

# 4 reasons to buy a separate DAC instead of a sound card

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If you're looking to get better sound from your computer, an internal sound card is probably not the best choice. In today's computers, buying a sound card makes no sense and the article will list the top reasons why you should buy a separate DAC instead of a sound card.

## Reason #1: Accessibility



Opening up a computer to plug something into the motherboard is what many people would probably consider an intimidating task.

It's a hassle to unplug everything from the back of the motherboard, open up your dusty computer, and put everything back. It's also a hassle to have to reach all the way to the back of the computer every time you want to remove the headset to carry it with you.



Separate DACs like the Creative SoundBlaster GC7 are much more convenient because they can be placed right on your desk or somewhere more accessible than inside or behind the computer. From there, you can plug and unplug your listening device easily.

If your computer is on your desk and you don't want another device taking up the USB port and cluttering your desk, an internal sound card is a good choice, but beware of the issues. electrical interference problems you may encounter.

#### **Reason #2: Availability and all-in-one device**



Due to its accessibility, DACs have become quite popular and, therefore, more easily available. You can easily get a quality separate DAC and amp combo for under \$200 like the iFi Hip-DAC2.

You can also buy a standalone DAC and separate amp, but there are also many all-in-one devices that have a DAC, amp, etc., such as an analog-to-digital converter (ADC) in the case of an audio interface. used for recording musical instruments or microphones.



If you are a musician, podcast host, or streamer, an audio interface is a must. You can listen and type through it, and honestly, a good audio interface is probably all you need.

The Shanling M0 and similar products like the FiiO M5 and HiBy R2 are small digital audio transmitters (DAPs) that can serve as a DAC/amp for your phone or computer, making it so it's extremely flexible. The Shanling M0 will be mentioned a lot, but this also refers to similar products, not just that particular product, as these are very versatile.

### **Reason #3: Separate DACs are more portable**



Although not all, there are many DACs that are small in size. The Creative Sound BlasterX USB DAC can fit in your pocket just like the USB sound card that comes with the HyperX Cloud II headset.

If you're not into gaming audio products, you can also buy a small DAC and amp like the FiiO KA1 that you can use with your phone or PC. An internal DAC that plugs into your computer's PCIe slot isn't something you can use anywhere, so in terms of versatility and portability, an external DAC has a huge advantage.



Of course, the previously mentioned Shanling M0, FiiO M5 and HiBy R2 can also do the same job, albeit a bit larger than the two previously mentioned products. You can also free up some space on your phone by playing music on those devices instead.

## **Reason #4: Separate DACs sound better**



The motherboard connects many components together, and those components communicate with each other through electrical signals. An internal sound card still receives digital information like an external DAC, but when it converts that digital information to analog information, the motherboard's electrical noise may appear in the analog signal, but still can be heard.

The discrete DAC has its own circuit that can only receive digital audio information and convert it into an analog signal that can be heard from the noisy environment of the motherboard. When the DAC is connected via USB, the motherboard's electrical noise can still seep into the DAC, but it will significantly reduce that noise.



The author of the article once used the Shanling M0 to power his power-hungry HIFIMAN HE400SE, because the Focusrite Scarlett Solo could make noise at 90% volume. The M0 has its own battery, thus eliminating the noise that the motherboard transmits through the USB port. You can also buy DACs like the FiiO Q11, which have their own battery and can provide more power than a small, portable DAP/DAC combo.

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