

LA Audio Digiboxes

Whenever a new piece of kit arrives in the studio, or a new configuration is needed for a project, then no matter how many cables and interfaces you keep there will always be a problem. Sometimes this can be solved by getting the soldering iron out, but in the digital age, frequently not. **ROB JAMES** thinks in the box.



COST EFFECTIVE ADDITIONS to the arsenal of products designed to get us out of trouble when faced with today's little challenges are most welcome. LA Audio's Digibox range adds a useful number of digital 'fixers' to its repertoire of processors and accessories. These come priced at a very reasonable UK£190 (+ VAT) each for the clock generator, AES-EBU channel divider and AES to SPDIF convertor, and an even more reasonable UK£150 (+ VAT) for the rest.

All the units are housed in identical cases. Smartly finished in metallic Azzura they are built into a hexagonal alloy extrusion with thick endplates, so they should stand up well to the degree of abuse they are likely to encounter. Most other aspects of construction have been carefully considered. Toggle switches are set back to lessen the chances of damage. XLRs, power receptacles and LEDs are all flush mounted. Where BNCs are fitted, these do of course, protrude.

Power is external with the usual wall-wart and commendably, there is cable retention. Fortunately for those who regard wall-warts as the spawn of Satan, there are alternatives available from other suppliers.

The current range divides into two groups: digital audio splitting and distribution and Word clock generation, conversion and distribution.

AES-D2 is an AES channel divider. This takes an AES-EBU signal on a dual channel input XLR, and distributes it to two output XLRs. Channel A or Channel B can be selected for each output.

AES-SPD takes a single AES-EBU or SPDIF input and converts to SPDIF or

AES-EBU respectively. The input is selectable between AES-EBU, SPDIF coaxial or TOS-Link optical. All outputs (1 x AES-EBU and 4 x SPDIF) can be used simultaneously and all inputs and outputs are terminated. The AES input and output are transformer balanced.

AES-S3 splits an AES-EBU signal to three outputs. All inputs and outputs are transformer balanced and terminated. Similarly, the SPD-S4 splits an SPDIF signal to four coaxial outputs and three TOS-Link (optical) outputs. The input can be selected as coaxial or optical SPDIF. All outputs (coaxial and optical) can be used simultaneously.

The CLK-G4 is a Word clock and/or Superclock generator, claimed to offer very low jitter. Output frequencies are switched for 44.1kHz, 48kHz, 88.2kHz and 96kHz. The four clock outputs can be switched in pairs between Word clock and Superclock.

CLK-C4 converts Word clock to Superclock or vice versa and distributes the result to up to four outputs. Detection of incoming Word clock or Superclock is automatic and an LED indicates when the unit is locked. The four outputs are arranged in two pairs. Each can send Word clock or Superclock.

CLK-D4 is a 4-way Word clock or Superclock distribution box. The input can be switched for high impedance (i.e. for use in a networked clocking system) or 75ohms when connected directly to the clock source. All outputs are individually buffered with 75ohm impedance.

Digiboxes provide tidy, no-nonsense solutions to commonly encountered interfacing problems. ■

PROS

Simple and neat; good quality; cost effective.

CONS

Wall-wart power.

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