Merging Audio Device Expands Functionality for All Users

Enhanced Infrastructure package for broadcast users

Merging Technologies has gained a justifiable reputation for supplying enabling tools for AES67/RAVENNA networks that have more recently been incorporated into the ST2110 standards. The freeware CoreAudio VAD has been downloaded thousands of times and the Linux ALSA driver has found favour with a number of OEMs. The ASIO driver supplied with Merging interfaces was beginning to show its age and lacked some key features. An entirely new Merging Audio Device (also referred to as MAD) for Windows computers is now available and offers significant improvements to the free of charge version and introduces an additional Infrastructure package for broadcasters wanting the more advanced features.

The first of the major enhancements is a multi-ASIO capability that allows different applications to run simultaneously sharing ASIO inputs and outputs. Additionally, internal bridging allows channels to be defined to send audio between applications concurrently using MAD.

ASIO is the most popular driver option for the recording industry but there are other markets where the official Microsoft WDM (Windows Driver Model) is essential and this is now incorporated into MAD. This addition makes the MERGING+ANUBIS the complete audio interface whether you use it for monitoring, recording, mastering, gaming or Esports. The combination of ASIO and WDM gives enormous flexibility by allowing WDM channels to be sent or mixed to the same outputs as ASIO or redirected to the bridge channels. This permits these channels to be routed or recorded by the ASIO applications as well as allowing the user to monitor the WDM sources independently to those on the DAW or Mix. The implications are huge because this enables the user to listen to his favorite DAW whilst comparing his track with playback from applications like Spotify or YouTube.

Recent developments in IP standards for the broadcast industry require a number of additional features to address stream redundancy and the migration towards centralised data centers. The Merging Audio Driver Infrastructure option not only offers ST2022-7 Seamless Protection Switching, it also adds NMOS IS-04 and IS-05

compliance to the package, plus it brings in the option of Virtual Machine operation. Today's broadcasters are leveraging the incredible flexibility and ROI maximization that centralized production machines can bring. An editing machine in the data center can be allocated to any remote location worldwide, making sure a news picture editing machine (for example) is shared as much as possible and generates revenue 24/7. MAD connects the machine in ST2022-7 and can be discovered and controlled by an NMOS solution, regardless of whether the machines available in the data center are physical or virtual. The new Anubis SPS provides the ultra-reliable high-quality audio end point in the editing room which can be configured remotely and provides to the end user accurate monitoring calibration (EQ/DLY/TRIM) as well as superlative recording facilities thanks to the industry-leading mic preamps and A/D D/A.

Delving a bit deeper into the capabilities of MAD, it is possible to have the ASIO and WDM applications at different sample rates as the WDM has its own Sampling Rate Converter which will automatically convert to the ASIO rate. This allows a recording to be compiled on the ASIO side with some files coming from a WDM source with a higher or lower rate. Additionally, Merging believes that the introduction of MAD gives existing Native customers a radically enhanced set of workflows for no extra cost and that the addition of the low-cost Infrastructure option offers broadcasters extremely cost-effective, controllable solutions to both the start and end points of any centralised IP network. The opening to data centers and server-based installations with VM support, the enhanced security provided by ST2022-7 and the additional discovery and control possibilities created by the inclusion of NMOS, reinforce Merging Technologies' position as a key solution provider for the broadcast and installation industries.

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