



FLX-AES3

AES3-to-anything Digital Audio Converter

User's Manual

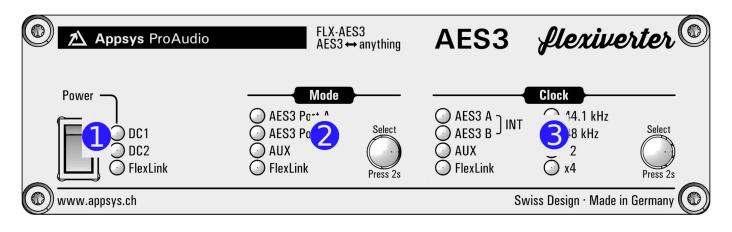


Table of Contents

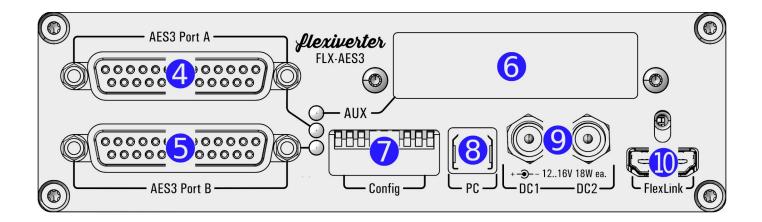
1.	QUICI	K REFERENCE	4
2.	2.1. 2.2.	DDUCTION. Purpose. Box Contents. Conventions used in this manual.	5 5
3.	3.1. 3.2.	IBLE SETUPS. Available AUX cards. Available FLX devices. FlexLink connection.	6 7
4.	4.1. 4.2.	D ROUTING Modes and indication Selecting the Route Mode Remarks	8 9
5.	5.1.	K SETTINGS	0
6.	6.1. 6.2. 6.3.	SSING INTERNALS.1Opening the device.1Inside view.1Installing AUX cards.1Variable DB25 pinout.1	2 2 2
7.	7.1. 7.2.	ETTINGS	4 5
8.	8.1. 8.2. 8.3.	IAL OPERATING MODES.1Version Display.1LED Test.1Interface Self-Test.1Firmware update.1	7 7 7
9.	SPECI	IFICATIONS1	9
10.	ACC 10.1. 10.2.	ESSORIES	9
11.	11.1. 11.2.	ENDIX	0 0

11.4.	Recycling	21
11.5.	Document Revision History	.21
11.6.	About this document	21

1. QUICK REFERENCE



- Power switch and "power good" indicators.
 - LEDs light up blue when power is available on the respective port.
- 2 Mode indicators/selector. Long-press the "Select" button to change the audio routing between the interfaces. Wait four seconds to activate the selected mode.
- Clock indicators/selector. Long-press the "Select" button to change the clock source and sample-rate. Wait four seconds to activate the selected mode.



- 4 5 AES3 ports A (ch1-8) and B (ch9-16)
- 6 AUX slot. Accepts optional card for standalone use, or additional AES3 channels
- DIP switches, mostly to control output data format. See <u>7. DIP Settings</u>
- 8 USB port (firmware update only, no audio)
- 9 Redundant DC input ports
- FlexLink: optional connection to second flexiverter, or to multiverter.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Purpose

The FLX-AES3 device is as digital audio converter, providing up to 16x16 channels of AES/EBU at samplerates up to 192kHz. It can be used in different setups, depending on the user's needs:

- standalone, to convert between the built-in AES3 ports and an AUX card
- together with another flexiverter, connected via FlexLink
- together with the multiverter, connected via FlexLink. This provides remote control, channel-wise routing and SRC (Sample Rate Conversion).

For a detailed description of possible configurations see <u>3. Possible Setups</u>.

2.2. Box Contents

- 1 FLX-AES3 Converter
- 1 HDMI cable 0.5m / 1.7 ft with locking screws
- 1 Power supply
- 1 Power cord (country specific)
- This manual

2.3. Conventions used in this manual

- A button on the front is shown like this: **O Mode** or **O Clock**
- A LED is shown like this: off / on / 💥 blinking



Filled circles with an exclamation mark indicates an action that must be performed ("Required").



A section marked with an "information" icon indicates a useful tip.

3. POSSIBLE SETUPS

The device can be used in three different setups, shown below:

	SETUP			
	flexiverter + AUX card	Double-flexiverter	flexiverter + multiverter	
	FLX + AUX	FLX (+AUX) FLX (+AUX)	FLX (+AUX) MVR-64 (+SRC-64)	
How it works	Converts between built-in interface and the AUX card. For a list of AUX cards, see	Devices are connected via FlexLink cable. Converts between one	Flexiverter connected to multiverter via FlexLink cable.	
	<u>3.1 Available AUX cards</u> .	FLX($+$ AUX) and the other FLX($+$ AUX).	FLX(+AUX) serves as extension to the MVR-64	
Channels (all can be used at the same time)	16x16 AES3 @ 48kHz 16x16 AES3 @ 96kHz 16x16 AES3 @ 192kHz or maximum capacity of the AUX card, whichever is less	16x16 AES3 @ 48kHz 16x16 AES3 @ 96kHz 16x16 AES3 @ 192kHz plus what the AUX card provides	448x448 from multiverter plus 16x16 AES3 plus what the AUX card provides	
Redundant power supply	up to 2x	up to 3x	up to 3x	
Battery-powered operation (DC 12-15V)	yes	yes	yes	
Sample Rate Conversion	no	no	yes (with SRC-64 card in Multiverter)	
Signal splitting	yes (to AUX or FlexLink)	yes (to AUX or FlexLink)	yes, to everything	
Channel-wise routing	no	no	yes, via MVR-64 (web, telnet or serial terminal)	
Remote control	no	no	yes, via MVR-64 (web, telnet or serial terminal)	
Rack mount	1U total	1U total	2U total	

3.1. Available AUX cards

At the time of writing (2021-11), the following AUX cards are available. More will come, please check <u>www.appsys.ch</u> for updates.

Item	Description
AUX-ADAT	16x16ch ADAT I/O (2x Toslink In + 2x out). Supports also S/PDIF
AUX-AES3	8x8ch AES3 I/O on 1x DB25, fully transformer isolated
AUX-AES67	64x64ch AES67 network card

AUX-AVB1	16x16ch / 32x0ch / 0x32ch MILAN-approved AVB
AUX-DAC ¹	8ch analog outputs (1xDB25)
AUX-DANTE	64x64ch DANTE network card
AUX-MADI-COAX	64x64ch MADI for coaxial cable (BNC connectors)
AUX-MADI-OPTO	64x64ch MADI optical, SC connector (Multimode 125um 1310 nm)
AUX-MADI-SFP	64x64ch MADI for SFP (Small-Factor Pluggable) modules
AUX-WORDCLOCK	BNC wordclock I/O

3.2. Available FLX devices

At the time of writing (2021-11), the following FLX devices are available. More will come, please check <u>www.appsys.ch</u> for updates.

Item	Description
FLX-AES3	16x16 channel AES3 flexiverter (with AUX slot)
FLX-AES50	96x96 channel AES50 flexiverter (with AUX slot)
FLX-AES67	64x64 channel AES67 flexiverter (with AUX slot)
FLX-DANTE	64x64 channel DANTE flexiverter (with AUX slot)
FLX-MADI	128x128 channel MADI SFP & MADI coaxial module (with AUX slot)

3.3. FlexLink connection

The FlexLink connection is designed to connect Flexiverters with each other, or with the Multiverter. It provides:

- 192x192 channels bi-directional transmission of 24-bit uncompressed audio (fully transparent to AES3 compatible metadata bits)
- Super-low link latency of 4 samples (ca. 83µs)
- Dedicated, high-quality reference clock signal with automatic configuration
- Power supply for connected devices (to reduce cabling), alternatively serves as redundancy scheme when both devices are powered: in case of power failure, both devices keep working from the remaining power supply.
- Uses standard HDMI cables (with locking screws), to provide easy field replacement in case of defects.

¹ Estimated availability: Q1/2022

4. AUDIO ROUTING

The flexiverter can operate in various routing modes, allowing you to pass audio between the available interfaces (AES3, AUX and FlexLink) in many different ways. The LEDs in the "MODE" section indicate the involved interfaces.

4.1. Modes and indication

Mode (route between)	Operation (Example)	Setup (blinking alternately)	Remarks	
AES3(+ AUX) < > FlexLink	 AES3 Port A AES3 Port B AUX FlexLink 	 ※ ○ AES3 Port A ※ ○ AES3 Port B ※ ○ AUX ○ ※ FlexLink 	AUX LED only active when card installed	
AES3 <> AUX	 AES3 Port A AES3 Port B AUX FlexLink 	 ※ ○ AES3 Port A ※ ○ AES3 Port B ○ ※ AUX ○ ○ FlexLink 	Only available with AUX installed. Additional split of everything to FlexLink ²	
AES3 A <> B + split to AUX	 AES3 Port A AES3 Port B AUX FlexLink 	 ★ AES3 Port A ◆ ★ AES3 Port B ★ ★ AUX ○ ○ FlexLink 	Split and/or translate between Tascam and Yamaha pinout cables. Additional split of everything to FlexLink ²	

LED color	Meaning
் off	Interface not active / involved
green	IN and OUT valid
🔘 white	OUT valid, but no IN detected
e red	 No valid signal or no valid clock. If the clock LEDs show red, make sure the clock mode is set correctly and a valid clock is supplied. If the clock LEDs show green, the clock is ok but the input is not detected. Check the respective connection.
red blinking	Interface is currently booting and not yet active
<mark>∦</mark> yellow blinking	Mode setting active: Alternately blinking LEDs indicate the interfaces between which data is converted; constant lit LEDs indicate splitting destinations. Press MODE button again to cycle through available modes. After 4 seconds, the selected mode is applied automatically.

² All incoming data is also split (output) to FlexLink: AES3 A + B are split to Lane 1 (ch1-64), AUX is split to Lane 2 (ch65-128). The split is not indicated on the LEDs for clarity but is always active.

4.2. Selecting the Route Mode

- Long-press the **O Mode** button until the LEDs are blinking yellow.
- Current routing mode is shown by alternately yellow blinking LEDs, indicating the interfaces where the signal is passed between.
- Press the O Mode button repeatedly to cycle between available modes, until the desired mode is shown.
- After four seconds without interaction, selection mode is terminated and the current setting comes into effect.

4.3. Remarks

- Routing between the selected interfaces is always bi-directional, meaning that audio is passed between them both ways. A working bi-directional link shows
 green for both interfaces. If the LED shows () white, the corresponding interface does only output data but no input on it has been detected. If the LED shows red, the interface is not connected, or the clock is invalid or missing.
- When routing channels to the AUX or FlexLink interface, channels of AES3 Port A and B are concatenated together and appear on the FlexLink interface channels 1-16 and vice versa. The channels of the AUX card can either be mapped to the FlexLink interface directly after that (commencing at channel 17), or to a different block. See <u>7.3 FlexLink channel mapping (DIP3, 7..9)</u>.
- Channel-wise routing and splitting (crosspoint switch/matrix) between all channels is possible when the flexiverter is connected to a multiverter. Routing is then done via the multiverter's web interface or via the command line.

5. CLOCK SETTINGS

5.1. Clock sources and indication

The flexiverter can be clocked from every interface (acting as clock slave), or can run on its internal clock (acting as clock master).

Clock source	"Clock" Indication (Example)	Remarks
AES3(A) Ch1/2	 AES3 Port A AES3 Port B AES3 Port B 48 kHz AUX x2 FlexLink x4 	Channel 1/2 on port A is taken as clock source and must be present
AES3(B) Ch1/2	 AES3 Port A 44.1 kHz AES3 Port B 48 kHz AUX x2 FlexLink x4 	Channel 1/2 on port B is taken as clock source and must be present
Internal ("INT")	 AES3 Port A \ INT AES3 Port B / INT AES3 Port B / 48 kHz AUX x2 FlexLink x4 	Flexiverter acts as clock master.
AUX	 AES3 Port A 44.1 kHz AES3 Port B 48 kHz AUX x2 FlexLink x4 	Only available with AUX installed. AUX card acts as clock master. Use an AUX-WORDCLOCK if you need BNC wordclock I/O.
FlexLink	 AES3 Port A 44.1 kHz AES3 Port B 48 kHz AUX x2 FlexLink x4 	Clock is taken from the peer device (Flexiverter or Multiverter)

LED color	Meaning
o off	Interface not active / not involved
green	Selected, locked and synced
e red	No valid clock. No input connected or no master clock signal detected
<mark>∦</mark> yellow blinking	Clock setting active. Press CLOCK button to go to the next clock source. After 4 seconds, selection mode is terminated and the selected mode comes into effect.

5.2. Selecting the Clock Source

- Long-press the **O Clock** button until the LEDs are blinking yellow.
- Current clock source/modes is shown by blinking LED(s).

- Press the O Clock button repeatedly to cycle between the available clock sources. Depending on the source, you might need to select the desired sample rate (* 44.1 kHz or * 48 kHz) and/or the appropriate multipliers (* x2 / * x4).
- After four seconds without interaction, clock setting is automatically terminated and the selected clock source comes into effect.

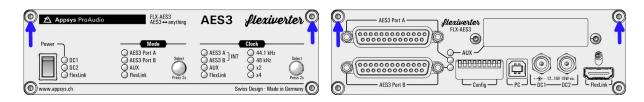


When the samplerate is incorrectly set (e.g. 48k with 96k data), unwanted effects (double samples, zero samples, channel crosstalk etc.) may occur and might not be noticed immediately. Always double-check that the samplerate is set correctly on all involved devices!

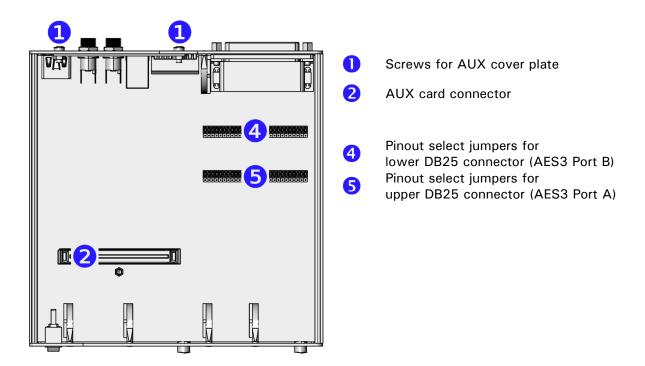
6. ACCESSING INTERNALS

6.1. Opening the device

- Required: Torx T10 screwdriver.
- Power off the device and detach all cables to avoid short-circuit or damage.
- Detach the device from the rack-mount kit.
- Remove the four top screws and the top cover by pulling it upwards:



6.2. Inside view



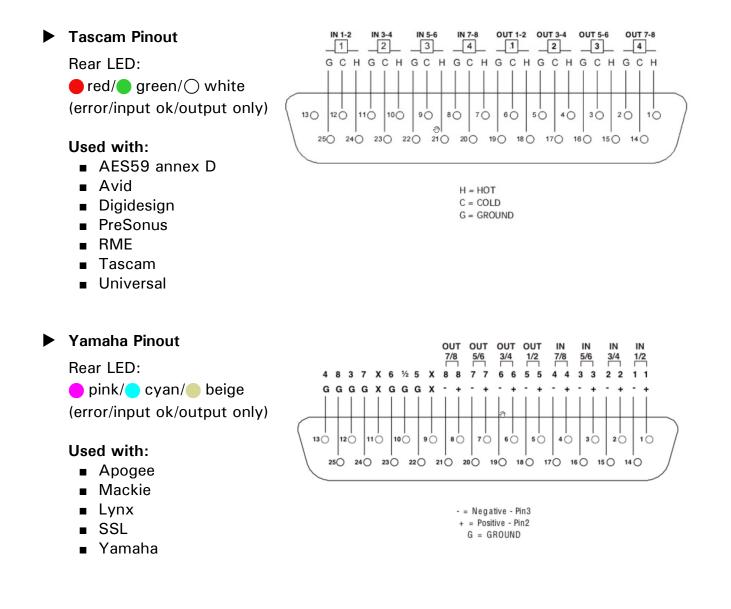
6.3. Installing AUX cards

- Remove the screws holding the cover plate, and the blank cover plate 1
- Insert the AUX card from inside, using the supplied cover plate.
 Make sure it is correctly fitted to the card connector 2
- Secure the card using two cover screws 1
- The card has been installed correctly if you are able to select an audio routing mode involving AUX (long-press MODE button to enter Route Mode Selection).

6.4. Variable DB25 pinout

Historically, there are two different pin assignments for the AES/EBU DB25 connectors around, commonly known as "Yamaha" and "Tascam" style. The FLX-AES3 supports both pinouts by means of internal jumpers. Pinout can be set for both ports independently, meaning you could use the FLX-AES3 as cabling adapter. To select the pinout:

- Locate the jumper blocks 4 and/or 5 and move all jumper blocks (3 each) to the desired position.
- CAUTION: Take care when remove the jumper blocks, pulling both sides equally gently upwards. You might use a knife or a screwdriver to push the blocks upwards. Make sure not to bend any pins!
- The jumper position is not visible when the case is closed, but you can determine it from the color of the LEDs on the back side.



7. **DIP SETTINGS**

Fine-tuning of the flexiverter's built-in interface behavior and of the AUX card can be achieved via DIP settings on the back side. Changing the DIP settings will come immediately into effect. Default setting: all switches up.

7.1. Base device config (DIP1..2)

	Single Wire (full channel count at 48k, 96k and 192k), professional format for metadata*
	Double wire (half channel count), only in 96k and 192k modes
	Quad wire (quarter channel count), only in 192k mode
	Single wire, SPDIF (consumer) format for metadata
* Def	ault setting

erault setting

Single Wire / Double wire / Quad wire:

This is to maintain compatibility with legacy devices. Has only an effect for 88.2/96/176.4/192kHz data (44.1/48kHz data is always "single wire").

In Single Wire mode, always two channels are sent per AES3 connection. In 96kHz modes, they are sent at twice the speed as with 48kHz, and at quadruple speed in 192kHz modes. Supported by most up-to-date devices.

Double Wire mode is a legacy technique to send 96kHz data over 48kHz links, by halving channel count (one channel per AES3 connection). It is also sometimes found on 192kHz devices, allowing 192kHz data to be sent over 96kHz links.

Quad Wire mode takes this principle further by allowing 192kHz data to be sent over 48kHz links, by quartering the channel count (0.5 channels per AES3 connection).

SPDIF: Metadata is sent as "consumer" (S/PDIF) format instead of "professional" (AES3) format. This does ONLY apply to metadata, the actual audio sample data is always transmitted in the same way.

7.2. AUX config (DIP4..6)

Many AUX card provide additional settings, which can be adjusted using these switches. The actual meaning depends on the type of AUX card installed:

AUX-ADAT	Channels 1-8: ADAT format * ³	Channels 9-16: ADAT format* ³	_	AES3 (Professional) ³ only for non-ADAT
	Channels 1-2: AES3/SPDIF format ³	Channels 9-10: AES3/SPDIF format ³	-	SPDIF (Consumer) ³ only for non-ADAT

AUX-AES3	4 5	Single Wire (full channel count at 48k, 96k and 192k), professional format for metadata*
		Double wire (half channel count), only in 96k and 192k modes
		Quad wire (quarter channel count), only in 192k mode
	4 5	Single wire, SPDIF (consumer) format for metadata

AUX-MADI-COAX AUX-MADI-OPTO AUX-MADI-SFP	96k frame* ³	5 6 5 6
	48k frame ³	57ch (use for DiGiCo stagebox control) ³
		56ch output ³
		reserved 5 6

AUX- WORDCLOCK	True to samplerate*
	Always x1 (single speed)

* Default setting

For cards not listed, refer to the manual of the respective card, or check for a newer version of this manual.

³ Applies to outputs only. Input format is always auto-detected, regardless of the switch setting

7.3. FlexLink channel mapping (DIP3, 7..9)

The FlexLink interface can transmit 192x192 channels, organized in three lanes with 64 channels each. The channel assignment can be adjusted to meet the user's needs, particularly when the device is used in double-FLX configuration (to make sure that all interfaces and channels are mapped to the desired target on the peer FLX device.

- Concat/Separate: Determines if AUX channels are seamlessly concatenated after AES3 A + B (commencing at channel 17), or if they are mapped to a separate block. "Concat" is useful e.g. with the AUX-AES3 card, to obtain a contiguous block total of 24x24 channels of AES3.
- Lane Assignment (DIP7..9): Controls the mapping of the blocks to the FlexLink lanes. This is useful in double-flexiverter configurations, to make each data appear on the desired interface on the peer device.

Lane 1 (ch1-64)	Lane 2 (ch65-128)	Lane 3 (ch129-192)
AES3A + B(+ AUX)*	-	-
9	AES3A + B(+ AUX)	-
- 9	-	AES3A + B(+ AUX)
AES3 A + B	AUX	-
AES3 A + B		AUX
AUX 9	AES3 A + B	-
AUX 9	-	AES3 A + B
9	AES3 A + B	AUX
- 9	AUX	AES3 A + B
	 AES3A + B(+ AUX)* - - AES3 A + B AES3 A + B AES3 A + B AUX AUX AUX - 	AES3A + B(+ AUX)* - AES3A + B(+ AUX)* AES3A + B(+ AUX) - - AES3 A + B - AES3 A + B AUX AES3 A + B - AES3 A + B - AES3 A + B - AUX -

* Default setting

8. SPECIAL OPERATING MODES

Special operating modes are accessible by *holding down the* **O** Mode *button while switching on the device.* Press **O** Mode again to switch to the next mode:

Version Display \Rightarrow LED Test \Rightarrow Interface Self-Test \Rightarrow Normal operation

8.1. Version Display

- The firmware version "X.Y" and the hardware version "Z" are shown on the LEDs on the front panel:
 - The number of opink LEDs lit indicate the major firmware number "X"
 - The number of e orange LEDs lit indicate the minor firmware number "Y"
 - The number of e green LEDs lit indicate the hardware version "Z"

Example: One (1) opink LED and three (3) openoidate or ange LEDs means "Firmware 1.3", zero green LEDs mean HW version 0.

- Blinking LEDs mean that the currently installed firmware is a "beta" version. It is advised to upgrade to an official release version as soon as it is released.
- Press **O Mode** again to proceed to LED test.

8.2. LED Test

- All LEDs on the front and on the back should show white.
- Press **O Mode** again to proceed to Interface Self-Test.

8.3. Interface Self-Test

All built-in interfaces and the optional AUX card can be tested for correct operation by the user. This is done using the special self-test mode, in which the device outputs a special random test pattern on all channels. This pattern is looped back via an external cable into the corresponding inputs, where it is checked for consistency.

 Self-test mode is indicated with "CLOCK" showing INT/48kHz in
 cyan color. The "MODE" LEDs indicate
 red (error/no connection) or
 green (loopback data received ok) for the respective interface.

- Make sure both ports "AES3 A" and "AES3 B" are set to the same pinout, matching the pinout of the loop-back cable.
- Connect "AES3 A" to "AES3 B" using the loop-back cable.
- If an AUX card is installed, connect all output ports of the AUX card to the respective inputs using a loop-back cable. Note: NOT supported with AUX-ADC, AUX-AES67, AUX-AVB, AUX-DANTE.

8.4. Firmware update

The firmware can be updated from any Windows PC over the rear USB port.

To update:

- Download the latest firmware from <u>www.appsys.ch/FLX-AES3</u>
- Unpack the firmware package FLX-AES3-Firmware_x.y.zip
- Connect your PC via USB to the flexiverter
- Power ON the device
- Run the FLX-AES3_Updater.bat file from the firmware package and follow the instructions on the screen.
- Power cycle the device to effect the update.



Thanks to the special design of the updater, it is virtually impossible to damage ("brick") the device during update. If updating fails or is interrupted, restart the procedure. You can also can go back to any older firmware version at any time

9. SPECIFICATIONS

Parameter	Value		
Dimensions	152x44x153mm (WxHxD) excluding connectors/buttons 152x44x163mm (WxHxD) including device-side connectors/buttons		
Weight	590g		
Operating temperature	0 + 55°C, non-condensing		
Storage temperature	-40 + 85°C, non-condensing		
Power consumption	+ 15V DC, 9W max (18W to power two devices via FlexLink) Triple-redundant input (2x DC, 1x via FlexLink)		
AES3 ports (A, B)	Input and output fully transformer-isolated according to AES/EBU requirements Maximum speed: 192kHz single-wire Pinout: Tascam(AES) or Yamaha, selectable for each port via internal jumper blocks		
Cable lengths	FlexLink	1m / 3ft. max. recommended	
	AES3	100m / 300 ft., depending on the peer device	
Channel count	16x16 @ 48/96/192 kHz (Single-wire) 8x8 @ 96kHz, 8x8 @ 192kHz (Dual wire), 4x4 @ 192 kHz (Quad wire) Additional AUX channels depending on AUX card		
Sample rates	44.1kHz, 48kHz, 88.2kHz, 96kHz, 176.4kHz, 192kHz 88.2/96kHz can operate in single-wire or double-wire mode 176.4/192kHz can operate in single-wire, double-wire or quad-wire mode		
Latency	Conversion AES3 <> FlexLink: 2 samples Conversion AES3 <> AUX: 4 samples plus AUX card latency (depending on AUX card)		
Internal clock precision	Jitter: Phase RMS: <1ps, Peak-peak: <50ps. Stability: ±25 ppm including all effects including aging, temperatur, supply, calibration, shock, vibration		

10. ACCESSORIES

10.1. Rack mount kits

For integration in 19" racks, two kinds of rack mount kits / brackets are available:

- **RM-FLX1**: For mounting one FLX device into 1U 19" space
- **RM-FLX2**: For mounting two FLX devices into 1U 19" space

10.2. Additional (redundant) power supply

- PWR-FLX: Additional power supply to provide redundancy for single-FLX configurations
- FlexLink Cable 0.5m. HDMI cable with locking screws

11. APPENDIX

11.1. Warranty

We offer a full two (2) year warranty from the date of purchase. Within this period, we repair or exchange your device free of charge in case of any defect^{*}. If you experience any problems, please contact us first. We try hard to solve your problem as soon as possible, even after the warranty period.

* Not covered by the warranty are any damages resulting out of improper use, willful damage, normal wear-out (especially of the connectors) or connection with incompatible devices.

11.2. Manufacturer contact

Appsys ProAudio	www.appsys.ch
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Bullingerstr. 63 / BK241	Phone: +41 43 537 28 51
CH-8004 Zürich	Mobile: +41 76 747 07 42
Switzerland	

11.3. FCC Compliance

This equipment has been tested and found to comply with the limits for a class B digital device, pursuant to part 15 of the FCC Rules. These limits are designed to provide reasonable protection against harmful interference in a residential installation. This equipment generates, uses and can radiate radio frequency energy and if not installed and used in accordance with the instructions, may cause harmful interference to radio communications. However, there is no guarantee that interference will not occur in a particular installation. If this equipment does cause harmful interference to radio or television reception, which can be determined by turning the equipment off and on, the user is encouraged to try to correct the interference by one or more of the following measures:

- Reorient or relocate the receiving antenna
- Increase the separation between the equipment and receiver
- Connect the equipment into an outlet on a circuit different from that to which the receiver is connected
- Consult the dealer or an experienced radio/TV technician for help

This equipment has been verified to comply with the limits for a class B computing device, pursuant to FCC Rules. In order to maintain compliance with FCC regulations, shielded cables must be used with this equipment. Operation with non-approved equipment or unshielded cables is likely to result in interference to radio and TV reception. The user is cautioned that changes and modifications made to the equipment without the approval of manufacturer could void the user's authority to operate this equipment.

11.4. Recycling



According to EU directive 2002/96/EU, electronic devices with a crossed-out dustbin may not be disposed into normal domestic waste. Please return the products back for environment-friendly recycling, we'll refund you the shipping fees.

11.5. Document Revision History

1: Initial release

11.6. About this document

All trademarks mentioned in this document are property of the respective owners. All information provided here is subject to change without prior notice.

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IDENT 9.00.16143.00

Declaration of Conformity

The manufacturer:

Appsys ProAudio Rolf Eichenseher Bullingerstr. 63 BK 241 CH-8004 Zürich Switzerland

declares under sole responsibility that the products mentioned below:

Flexiverter FLX-AES3

meet the requirements of the following standards:

EN 55024:2010 EN 55032:2015 Class B EN 61000-3-2:2006/A1/A2:2009 EN 61000-3-3:2009 EN 61000-6-3:2007/A1:2011

Therefore the product fulfills the demand of the following EC directives:

73/23/EWG (Directive related to electrical equipment designed for use within certain voltage limits)

> **89/336/EWG** (Directive related to electromagnetic compatibility)

The devices are marked accordingly. Zürich, 21.11.2021

R. Cilm

Rolf Eichenseher (CEO)