

By GeorgePetersen

Digital Snakes

Once upon a time, digital snakes were regarded as “why would I need that to just replace a cable?” But with the proliferation of digital mixers and simple interfacing via fiber or Cat-5 cabling, the idea started catching on. This was helped by their ability to reduce the FOH footprint with the ease of doing signal “splits” and the convenience of locating preamps in remote-controllable stageboxes; while replacing hundreds of pounds of copper with a lightweight reel — or two, for redundancy. When looking into a digital snake option, your best bet is starting off with your own console manufacturer, but with a number of solid third-party alternatives, it’s a buyer’s market. Speaking of purchasing, all the products here are scalable and/or expandable, so prices will vary depending on individual configuration requirements; however the option to build your system as your needs grow is a definite plus.

Allen & Heath
GLD-AR2412



Protocol: A&H dSNAKE via Cat-5e

Resolution: 24-bit/48k Hz


Physical I/O: 24 x 12 with 8 x 4 expander avail.

Size: 3 rackspaces

Notes: Includes Aviom Pro16 port; also compatible with A&H ME Personal Mix System

allen-heath.com

Aviom DS16



Protocol: A-Net via Cat-5e

Resolution: 24-bit; 48/96/192k Hz


Physical I/O: 16 plus 16 passive splits on two D-25subs

Size: 3-rackspaces

Notes: Interfaces with Aviom Personal mixers

aviom.com

dbx TR1616



Protocol: BLU link via Cat-5e

Resolution: 24-bit; 48k/96k Hz


Physical I/O: 16 x 16

Size: 3-rackspaces

Notes: Interfaces with dbx PMC16 Personal Monitor Controllers

dbxpro.com

Innovason SR-16
Mini Stage Box



Protocol: EtherSound via Cat-5e

Resolution: 24-bit/48k Hz


Physical I/O: 16 x 16

Size: 2-rackspace

Notes: Configurations fully saved in Nova snapshots

innovason.com

Avid VENUE Stage 48



Protocol: Ethernet AVB via Cat-5e

Resolution: 24-bit/48k Hz


Physical I/O: 32 x 16

Size: 5-rackspaces

Notes: Three empty bays are customizable with any combination of input and/or output cards, for up to 48 in/32 out

avid.com

Behringer S16



Protocol: Klark Teknik SuperMAC (AES 50) via Cat-5e

Resolution: 24-bit/48k Hz

Physical I/O: 16 x 8

Size: 2-rackspaces

Notes: Interfaces with Behringer PowerPlay P-16 monitor mixers

behringer.com

DiGiCo D-Rack



Protocol: Proprietary RJ-45 via Cat-5e

Resolution: 24-bit; 48k/96k Hz


Physical I/O: 32 x 16 (8 outs are AES/EBU switchable)

Size: 3-rackspaces

Notes: Fiber connection and Aviom D-16e module optional

digico.biz

Link DGLink Stage Box



Protocol: AES 50 via Cat-5e; also Ethernet control port

Resolution: 24-bit; 48k/96k Hz


Physical I/O: 48 x 16

Size: 5-rackspace

Notes: Dual redundant power supplies

linkusa-inc.com

Cadac M16



Protocol: MADI optical

Resolution: 24-bit; 48k/96k Hz

Physical I/O: 16 inputs

Size: 3-rackspaces

Notes: Optional RM16 remote controller

cadac-sound.com

Focusrite RedNet 4



Protocol: Dante via Cat-5e (MADI optional)

Resolution: 24-bit; 48k/96k/192k Hz

Physical I/O: 8 mic in/8 line in

Size: 2-rackspace

Notes: Line inputs individually switchable to DI

focusrite.com

Midas DL251



Protocol: AES 50 via Cat-5e; also Ethernet control port

Resolution: 24-bit; 48k/96k Hz


Physical I/O: 48 x 16

Size: 5-rackspace

Notes: Dual redundant power supplies

midasconsoles.com

QSC I/O Frame



Protocol: Q-Sys via Cat-5e

Resolution: 24-bit; 48k/96k Hz


Physical I/O: Four cardslots accommodate 16 analog or 32 AES

Size: 2-rackspace

Notes: 16x16 Cobranet option

qsc.com

Roland S-4000S-3208



Protocol: REAC via Cat-5e

Resolution: 24-bit; 48k/96k Hz

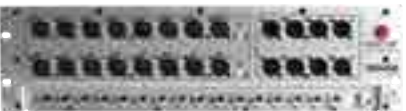
Physical I/O: 32 x 8

Size: 6-rackspace

Notes: Use as stagebox with Roland mixers or pair with S-4000S FOH box for conventional digital snake.

roland.com

Whirlwind ES4T



Protocol: Cobranet/Ethersound/Dante/AVB configurable

Resolution: 24-bit/48k Hz


Physical I/O: 16 x 8

Size: 3-rackspace

Notes: Can be paired with ES4R receiver unit for conventional digital snake.

whirlwindusa.com

Optocore X6P-16IN



Protocol: SANE and Ethernet/Cat-5e

Resolution: 24-bit/48k Hz


Physical I/O: Configurable: 8 x 8 or 16 x 0 (analog or AES)

Size: 1-rackspace

Notes: Optional cards allow user I/O customization

optocore.com

Riedel RN.101.IO



Protocol: RockNet via Cat5e

Resolution: 24-bit/48k Hz


Physical I/O: 16 x 8 or 8 x 16

Size: 3-rackspace

Notes: Configurable via front panel or RockWorks software

riedel.net

Soundcraft/Studer Compact Stage Box



Protocol: Optical MADI or Cat-5e

Resolution: 24-bit/48k Hz


Physical I/O: 32 x 16 (optionally 48 x 0)

Size: 4-rackspace

Notes: Identical model offered as Studer Compact Stage Box

soundcraft.com, studer.ch

Yamaha Rio3224-D



Protocol: Dante via Cat-5e

Resolution: 24-bit; 48k/96k Hz

Physical I/O: 32 x 16; plus four AES/EBU outs

Size: 5-rackspace

Notes: Single-rackspace Ri8-D (8 inputs) and Ro8-D (8 outs) also offered.

yamahaproaudio.com

Peavey CAB 4" Dante



Protocol: Dante via Cat-5e

Resolution: 24-bit/48k Hz

Physical I/O: Configurable for 8 x 8, 16 x 0, 0 x 16, 12 x 4, 4 x 12

Size: 2-rackspace

Notes: CAB series breakout box for MediaMatrix NION network


peavey.com

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