

3.13.5 Sound Card Installation Facts

Sound cards should be treated with care. Below are tips and suggestions for installing, configuring and troubleshooting sound cards.

This lesson covers the following topics:

- Configure the system sound
- Troubleshoot sound problems

Configure the System Sound

Be aware of the following when configuring system sound:

- Many motherboards include an onboard sound card. Use the connectors on the motherboard's I/O plate to connect components to the onboard sound card.
- Sound cards are typically added to a computer using PCI or PCIe slots. Some sound cards also connect through USB. External sound cards for laptops can use an ExpressCard slot.
- When installing a sound card using an expansion slot, make sure to disable the onboard sound card in the CMOS configuration.
- After installing the sound card, install the drivers and other software that came with the sound card.
- In Control Panel, use the Sound applet to:
 - Configure settings for sound card connections such as speakers, audio input, and microphone.
 - Identify the sources that you want to record.
 - Configure sounds to play with system events or to play a sound to test your configuration.
- An audio *codec* is a specific method of formatting sound files. Common codecs include WAV, WMV, AIFF, and MP3. To play sounds saved using these formats, your computer must have the corresponding codec installed.
 - You can see the list of installed codecs in System Information.
 - By default, Windows comes with common codecs installed. Other codecs might be installed as you add other software.

Troubleshoot Sound Problems

To troubleshoot sound problems, try the following:

- Make sure that the speakers are connected to the sound card and that the speakers have power.
- Check the volume setting on the speaker and the back of the sound card (if present).
- Check software sound settings. Verify that the sound is not muted and check mixer settings.
- If some files play but others do not, make sure you have the right codecs installed for playing that file type.
- If you are working with a built-in audio interface, verify that it is correctly configured in the BIOS. If you have installed an add-in card, make sure the built-in audio is disabled.
- If no sound plays, make sure the card is seated, check for resource conflicts, and update the drivers if necessary.
- Ensure that the sound card is not experiencing electromagnetic interference (EMI) from the disk drive or power supply. To remedy this problem, move the affected card to an expansion slot located away from the source of EMI.

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