

Pro Tools®  
**Glossary**

Version 7.2



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## chapter 1

# Glossary

### Numbers

**9-pin (Sony 9-pin; DB-9)** Industry standard for serial machine control of professional video and audio transports, made by Sony and other manufacturers. Refers to the DB-9-style physical external control connector found on 9-pin-compatible devices.

### A

**Absolute Grid mode** An editing mode that constrains movement and alignment of regions to precise increments on a user-defined grid. See also *Relative Grid mode*.

**A/D (analog-to-digital)** Analog-to-digital converters operate at various bit-rate resolutions and sampling rates, converting analog audio signals to digital audio signals.

**ADAT lightpipe** Standard industry term for optical connection of digital audio. Created by Alesis, the lightpipe can simultaneously stream eight channels of digital audio.

**address (time code address)** Specific SMPTE/EBU time code reference or reading, in hours:minutes:seconds:frames.

**AES/EBU (Audio Engineering Society/European Broadcasters' Union)** Industry professional standard for transferring digital audio between professional-quality audio devices. Most AES/EBU connections utilize an XLR-style 3-pin connector to carry two channels of digital audio.

**AIFF (Audio Interchange File Format)** An Apple Computer audio file format.

**AMS (Audio MIDI Setup)** Apple Computer's audio and MIDI operating system, which is part of Mac OS X. For Mac users, AMS replaces Opcode Systems' OMS (Open Music System).

**ASIO Driver** The Digidesign® ASIO Driver is a single-client, multichannel sound driver that allows ASIO third-party audio programs that support the ASIO Driver standard to record and play back through qualified Digidesign audio interfaces:

**ATR (Audio Tape Recorder)** A tape recorder of any format, including a Digital Audio Tape (DAT) deck.

**audio interface** Among most Pro Tools® systems, the audio interface is a separate box that is attached with a special cable to the audio card, or to a USB or FireWire port. An audio interface typically has analog and digital audio inputs and outputs, and may be equipped with level meters, level controls, and other features.

**audio region** A region of an audio file that is defined nondestructively with pointers. See also *region*.

**AudioSuite™ plug-in** Digidesign's proprietary file-based, non-real-time plug-in format. AudioSuite plug-ins are used to process and modify audio files on disk, rather than nondestructively in real time. Depending on how you configure a non-real-time AudioSuite plug-in, it will either create an entirely new audio file, or alter the original source audio file.

**audition** Listening to, or “monitoring,” one or more tracks or audio files. In Pro Tools, you can audition files before you load them into the program. There are also various ways to audition takes from the Region List, the Takes List pop-up menu, and from DigiBase™ browsers.

**auto-created region** Automatically created regions are a by product of editing and punch recording over existing regions.

**Automation modes** Function for recording and playing changes in volume levels, panning, and virtually every adjustable parameter (including plug-in parameters) in Pro Tools. There are several different automation modes in which to write automation data in Pro Tools.

**aux** See *Auxiliary Inputs*.

**Auxiliary Inputs (Auxiliary Input Tracks)** In Pro Tools, these input channels are used for send and bus returns (input only). Sends are used for output routing.

**auxiliary send** See *send*.

**Avid DNA™ Video Peripheral** Avid interface (such as Avid Mojo®) that integrates Avid video technology with Pro Tools systems.

**AVoption|V10™** Video interface and software that integrates Avid® video technology with Pro Tools|HD® systems.

**.AVI** Movie file format for the Video for Windows component of Microsoft's Media Player, supported by Pro Tools.

## B

**bit depth** One of two main specifications that define digital audio quality (the other is sample rate). Bit-depth defines how precisely a sound's dynamic range is represented. Also called bit-resolution or bit-rate.

**black burst** See *house video reference*.

**BNC** Coaxial cable connectors used for video and synchronizer signals.

**Bounce to Disk** Mixing a segment of audio (or an entire session) internally to disk, without leaving the digital domain. Bit rate, dithering options, and other parameters are provided by Pro Tools for bouncing to disk.

**breakpoint** Step or level on a track's automation playlist.

**Broadcast WAV File (BWF)** A variation of Microsoft's .WAV audio file format that contains additional data on the title, origination, date, and creation time of the audio content not included in the standard .WAV file format. An important feature of BWFs is their support of *time stamping*. Time stamping allows files to be moved from one session to another and easily aligned to their original point in time.

**browser** The location where information contained in the databases is displayed and manipulated. With DigiBase, files can be moved on the volumes and spotted into Pro Tools sessions by drag and drop.

**bus (noun)** An internal routing path.

**bus (verb)** To route one or more signals to one or more destinations (either internal or external).

## C

**clipping, clipping indicator** the LED at the top of each channel meter indicates a level may have run out of headroom, and is approaching clipping.

**clock reference** Common “speed” reference, which various devices can use to establish synchronization during playback and recording.

**Conductor rulers** A ruler that can show session data. There are three types of Conductor rulers, called Tempo, Meter, and Markers rulers.

**continuous controller data** MIDI instructions that affect MIDI note parameters, including volume, panning, velocity, pitch bend, and modulation. Also, the main type of instructions sent by MIDI control surfaces.

**Control|24™** Digidesign-dedicated controller for Pro Tools systems. Includes 16 premium microphone preamps, a control room monitoring section, and a line submixer. Ideal front-end for Pro Tools recording, mixing, and editing.

**CoreAudio** The Digidesign CoreAudio Driver is a multi-client, multichannel sound driver that allows CoreAudio compatible applications to record and play back through qualified Digidesign audio interfaces.

**crossfade** Function for fading out from one region as you fade in to another region. Crossfade duration is user-selectable from within the Edit window. As with fades, portions of audio for which the crossfade function has been applied are stored in the session’s Fade Files folder.

## D

**D/A (digital-to-analog)** Digital-to-analog converters operate at various bit-rate resolutions and sampling rates, converting digital audio signals to analog audio signals.

**DAE™ (Digidesign Audio Engine™)** Digidesign’s real-time operating system that provides the core functionality of hard disk recording, digital signal processing, mix automation, and MIDI required by Pro Tools and other Digidesign products.

**database** Databasing is a convenient way of storing, organizing, searching, and displaying information. A database file is a collection of records that hold data. In this guide, the term “database” refers to a DigiBase database file. Pro Tools creates and stores database files on local volumes as needed.

**DB-9** See *9-pin*.

**Digi 002®** Digidesign’s FireWire-based Pro Tools LE™ studio with integrated control surface. Includes eight touch-sensitive, motorized faders and 8 motion-sensitive rotary encoders, eight analog inputs and outputs, four mic preamps, eight channels of ADAT optical I/O, two channels of S/PDIF I/O, and 24-bit/96 kHz A/D and D/A converters.

**Digi 002 Rack™** Rack version of Digidesign’s Digi 002. This FireWire-based Pro Tools LE system includes eight analog inputs and outputs, 4 mic preamps, eight channels of ADAT optical I/O, two channels of S/PDIF I/O, and 24-bit/96 kHz A/D and D/A converters.

**Digidesign Audio Engine** See *DAE*.

**dither** “Noise” added to an audio signal when down-sampling bit rates. Designed to create a smoother transition at lower amplitudes.

**drop frame** Refers to a variance of SMPTE/EBU time code for NTSC color video (29.97 fps) that omits two frames (frames “0” and “1”) every minute except for every tenth minute.

**DSP (Digital Signal Processing)** In audio terms, DSP refers to manipulation of digital audio—everything from reverberation to changes in level.

## E

**edit cursor** Flashing line that appears when you click in a track in the Edit window.

**Edit Decision List (EDL)** List of edits, or events, typically with each event’s respective source in and out times, source reel number, and record in and out times.

**Edit insertion point** Location within a track where you click (without dragging); also location at which a region’s start, end, or synchronization point will be placed.

**Edit selection** In the Edit window, this is what is highlighted in the playlist (such as a region).

**Event List** See *MIDI Event List*.

**expansion chassis** Expands the capabilities of Pro Tools|HD systems by adding more external PCI slots.

**ExpressPro-Tools** ATTO’s hard disk utility for the preparation of hard drives for Pro Tools. For Mac OS X, a new version of this utility, ExpressStripe, must be used.

## F

**fade** A selection in which the volume rises or falls, typically from or to  $-\infty$ . See also *crossfade*.

**FireWire** A high-speed peripheral standard capable of transferring data. FireWire is commonly used for digital audio and video devices, as well as external hard drives and other high-speed peripherals.

**frames per second (fps)** Number of frames that elapse per second, as defined by the four SMPTE/EBU Time Code fps standards. These include:

- 24 fps (for film applications)
- 25 fps (the PAL/SECAM video standard)
- 29.97 fps (the NTSC color video standard) (see also *drop frame*)
- 30 fps (the NTSC black and white video standard)

## G

**general preference** A preference that affects all sessions for the same user. This differs from a global preference, which is the same for all users. See also *user preference*.

**Grid mode** Used to align regions in tracks to the grid or between Grid boundaries. See also *Absolute Grid mode* and *Relative Grid mode*.

**Groove Template** A template derived from an audio selection using Beat Detective™. Groove templates contain information on the timing nuances and dynamics of the selected audio performance. Groove templates can then be used to *conform* or impose these performance characteristics on other audio material using Beat Detective, or on other MIDI material using the Grid/Groove Quantize command.

**groups** Linked tracks in which an action in one of the tracks is mirrored in all tracks in the group. Groups can be created separately or linked between the Mix and Edit windows.

## H

**HD Accel** PCI card with additional DSP for Pro Tools|HD systems.

**HD Core** PCI core card, which connects to audio interface and contains the DSP, for a Pro Tools|HD system.

**HD Process** PCI card with additional DSP for Pro Tools|HD systems.

**headroom** Amount of remaining gain available for a given signal before the onset of unacceptable clipping.

**house video reference (black burst)** A type of clock reference signal commonly used to synchronize audio or video devices during playback or recording.

## I

**inactive** Items that have been turned off in Pro Tools to free up or conserve DSP. For example, when a track, send, or plug-in is inactive, its name appears in italics and the item is silent.

**indexing** Used by databases to obtain and maintain the data displayed in browsers. Indexing creates and updates a database with the latest metadata information.

**item** In DigiBase, each row of data is referred to as an item in the Items List. Items include Volumes, Catalogs, Session files, and Media files, as well as other types of files.

## L

**latency** Time delays inherent in internal processing or generation of audio signals within a computer.

**Legacy I/Os** Older Digidesign audio interfaces (such as 888|24™ I/O and 882|20 I/O™) that can be connected to Pro Tools|HD audio interfaces (such as 192 I/O™ and 96 I/O™) for additional input and output channels. Legacy interfaces can only be used with 44.1 kHz and 48 kHz sessions.

**lightpipe** See *ADAT Lightpipe*.

**Loop Sync** A dedicated clock signal for synchronizing multiple Pro Tools|HD audio interfaces together. Loop Sync uses a Word Clock signal based on sampling rates of either 44.1 kHz or 48 kHz. As sample rates increase in the system, Loop Sync continues to operate at a base rate of 44.1 kHz or 48 kHz, depending upon the higher rate. Loop Sync should be used only to chain multiple Pro Tools|HD peripherals together.

## M

**machine control** Pro Tools functions to control or be controlled by an external transport, typically a VTR or ATR.

**Marker** Memory Location referenced on a timeline, typically used to store locations to important points in a session. See also *Memory Location*.

**master (device)** “Lead” machine or Pro Tools system in a synchronized machine arrangement. Slaves follow masters. There can only be one master at any given time.

**Master Fader track** Governs the overall output of one or more tracks.

**media file** A file that contains actual audio, video, or graphics data. It also contains a variety of metadata (such as file name and format).

**Memory Location** Pro Tools supports up to 999 Memory Locations, which can include markers, Edit selections, record and play ranges, track settings, and other data. They can be viewed and sorted in the Memory Locations window, from which they can also be accessed.

**metadata** Media files, session files, and other types of files contain their own sets of metadata, which include general types of data such as file name, creation date, and file size. Metadata varies with file type, format, and kind.

**MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface)** A communication protocol designed to allow equipped instruments such as synthesizers to intercommunicate for control and playback purposes. Information transmitted over MIDI includes note-ons, note-offs, key velocity, pitch bend, and other performance data. Connections are made using cables equipped with 5-pin DIN connectors.

**MIDI Event List** Pro Tools window that shows the contents of a MIDI track in a column, for easy editing of individual MIDI events.

**MIDI I/O™** Digidesign's USB-based MIDI interface. Features 10 MIDI inputs and outputs for a total of 160 MIDI channels and supports time-stamping for superior timing accuracy and precision.

**MIDI Machine Control (MMC)** See *machine control*.

**MIDI Time Code** See *MTC*.

**MP3 (MPEG Layer 3)** An adjustable-quality audio compression format developed by the Fraunhofer Institute.

**MTC (MIDI Time Code)** Non-SMPTE form of time code that is used by some devices (including Pro Tools) to send and receive timing information.

## N

**nondestructive editing** Leaves audio files intact. As you edit audio within Pro Tools, you are only editing the regions, or "pointers," to audio files that are stored on the hard drive, unless you explicitly choose destructive modes (during recording, or when using AudioSuite processing).

**non-drop frame** Time code that is not in drop-frame format. In North America, the standard format outside of color video production or post production is typically 29.97 fps non-drop frame.

**NTSC** Video standards developed by the National Television Standards Committee. NTSC color video runs at 29.97 frames per second; NTSC black and white video runs at 30 fps. Used primarily in North and South America and Japan.

**Nyquist frequency** The highest audio frequency that can be accurately sampled, equivalent to one-half of the sampling frequency. The Nyquist sampling theorem showed that the sampling rate must be at least twice the highest frequency present in the sample in order to accurately reconstruct the original signal.

## O

**offline (media)** Not connected to or directly accessible by a computer.

**offline (synchronization)** Not under the control of (or controlling) another device for synchronized playback or recording.

**OMS (Open Music System)** A “MIDI operating system” for Mac OS 9 systems, developed by Opcode. It handles the exchange of MIDI data between applications, including timing signals such as MTC. OMS is replaced by AMS (Apple’s Audio MIDI Setup utility) in Mac OS X.

**online (media)** Connected to and directly accessible by a computer.

**online (synchronization)** Controlled by (or controlling) another device for synchronized playback or recording.

## P

**peak indicator** Indicator light designed to warn of the possibility of clipping, which illuminates as a device’s input reaches a preset degree of headroom.

**performance volume** A storage volume that has been designated to record and/or play back media files in a Pro Tools session.

**PFL (Pre Fader Listen)** Sometimes called a “cue,” this is a channel’s level before it is attenuated or boosted by the fader setting. Master faders are PFL in Pro Tools. See also *pre-fader*.

**playlist** A group of regions arranged on an audio or MIDI track.

**positional reference** Common reference that provides location information that various devices can use to establish synchronization during playback and recording. Most commonly, the information is delivered in the form of SMPTE/EBU Time Code.

**post-fader** Output from a track (typically a send) that is governed by the channel’s fader setting.

**post-roll** Adjustable time for playback to continue beyond the current playback or recording of a selection.

**PRE™** Digidesign’s remote controllable 8-channel microphone preamp. Features eight discrete, matched transistor hybrid mic-preamp circuits and offers a pristine signal path designed specifically for the Pro Tools environment, but can also be utilized as a stand-alone microphone preamp.

**preamp** In recording studio terminology, a circuit designed to boost relatively low signal levels, such as a microphone output, up to standard line levels of –10 dBV or +4 dBu. Digi 002 and Digi 002 Rack are equipped with four microphone preamps. Mbox 2 and Mbox® are equipped with two microphone preamps. See also *PRE*.

**pre-fader** Output from a track (typically a send) that is independent of the channel’s fader setting.

**pre-roll** Adjustable time that precedes the playback or recording of a selection.

**ProControl®** Digidesign-dedicated controller that communicates with Pro Tools by means of ethernet. Features include touch-sensitive, motorized faders, and a dedicated effects editing section.

**Pull Up/Pull Down** Refers to the deliberate “mis-calibration” of the audio or video sample rate clock (the audio pitch) in order to compensate for a speed change elsewhere in the production chain. The usual situation in which these rates are encountered is when film footage (at 24 fps) is transferred to color NTSC-standard video tape (at 29.97 fps). Video Pull Up/Pull Down is supported in Pro Tools 5.3.1 and higher.

## Q

**quantize** To adjust MIDI note locations or durations to the nearest unit or template structure so that a particular rhythmic “feel” is achieved.

**QuickTime™** Apple’s system extension for control of time-based events, such as digitized video movies and digitized sound.

## R

**RealAudio** Audio compression scheme designed for streaming over the internet.

**record** Element of a database. A database is a collection of records. Each record represents a particular file (such as a media file or session file). The record contains all of the metadata describing that file, but none of the media. Therefore a record is much smaller than the actual file, and much easier to parse for information.

**region** Within Pro Tools, a “pointer” to a particular track selection or file. Regions can be dragged from the Region List, or a DigiBase browser, to a track.

**Relative Grid mode** An editing mode that constrains movement and alignment of regions to precise increments on a user-defined grid while allowing the region to maintain an offset relative to that grid point. See also *Absolute Grid mode*.

**resolving** The process of synchronizing multiple devices to a common clock reference.

**RTAS® (Real-Time Audio Suite) plug-ins** Digi-design’s host-based, real-time effects plug-in format.

## S

**sample rate** One of two main specifications that describe digital audio quality (the other is bit rate resolution). Sample rate refers to how frequently incoming audio is sampled per second during conversion from an analog to a digital signal.

**SCSI HBA (Small Computer System Interface and Host Bus Adapter)** Digidesign’s conformed terminology for SCSI cards. SCSI is a type of data bus allowing for the high speed transfer of data between a computer and peripheral devices. An HBA is the card that connects the SCSI bus between the computer and peripheral devices such as hard drives.

**send** An adjustable additional track output, which can be routed to an internal bus for effects processing, monitoring, and submixing.

**session file** A work file, much like a word processing document or a graphics program file. A Pro Tools session file contains data describing how media files are to be played and displayed. It also contains metadata about the files on which it depends (audio and MIDI files, and related data such as fades, playlists, and selections). Each separate project worked on should be stored as its own session.

**session template** A Pro Tools session file whose parameters are preset to a user’s specific preferred state. Any Pro Tools session may be saved as a template using the Save As command for convenience of setup.

**slave** Device that “follows” the master during synchronization.

**Slave Clock (or Super Clock)** Digidesign’s proprietary hi-speed Word Clock that runs at 256x (256 times) the sample rate. It is required by Pro Tools|24 MIX™ and Pro Tools|24 systems to synchronize audio interfaces to a single, highly-accurate clock from SYNC I/O™, USD™, or HD audio interface. See also *Legacy I/Os*.

**Sound Designer II™ (SD II)** Digidesign’s high-quality digital audio file format.

**S/PDIF** Semi-professional version of the AES/EBU standard. Stands for “Sony/Philips Digital Interface Format.” S/PDIF connections use coaxial (RCA) or Toslink optical in/out connectors. Most S/PDIF connections carry two channels of digital audio at a time.

**Spot** Audio post production process of aligning audio events to visual events. In Pro Tools, Spot mode lets spot regions to particular time code events.

**Standard MIDI File** Universal format that can be read by virtually any software that reads MIDI. Type 0 is a single line sequence, type 1 is multi-track.

**submix** Routing multiple audio sources to an Auxiliary Input for monitor mixes, bus-master control over levels, and shared effects processing.

**subgroup** See *groups*.

**Super Clock (256x)** See *Slave Clock*.

**SYNC I/O** Digidesign’s multi-format synchronization peripheral for Pro Tools|HD systems that supports all major industry-standard clock sources and time code formats. SYNC I/O features near sample-accurate lock to time code or bi-phase/tach signals and a 192 kHz capable, high-fidelity, low-jitter Word Clock.

**synchronization** Process of having two or more audio, video, or other devices play and record as one, at the same speed.

**Sysex (System Exclusive)** MIDI data specific to a particular piece of hardware or instrument.

## T

**TDM (Time Division Multiplexing)** A technology that employs a networked bus of DSP chips that supply the processing power for Pro Tools|HD systems. This bus is called the Digidesign TDM Bus™.

**TDM plug-in** Digidesign’s proprietary real-time, nondestructive plug-in format for Pro Tools|HD systems.

**time code address** See *address*.

**time code generation** Process of creating “fresh” time code.

**Time Scale Timebase rulers** The Main Time Scale is the Timebase ruler that determines the time format used for Transport functions, and Grid and Nudge values. The Sub Time Scale is the Timebase ruler that provides additional timing reference.

**Timebase rulers** Up to five discrete strips measuring different units (samples, feet.frames, minutes:seconds, bars:beats, or time code) displayed across the top of the Edit window.

**Timeline insertion point** Location on the timeline corresponding to the cursor point, and the point from where playback or recording begins.

**Timeline selection** A selection in any Timebase ruler that determines the playback or record range.

**transfer volume** A storage volume that has been designated as a Transfer Volume in DigiBase Workspace will not be used to record or play media in a Pro Tools session. Volumes that are not supported by Pro Tools for audio playback, (such as network share volumes, CDs, or DVDs) will be designated as transfer volumes by default.

## U

**Universe window** Provides a visual overview of all tracks in a session, and can be used to quickly navigate to any location in a session.

**USB (Universal Serial Bus)** A high-speed peripheral standard capable of transferring data at up to 12 Mb/sec. USB is used for many audio and video peripheral devices.

**user preference** A user-definable state for a specific Pro Tools parameter or system setup. Mac has the ability to create separate preferences files for each user. For Pro Tools database functions, these include Browser views, and parameter and search settings. See also *general preference*.

**user-defined region** Explicitly defined regions that are created when recording or importing audio or MIDI; capturing, separating, or consolidating a selection; trimming a whole-file audio region; or renaming an existing region.

## V

**velocity** MIDI data parameter that describes how fast or hard a key is struck and controls the volume of MIDI note playback.

**video reference signal** Clock information contained in all video signals, which can be used as a clock reference.

**voiceable track** Previously known as virtual voicing; total voiceable tracks refers to the maximum number of audio tracks that can share the available voices on your system.

**voices** With a Pro Tools system, refers to the number of channels that can be played back simultaneously.

**VTR (Video Tape Recorder)** A video tape recorder of any format.

## W

**.WAV** Pronounced “wave,” this is Microsoft’s Audio File Format. Can be read by Pro Tools on both Windows and Mac platforms.

**WaveDriver** The Digidesign WaveDriver is a single-client, multichannel sound driver that allows third-party audio programs that support the WaveDriver MME (Multimedia Extensions) standard to play back through qualified Digidesign audio interfaces:

**waveform** Means of visually representing a sound. When sound regions are imported into the Pro Tools Edit window, they can be viewed in Waveform view. Preview waveforms can also be viewed in DigiBase browsers.

**whole-file audio regions** Created when recording or importing audio, consolidating existing regions, and when processing with an AudioSuite plug-in.

**Word Clock** Many professional digital audio products—including open-reel multitrack tape recorders, digital mixing consoles, and digital recorders—have Word Clock (1x sample rate) connectors.

Word Clock allows Word Clock-compatible devices to send or receive external clock information that controls the sample rate, which in turn (where applicable) controls the play and record speed.

**zero crossing** Point at which a wave's amplitude crosses the center line of the waveform display. Typically, a good spot to edit a sound file is at zero crossings, to avoid unwanted artifacts.

**Zoom** Function used to view waveform displays within the Edit window with greater detail or more data.



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