

## 100T-SCAN

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# PCDJ DAC-3

## USB DJ CONTROLLER

PCDJ'S MUCH ANTICIPATED MP3 USB CONTROL INTERFACE HAS THE LOOK OF A PROFESSIONAL DUAL CD PLAYER, BUT IS IT ANY GOOD?

PRICE: £329 INFORMATION: [WWW.PCDJ.CO.UK](http://WWW.PCDJ.CO.UK) CONTACT: 01482 319700

**PCDJ** is a popular brand of virtual DJ applications from US company Visiosonic. While software mixing programs offer numerous advantages, computers offer very little tactile control. Visiosonic were among the first to recognise this and came out with the first controller to free its users from the mouse or keyboard as a mixing interface. The new DAC-3 has just been released with loads of new features and in a larger unit size than its predecessor, the DAC-2. It now takes up three rack units instead of two and fills the new space with even more controls to link directly to PCDJ software's most favoured tools and controls. The new version is not just a much bigger device but also sports the much more responsive USB 2 interface from which it also takes its power supply. The DAC-3 is customised to work specifically with PCDJ software, however it will also work with many other applications that support MIDI control.

### PROFESSIONAL USE

The DAC-3 closely resembles any mid-priced professional dual CD player controller on the market. It's ruggedly built with loads of controls and features a bright LCD display. Coupled with the top of the range PCDJ VRM (short for Virtual Rack Mount), this system offers all the features such as auto-beat-matching, master-tempo, effects and more.

The DAC-3 has direct buttons for accessing features and for scanning through files and

folders within PCDJ software. DJs can expand the use of the controller buttons using the Shift key. This also works with the jog wheel for pitch bending or searching through folders.

### INSTALLATION

The DAC-3 must be powered directly from the USB port, which is fine if you have the latest laptop with USB 2.0 or a PCI slot on your desktop. However, if you have a slightly older laptop with only USB 1.0, the chances are you'll need to upgrade via the PCMCIA slot. This causes a slight problem because the PCMCIA slot will not provide enough juice to power the DAC-3. So you'll also need a powered USB hub. While this isn't going to cost more than £30 to sort out, it does mean a lot more wires and an extra socket needed when setting up. When making a custom rack system, this can all be compacted away but it's worth making sure a new computer has the latest connections. Once connected, the DAC-3 was instantly recognised on our test machine and available for use within PCDJ software.

### MIDI KID

The DAC-3 is a fully-fledged MIDI controller and can be used with any application that supports MIDI, so could even be used with your sequencer or visual application. A word of warning though as the DAC-3 does not appear automatically as a MIDI device in other software

and there is no explanation within the DAC-3 manual to explain how to make it work. As an accessory to PCDJ the product is complete, but when used with other software it's still in the early stages. Due to its 'open source' style of development, it is constantly being improved and as such will also be able to constantly adapt as the software around it advances.

On the PCDJ website you'll find all sorts of patches, updates and plenty of people sharing settings files for various different applications within the forums.

To get MIDI working requires a little patch called MIDI Yolk, which can be downloaded from the support pages at [www.pcdj.co.uk](http://www.pcdj.co.uk). To make the DAC-3 appear in the drop-down menus of various windows applications, such as Traktor DJ Studio, run the program, select the DAC-3, leave the application running and then open any other MIDI enabled application you wish to control. The DAC-3 should now be accessible in the same way as any other MIDI controller. For Traktor DJ Studio, there is a MIDI settings tab within the set-up and virtually every DJ control can be linked to a MIDI control signal.

Simply select the DAC-3, select and control feature, click on the 'learn' button and then move or press the desired control on the DAC-3. The control within Traktor and on the DAC-3 will now be linked.

## INFO

### T-SPECS

- » Ten cue points » Track search
- » Record case search » Large jog dial » Track load button » Bright blue back-lit screen
- » Time display remaining/elapsed, progress bar
- » Looping and reloop controls » Play, pause, cue and stutter controls » Solid pitch control
- » Pitch bend buttons » MIDI compatible
- » One press 'Mix Now' button » USB 2.0 powered » Windows PC only: XP

## VERDICT

### PROS

- » MIDI compatible with many programs
- » Works seamlessly with PCDJ software
- » Loads of controls for common functions

### CONS

- » Doesn't work on Macs
- » Some DJs prefer dual concentric jog wheel
- » DJ still needs to use computer to change folders

### VALUE FOR MONEY

★★★★

### FEATURES

★★★★★

### EASE OF USE

★★★★

### SOUND QUALITY

★★★★★

### STABILITY

★★★★★

### OVERALL

★★★★★

This same process is much the same for modern applications.

Once fully configured these settings can be saved and shared with others, so the chances are you'll be able to find one already configured on the web. The most likely place to find this is on the respective application's user forum.

### SCREEN

While the MIDI controls work with PCDJ and other software, there are some restrictions with the DAC-3 unit's screens, which currently only work with PCDJ. However, Mix Vibes and Traktor DJ Studio developers have already told us that they will include support for the DAC-3 in future updates. Support can only be added by the respective developers as the coding needs to come from within the software and the screens do not communicate with the software using MIDI.

### IN THE MIX

The DAC-3 is without doubt a very accomplished piece of gear for use with PCDJ and shows great potential for working with a number of other programs like Traktor DJ Studio and Mix Vibes.

PC mixing without a mouse

