI capable devices together.

MIDI Track

A type of channel in a DAW which is used for recording and playing back MIDI data. It creates no sound in itself and requires its output to be routed to a MIDI synthesiser or software instrument on a different channel.

Mini Jack

Also known as 3.5mm jack. A kind of jack connector with a diameter of approximately 3.5mm. Most commonly used by consumer headphones.

Minidisc

An evolution of the CD, which housed the optical disc inside a plastic case making it smaller and more durable.

Mix

The version of a recording which features all the required recorded elements balanced together coherently.

Mix Window

An area of a DAW which enables the user to balance the levels of the recorded sounds.

Mixer

The device in a recording studio which acts as the central hub, altering the audio signal or directing it to different locations. Also referred to as mixing desk or mixing console.

Mixing

The process of balancing the relative level of the recorded audio tracks. The ideal result being a coherent and well- balanced sound.

Mixing Desk

The device in a recording studio which acts as the central hub, altering the audio signal or directing it to different locations.

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Glossary

Modulation Wheel

A controller found on musical keyboards which enables the musician to control many elements of the sound of the performance. Modulation is a controller in itself, but the modulation wheel can be assigned to any other controller such as filter cutoff.

Monaural

A single channel of audio.

Monitor Display

The visual interface of a computer system.

Monitor Speaker

The main set of speakers that the sound engineer will use to listen to their mix in the studio.

Mono

An abbreviation of 'monaural'.

Monophonic

A limitation of some synthesisers that can only play one note at a time.

Mouse

A common computer peripheral used to control the pointer on screen.

MP3

An abbreviation of 'mpeg-2 audio layer 3'. A lossy compressed audio format, which has a smaller file size than a WAV file. Their combination of small file size and acceptable audio quality have made them very popular with consumers.

MS

An initialism of 'mid-side'.

MTC

An initialism of 'MIDI time code'.

Multitimbral

A multi timbral synthesiser is capable of playing more than one type of sound at a time.

Multitrack

The system of recording invented by Guitar pioneer Les Paul, where recordings can be layered over each other, regardless of when they are recorded. For example, a guitar recorded first, then the vocal added over the top at a later time or date.

Mute

The function which silences a device or channel.

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My Computer

The area of the Microsoft Windows operating system which enables users to organise files and folders.

Natural Sound Source

A source of sound which is created through natural means, for example, the vibration of a string or drum skin.

Near Coincident Pair

A type of XY stereo microphone technique where the capsules are within 30cm of each other but not immediately next to each other.

Neumann U87

A very high quality large diaphragm condenser microphone with a switchable polar pattern, it is considered to be an industry standard in commercial studios, used for vocals, acoustic guitars, pianos and other acoustic instruments.

New York Compression

Another name for 'parallel compression'.

Noise

Unwanted sound, such as hiss, hum or buzz.

Non-Destructive Editing

The type of editing employed by modern DAW software, where the original file is not affected by changes made to it in the software.

Non-Linear Editing

A non destructive form of editing, as used in modern DAW software.

Normalisation

A software function which increases the level of an audio file so that its loudest part is as loud as the system can handle, normally 0dBfs.

Normalled (Patch Bay)

When a patch bay is normalled, the top socket and bottom socket of the row are connected together unless a cable is inserted into either the top or bottom socket.

Note On

A MIDI message which triggers a note to sound.

Nyquist Frequency

The highest frequency that a digital audio system can capture accurately.

Octave

12 semitones. One octave up is double the frequency of the starting pitch.

Glossary

Offline

Any computer action which takes place through local processing.

OMF

An initialism of 'open media framework'.

Open Media Framework

A format for saving session files which is compatible with all major DAWs. It is quite limited as only the basic arrangement is saved, however, it can be a valuable tool for collaboration with other producers.

Operating System

The software installed on a computer which controls its most basic functions, such as how it communicates with peripherals and interacts with other installed software applications. The operating system is the graphic user interface that the user interacts with.

Oscillator

An electronic device which generates a constant waveform. Used to generate sound waves in synthesis.

OSX

An operating system created and developed by Apple which comes preinstalled on all new Apple Macintosh computers.

Outboard Device

Any piece of equipment which is not part of the mixing desk or computer system.

Pan

An abbreviation of 'panorama'. Commonly referring to the pan pot, a control on a mixing desk or DAW channel which moves the signal from left to right in the stereo image.

Parallel

A set of sockets on a patch bay, which enable the engineer to duplicate the signal. Also referred to as a 'mult'.

Parallel Compression

A compression technique which splits a signal in two, with heavy compression applied to one and no compression applied to the other. The two signals are then mixed together. Also known as 'New York compression'.

Parameters

Programmable elements of device or system.

Parametric EQ

An accurate form of equalisation, where the gain, frequency and Q factor can all be changed.

Paste

A computer software function, common to most software which inserts the contents of the clipboard at a chosen location.

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Glossary

Patch

Settings that have been saved for future recall in hardware devices such as synthesisers or effects units.

Patch Cable

A short cable which is used to make connections on a patch bay. Some guitarists also use patch cables to connect their pedals together due to their conveniently short length.

Patch Bay

A series of rackmount sockets, which represent every connection in the studio. This makes it possible to connect two devices together without running cables across the room and overcoming inaccessible rear connections.

PCM

An initialism of 'pulse code modulation'.

Period

One cycle of an oscillation, for example, a sound wave.

Peripheral

An external device that can be connected to a computer system to enhance its capabilities, e.g. audio interface, MIDI interface, keyboard, monitor, mouse.

Personnel

The people involved in a project or task.

PFL

An initialism of 'pre fade listen'. This enables signal to be sent from a channel independently of the fader level. A common use is for headphone mixes.

Phantom Power

The 48v power supply required by condenser microphones.

Phase

A time point in a cycle.

Phase Cancellation

An electrical version of constructive interference, where two waves are combined to create a new waveform. If one wave is positive, when the other is equally negative, the result would be complete cancellation.

Phasing

A delay based modulation effect.

Phono Connector

Also known as RCA connector.

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Glossary

Piano

A stringed instrument which uses keys to trigger hammers that strike the strings.

Piano Roll Editor

A DAW editor window which enables the manipulation of MIDI note data, which is arranged in a matrix with the piano keys from top to bottom and time from left to right.

Pitch

A fixed note, determined by its fundamental frequency.

Pitch Bend

A MIDI controller found on most keyboards, which enables the musician to change the pitch of the sound during the performance, bending the note.

Pitch Correction

The process of correcting the pitching of a performance. DAWs offer this basic functionality, however, bespoke plugin solutions are offered such as Melodyne and Autotune.

Plugin

An optional piece of software, which operates within a DAW. Many plugins are supplied with a DAW, however further plugins can be purchased from 3rd party manufacturers. There are several formats of plugin, including Audiounit, AAX, VST and RTAS.

Polarity

Having a positive or negative value. In audio, reversing the polarity will switch a waveform so that everything that was positive is negative and vice versa. This is the function of a phase switch on a mixing desk.

Polyphonic

An ability to reproduce multiple notes at once, unlike monophonic.

Post-fader

Anything that occurs after the fader in channel signal flow.

Pot

An abbreviation of 'potentiometer'.

Potentiometer

A variable resistor, which exists on mixing consoles in the form of knobs such as gain, EQ and pan.

Pre-fader

Anything which occurs before the fader in channel signal flow.

Preamp

An amplifier which brings the input signal up to an acceptable operating level, for example, the gain stage of a mixing desk is a microphone preamplifier.

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Glossary**Precedence effect**

Another name for the Haas effect.

Preset

The memory settings which come pre-installed on a device such as a synthesiser, effects unit, software instrument or plugin.

Pro Tools

A digital audio workstation, originally created by a company called Digidesign, but now owned and developed by Avid.

Producer

The person who leads a music recording project, quite often making creative decisions and managing budgets where applicable. It is the producer's responsibility to ensure a project runs to time.

Profit

Income minus expenditure.

Programme Change Message

A MIDI message which instructs a device to switch between stored programmes.

Promoter

The person or company who is responsible for ensuring live performances are advertised to the public and other organisations such as the press.

Proximity Effect

A side effect of directional microphones, which results in greater low mid and bass frequencies when the source is close to the microphone.

.ptx

The file suffix of a Pro Tools session file.

Publisher

The publisher controls the copyright of the musical work, i.e. the creative element of music. When an artist has a publishing contract, the publisher will ensure the writer is paid for the use of their music in return for a fee or percentage of income.

Pulse Code Modulation

The method by which analogue to digital conversion takes place, where measurements of the amplitude of a waveform (bit depth) are measured at regular intervals (sample rate).

Punch In/Out

The function of a recording device to enable and disable recording during playback, enabling small sections to be recorded over.

Glossary

Q

An abbreviation of 'quality'. A function of parametric EQ which adjusts the accuracy of the frequency band which is being affected, a high Q is more accurate, a low Q affects a wider frequency band.

Quadraphonic Sound

Also referred to as 4.0 surround. An early surround sound format which uses four speakers located in the corners of the room.

Quantisation

An automatic MIDI editing process which shifts the start of notes onto the selected beat, e.g. the closest 1/4 note, 8th note.

RAM

An acronym of 'random access memory', short term storage in a computer system which is cleared on restart.

Ratio

The control on a compressor or expander which controls how much compression or expansion is applied.

RCA Connector

Also referred to as a phono connector. An unbalanced connection, most commonly used in consumer hi-fi equipment.

Re-amp

To take a pre-recorded clean guitar signal and connect it to a guitar amplifier for recording with a microphone. The advantage being that the settings for the amplifier and any other effects can be adjusted after the performance and multiple versions layered together from one recording.

Read Mode (Automation)

An automation mode which purely reads the existing automation data without allowing any changes to be recorded.

Real Time

Processing that is applied in the same amount of time as it takes to play back the affected audio.

Record Decks

A playback device for the vinyl format. Used by DJs, normally in pairs with a DJ mixer to crossfade between playback from each.

Record Label

A company which coordinates the production, manufacture, distribution, marketing, promotion, and enforcement of copyright for sound recordings and music videos.

Recording

The process of capturing real-world audio and storing it on a physical medium.

Recording Studio

A room or complex of rooms which is used to record sound.

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Glossary

Release (Dynamic Processing)

The time it takes for the dynamic processor to recover to normal.

Release (Synthesis)

Release is the time it takes for the signal to fade from the sustain level to its final level.

Return

An input of a mixing desk which is used specifically for receiving signal that has already been sent out of the console for some processing, e.g. an insert return or effects return.

Reverb

An abbreviation of 'reverberation'.

Reverberation

The sound that bounces around the surfaces in a room, which is emulated using an outboard effect or plugin to give the impression that the sound is in a real room.

RF

An initialism of 'radio frequency'.

RMS

An initialism of 'root mean square'. A means of calculating the loudness of audio.

ROM

An acronym of 'read only memory'. An area of computer storage which can only be read from, and can not be overwritten.

Room Mode

Where the dimensions of the room align with the wavelength of an audio frequency, causing a resonance at that frequency. This can cause that frequency to become emphasised or canceled in different places within the room.

Routing

A function commonly found on mixing desks, which enables the user to set the signal path. For example, you could route a microphone signal to the input of the DAW.

Sample Editor

An area of a DAW which enables the user to edit an audio clip in detail.

Sample Rate

The rate at which measurements are taken, measured in kHz.

Sampler

A hardware or software device which can record and manipulate short audio clips, and trigger them using MIDI note messages. Samplers are also emulated in software instrument plugins.

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Glossary

Sampling

The process of converting acoustic audio into digital audio by measuring the waveform amplitude at set time intervals.

Save

To retain any work in progress. In a DAW this would be the generation of a 'session' file.

Score Editor

A DAW editor window which enables the user to input or edit musical notation.

Semi-Parametric EQ

A simplified version of a parametric EQ, where there is no Q control, just gain and frequency.

Send

A connection on a mixing desk which is used as an output, to send signal to an external location for further processing, e.g. insert send or effects send.

Sennheiser MD421

A high quality dynamic microphone, often used for recording guitar amplifiers and toms.

Sequencer

A legacy name for a digital audio workstation, referring to the sequencing of audio or MIDI regions in the arrange page.

Session File

A DAW saved file, which will often also require additional assets such as audio files.

Shelving

A kind of equaliser which affects all frequencies above (hi-shelf) or below (lo-shelf) a specified frequency.

Shortcut Function

Software applications use combinations of key presses on a computer keyboard to trigger certain actions. Some are standardised, for example, Command-S on a Macintosh is the shortcut to save in all applications, the equivalent being Control-S on a Windows PC.

Shure SM57

A rugged dynamic microphone, similar to the SM58 but without the mesh protection. Commonly used for recording guitar amps and close miking drum kits.

Shure SM58

A rugged dynamic microphone, most commonly used for vocals in live performances.

Sidechain

An insert loop on a compressor which can be used to send the signal for processing. The signal received at the sidechain return is used as the trigger for the compressor. This makes it possible to make the compressor react in a different way, perhaps to certain frequencies more than others, as in the case of de-essing.

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Signal to Noise Ratio

The ratio between the wanted sound and the noise floor. In a system, this will refer to the ratio between the nominal level and the noise floor.

Sine Wave

A basic waveform, with constant amplitude and consistent frequency.

Slapback

A single short delay echo without any repeats.

SMPTE

An acronym of 'Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers'. Referring to a time code standard for synchronising audio devices and video devices.

SNR

An initialism of 'signal to noise ratio'.

Soft Synth

An abbreviation of 'software synthesiser'. A software version of a synthesiser, a software instrument plugin.

Software Instrument

An optional piece of software, which operates within a DAW as a synthesiser of various kinds of instrument. Many software instruments are supplied with a DAW, however further instruments can be purchased from 3rd party manufacturers.

Software Instrument Track

A type of channel in a DAW which is a hybrid between audio and MIDI. It has an audio output, which responds to MIDI input, by triggering a software instrument added to one of the plugin slots.

Solid State Drive

An evolution of the hard disk drive, which uses solid state technology to save the files rather than using physical magnetic disk plates. This makes the drive less prone to damage and enables faster data transfer rates.

Solo

A function of a mixing desk and DAW which enables the sound engineer to listen to channels in isolation.

Song

A piece of music, composed and arranged.

Sound Effects

Sounds which are generated or added to enhance the visual impact, for example, light sabers, dinosaurs roaring, explosions.

Sound Engineer

The person who is primarily in control of the equipment, and aims to achieve the best quality of sound possible. They would work under direction from the producer.

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Glossary

Spaced Omni

Another name for the AB microphone technique.

SPDIF

An acronym of 'Sony Philips digital interface'. This is a audio data transfer protocol used over short distances to make a single stereo connection between two devices. In most cases it will use an RCA connector, however, it can also use an optical TOSLINK connection.

Speaker

The device which converts electrical energy into acoustic energy. i.e. the opposite of a microphone.

Speakon

A cable connector created by Neutrik, used most commonly for connecting amplifiers and speakers in PA systems.

Spill

Unwanted sound that enters a microphone, for example, spill from the headphones on a vocalist, or spill from the cymbals on a snare microphone.

Spotify

An online music streaming service, which has a free subscription with advertising, or for a monthly subscription the user can bypass advertising and obtain additional functionality.

SSD

An initialism of 'solid state drive'.

Standard MIDI File

A standard format for saving MIDI data for sharing between devices. There are two kinds, type 1 (multiple tracks of MIDI) and type 0 (a single track of MIDI).

Standing Wave

When two waves of equal frequency are moving in opposite directions, for example, as a result of a sound bouncing from a wall in a studio. Standing waves can cause problems due to constructive interference, which may result in some frequencies being louder than others.

Status Byte

An initial message sent to a MIDI device which identifies its purpose.

Stems

Sub-mixes of multiple tracks of similar instruments, for example, the 'guitar' stem could be a sub mix of 2 electric guitars and an acoustic guitar, the 'drums' stem could be all the tracks relating to the drumkit.

Step Sequencing

Recording MIDI into a sequencer or DAW one note at a time, without needing to keep up with the tempo.

Stereo

A realistic sounding format for audio, which uses two channels to emulate the feeling of space around a sound.

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Glossary

Stringed Instrument

An instrument which generates its sound from the resonance of a pitched string.

Strings

A collective term used for stringed instruments, most commonly referring to bowed instruments such as violin, viola, cello and contrabass.

Studio Assistant

The person in the studio who assists the sound engineer, for example, setting up microphones or operating the patch bay.

Studio One

A digital audio workstation created and developed by Presonus.

Studio Runner

The person in the studio whose role it is to ensure that everyone has what they need during a recording session. They might be tasked with fetching equipment or making tea.

Subtractive Synthesis

A method of synthesis in which the harmonics of an audio signal are attenuated by a filter to alter tone of the sound.

Subwoofer

A speaker which is designed to produce very low frequencies, often referred to as the '.1' in surround formats, i.e. 5.1, 7.1.

Surround Sound

An audio format which uses more than two speakers, arranged around the listener to provide a more realistic environment.

Sustain

In synthesis, sustain is the time during which the signal remains at its normal level.

Sustain Pedal

A MIDI controller used to emulate the sustain pedal of a piano. When the sustain pedal is held, any notes that are played will continue to sound beyond the release of the key/note off message.

Sweep EQ

Another name for the mid band of a semi parametric EQ.

Synchronise

To ensure timing between two devices of mediums is accurate.

Synth

An abbreviation of 'synthesiser'.

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Glossary

Synthesiser

An electronic device which generates sound. This may be original sound, designed for its own tone and timbre, or it may be to emulate acoustic instruments such as piano and drums.

System Preferences

The part of an operating system that enables the user to optimise the computer for the required purpose, such as audio recording.

Tape / Magnetic Tape

A linear magnetic medium, used to record sound and music. It is now rarely used due to its inconvenience and expense, but many engineers still maintain that it sounds better than the digital equivalents.

TDIF

An abbreviation of 'Tascam digital audio interface', named after its founding company. Initially a standard for connecting Tascam digital tape machines, it has also been adopted by other manufacturers to connect digital mixing desks and other multichannel devices. The technology has since been superseded by MADI and ethernet based standards.

Template

Predefined settings which enable the user to get started more quickly.

Threshold

The control on a compressor, expander or gate which defines the sound level at which the device will react.

Thunderbolt

A peripheral connection which is capable of very high data transfer rates. There are three versions available, with Thunderbolt 3 being capable of 40Gbps.

Timbre

The tonal colour of a sound.

Time Machine

A component of the OSX operating system which enables automatic backup of data stored on that computer or any connected hard drives. Individual files can easily be retrieved if needed.

Tinnitus

A medical condition which affects the hearing, caused by long exposure to loud sounds, and resulting in a constant ringing noise.

TOSLINK

An acronym of 'Toshiba link', named after its founding company. It uses the same connector as ADAT lightpipe to connect two digital audio devices, using the SPDIF protocol to transfer the data. This is most common on consumer hi-fi equipment, for example, connecting a CD player to an amplifier.

Touch Mode (Automation)

An automation mode which allows existing automation to be altered during playback. When alterations are complete the automation will jump back to pre-recorded value.

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Glossary**Track**

An individual element of recording or recorded material, such as a vocal or guitar. When working with more than one track, it is referred to as 'multi tracking'. A track is different to a channel.

Track Pad

An alternative to a mouse, which is useful in small spaces. Commonly found on laptop computers, but also available as a peripheral.

Trackball

An alternative to a mouse, which uses a ball on the top for control of the pointer. Sometimes preferred by sound engineers due to it remaining static on the work surface.

Transducer

A device which converts one kind of energy into another, for example, acoustic energy into electrical energy in the case of a microphone.

Transmission Line Speaker

A speaker which is similar in concept to the bass reflex design, except that the length of the tunnel to the cabinet port is much longer, allowing the tuning of lower frequencies. These speakers are generally very expensive and large in size.

Transport

The controls of a DAW which enable the user to play, stop, pause, fast forward, rewind and record.

Tremolo

A rapid variation of pitch of a note, for example, the effect of a tremolo arm on a guitar. Also emulated by effects plugins in a DAW.

Trim

Another name for the gain stage of a mixing desk, except that trim can also be used to reduce the level of the input.

Trombone

A brass instrument which uses a telescopic slide to alter the note. Commonly used in classical music among many other genres.

TRS

Initialisation of 'tip, ring, sleeve'. A kind of jack connector used by headphones and balanced audio systems.

Trumpet

A brass instrument with three valves, the highest register in the family of instruments. Commonly used in jazz and classical music, among many other genres.

TS

Initialisation of 'tip, sleeve'. A kind of jack connector used by unbalanced audio systems.

Turnover

The amount of money that is earned by a company or project, normally measured annually.

Glossary

Tweeter

A speaker which is designed to produce higher frequencies.

Unbalanced

An audio connection which uses one signal carrier, plus the screen/earth. Most commonly found on consumer equipment, prone to external interference.

Unity Gain

When the output of an audio circuit is at the exact same level as the input level. i.e. when a fader is at zero on a mixing desk.

USB

An initialism of 'universal serial bus'. A standard peripheral connection used on both PCs and Macs. Three versions are available, with varying speeds. USB3 is the fastest at the time of going to print, with a data transfer rate of 480 megabits per second.

VCF

An initialism of 'voltage controlled filter'.

VCO

An initialism of 'low frequency oscillator'.

Velocity

A measure of how hard a MIDI key has been pressed, which is translated into level information, and in some cases can be used to trigger a different sample which has been recorded at a louder level, providing a more realistic sounding performance.

Vinyl Record

A flat circular piece of vinyl with grooves cut into it. A record player needle sits in the groove as it rotates, the vibrations in the needles are amplified to playback the recorded sound, making it an analogue medium.

Viola

A wooden stringed-instrument with four tuned strings. Commonly used in classical music as well as many other genres. It is slightly larger than a violin, giving it a deeper sound.

Violin

A wooden stringed-instrument with four tuned strings. Commonly used in classical music as well as many other genres.

Voice

A natural sound source, created from air (breath) passing over the vocal cords in the throat.

Voltage Controlled Filter

A synthesis module which allows control of a filter's frequency. The filter could be high-pass, low-pass or bandpass.

Voltage Controlled Oscillator

An oscillator (sound generator) whose pitch can be controlled via voltage variation.

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Glossary

WAN

An acronym of 'wide area network'.

.wav

A file suffix used for Wav files.

Wav

An abbreviation of 'waveform'. Wav files are the industry standard digital audio file format. They are considered high quality as they are a lossless format.

Waveform

The visual representation of an audio wave, as seen in the DAW arrange page or sample editor.

Wet

With effects or processing applied.

Wi-Fi

Also known as WLAN.

Wide Area Network

A network of computer systems which extends beyond the confines of the LAN location, connecting to other networks anywhere in the world.

Windows

An operating system created and developed by Microsoft. There are numerous versions, including Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8 and Windows 10.

WLAN

An acronym of 'wireless local area network'. A wireless connection to a local network.

Woofers

A speaker which is designed to produce lower frequencies.

World Wide Web

The content that is stored and accessed via the internet.

Write Mode (Automation)

An automation mode which records new automation data during playback.

XLR Connector

A balanced connection, used in most professional level equipment. The standard connection for microphones. Also referred to as a cannon connector.

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Glossary

XY

A stereo microphone technique where two cardioid microphones are placed at an angle of 90–135 degrees of each other, with the capsules as close as possible (coincident) or within 30cm of each other (near coincident).

Youtube

An online video streaming service provided by Google.

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Useful Information (Non-assessed)

Contracts

A contract is a legally binding document which is a signed agreement between two (or more) parties.

Understanding contracts will be an important part of your career as a freelance music producer, as it will make the difference as to whether you make money or not.

A contract is designed so that the agreement suits both parties equally, if it doesn't do so then one party would refuse to sign it.

At its most basic level, a contract is there to document what each party will do for the other one. For example, if person A produces an album for person B, then person B will pay a fee to person A.

It will also outline deadlines for projects, and any consequences if the agreement is broken for any reason.

A contract should go into as much detail as possible so that everyone is clear on what is being expected of them.

As a contract is a very important document, you should always take legal advice to ensure that what you are signing is to your benefit.