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Subject: Jitter on Firewire & USB protocols - Bob Katz replies

Posted by [Neil](#) on Mon, 24 Dec 2007 01:26:13 GMT

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In a recent thread here that had a question come up with regard to jitter, I mentioned that Bob Katz pointed out in his book that Firewire tended to be more prone to jitter. Since I've been shopping around for a laptop - mainly for general office-type use (documents, spreadsheets, etc), but would also like to have the option of using it for audio should the need arise, I thought I'd try e-mailing him with a question about UBS vs. Firewire jitter... he responded pretty quickly, I must say, and I thought I'd post his answer in case it might be helpful to anyone else here, whether they're using such an interface for laptop, or desktop use:

<begin paste of my question & his reply>

Hi Bob...

I am in the process of reading your Mastering Audio book, and I noticed that you mention in there that Firewire tends to be more jitter-prone. If I'm looking for a mobile solution (for remote recording into a laptop), do you feel that the USB 2.0 protocol is better than Firewire? Worse? Not much different?

HI, NEIL. Thanks for writing.

What you need is an interface which provides a stable clock to the converters and does not get its clock from the Firewire OR the USB. Look to companies that specialize in high quality conversion first and are aware of these issues. When in doubt, quiz the company engineers (not just the sales people), don't just take their advertising for granted.

I hope this helps,

Bob

<end paste>

I don't know of any offhand that specifically get their clock from either internally or externally, as opposed to from the FW or USB port itself, xcept for the RME Fireface 400 & 800, which can be externally-clocked; but now we at least know what to look for for best audio quality when using these types of interfaces (interfascia?) :)

Neil

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