For many people, there is a tendency to gloss over the OSI model and just talk about networking-branded protocols. However, understanding the OSI model will bring clarity to your understanding of digital audio networking (Fig. 2).ĊDue to the integration of pro AV systems, true networking schemes are vitally important. A distinction must be made between audio networking and digital audio transports. Audio networks are defined as those meeting the commonly used standard protocols, where at least the Physical and Data Link layer technologies and standard network appliances (such as hubs and switches) can be used. There are several technologies that meet this requirement using IEEE 1394 (Firewire), Ethernet, and ATM technologies, to name a few. However, because Ethernet is widely deployed in applications ranging from large enterprises to the home, this will be the technology of focus. All other technologies that do not meet this definition will be considered digital audio transport systems, and not a digital audio network.ĊThere are at least 15 schemes for digital audio transport systems and audio networking. Three of the four technologies presented here have been selected because of their wide acceptance in the industry based on the number of manufacturers that support it.ĊLet's compare four CAT-5/Ethernet technologies: Aviom, EtherSound, CobraNet, and