

Musical Fidelity V-Link 192

If you've got music stored on a computer hard drive, and want to play it through your hi-fi, you need a DAC (or CD player) that has a dedicated USB port. Alas, many older digital products don't have this. But panic ye not! That's where Musical Fidelity's new V-Link 192 comes in.

Costing £229, this little silver box can handle sampling frequencies up to 192kHz. It sits above MF's popular (and keenly-priced) 96kHz-compatible V-Link II in the range. Sampling rates switch automatically, and 24-bit resolution is achieved.

Processing always takes place at the native frequency of the input source connected – the V-Link 192 does not upsample incoming signals. Front panel lights indicate the sampling rate selected – so you always know what you're listening to.

The unit is usable with Windows XP (and MAC OS-X 10.6.4) onwards, and power is drawn via the USB cable, so no external power supply is called for. The V-Link 192 features galvanically-isolated asynchronous digital inputs/outputs for optimum noise-free transfer of digital signals. 24-bit/192kHz capability makes it suitable for hi-res source material, of course.

Sound quality

Sonic performance proved outstandingly good – crisp, clean, neutral, open and very detailed. USB material sourced from CD sounded better than CDs reproduced by a top-class (£7k) CD player, I found.

For those wanting to play USB sources into a DAC (or CD player) only having an S/PDIF or AES/EBU digital input, the V-Link 192 represents a simple elegant solution that delivers state-of-the-art performance at a nice price. **JMH**



► DETAILS

PRICE: £229
CONTACT:
020 8900 2866
WEBSITE:
MUSICALFIDELITY.COM

OUR VERDICT



Meicord Opal Ethernet cord

The Opal Ethernet patch cord, which costs between £72 and £96 – depending on length (1, 2, 3 and 5 metres including snag-resistant connectors) – is the finest of its type that I have seen. My only criticism of the cable concerns its stiffness – it is nowhere near as flexible as most 'regular' patch leads – but that shouldn't pose any insurmountable problems in most systems.

Sound quality

I tested the cable in my regular music network, which consists of Gigabit switchgear and unshielded Cat 5 and Cat 6 cabling. (It is inadvisable to mix shielded and unshielded cables in one's network; although one might imagine that shielded cables are best, I prefer unshielded types). Using a variety of music files – the majority of which were 16-bit/44.1kHz resolution, the 3m Meicord cable sounded superior to a 1m manufacturer-selected example, which had been supplied with a £100 router, when used between a switch and a media player on an electronically 'busy' equipment rack.

Through the Meicord, the music seemed blessed with more weight, solidity and authority. It was more convincing, both in tonal terms, where instruments had more credible timbre, and in its timing, where music had a more persuasive and cohesive sense of flow.

The differences heard weren't 'night and day', but the improvement garnered was well worth having. In a finely honed system the audible differences were subtle, but nonetheless appreciable. They strike me as worthwhile if you want the finest performance from an audiophile-grade networked hi-fi system. **MS**



► DETAILS

PRICE: £72-£96
(1-5 M)
CONTACT:
07908 056978
WEBSITE:
MAINS-CABLES-R-US.CO.UK

OUR VERDICT

