okto research

okto research dac8 PRO v1.5 firmware

release announcement

Dear dac8 PRO owners,

we hope that our product has been enhancing your listening experiences, enriching your favorite music, and inspiring a journey of musical discovery. We are pleased to announce the release of the long-awaited v1.5 firmware version. This update addresses known bugs, enables compatibility with a newly released custom Okto Research ASIO driver for Windows, and introduces several new features.

This update employs our custom USB update mechanism with packages delivered as executable files for Windows, MacOS, and Linux. For each operating system, we have created comprehensive, step-by-step installation guides. You can access the release note which includes these guides and the download link by clicking the button below:
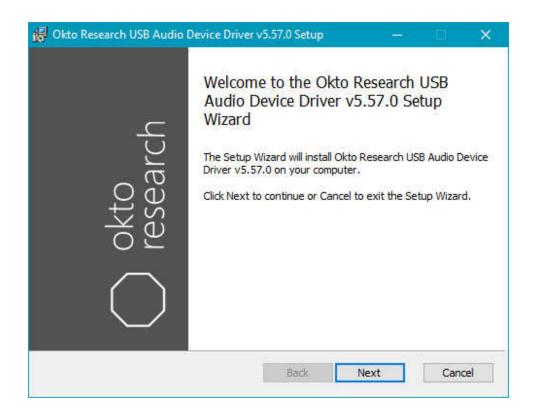
v1.5 firmware release note

It's important to note that Windows users may encounter small

inconvenience during the firmware update process. We've found that the generic USB library included in Windows, which our update utility relies on, may cause issues due to inadequate timeout during a specific phase of the update process. This behavior can vary depending on the Windows build version, among other factors. As a solution, we offer an alternative update method that uses a bootable Linux Mint USB stick and is independent of the operating system.

Another issue concerns a bug found in units with the earliest firmware versions from 2020, which prevents a successful update regardless of the operating system used. Unfortunately, at this time, we do not have an alternative method to resolve this. If your unit is affected, please contact us to request a hardware programming tool that can be connected to the dac8 PRO's digital input board, bypassing the bug. That will be provided at no cost, however we may ask you to forward it to another user in your country after your successful update, with us taking care of any associated shipping expenses.

We would like to stress that this bug poses no risk of damaging or 'bricking' the unit; it merely prevents the update from being installed successfully.

Firmware version 1.5 brings compatibility with a more user-friendly update method featuring a graphical user interface. We are dedicated to enhancing our products through ongoing updates, and we strive to bring more value to our customers, regardless of when they made their purchase or whether they are original or second-hand owners.

In v1.5, we have also implemented a substantial modification to the USB descriptors of the dac8 PRO, enabling 2 and 6 (or 5.1) channel DSD playback on Linux (using MPD/ALSA). This is important not only for Linux users, but also for anyone using a Linux-based streamer. Previously, only 8-channel DSD playback was possible because the unit only exposed an 8-channel DSD configuration. While Windows and MacOS can upconvert the number of DSD channels, Linux, unfortunately, cannot. Our novel approach involves adding separate configurations for 2 and 6 channels

into the descriptors, with the resulting number of 6 configurations (or altsets) compared to the conventional 4 (with first 3 being PCM configurations). We have tested this extensively and haven't found any side effects. However, if you experience any unusual behaviour, please let us know.

There's no urgency to install the update if you're not facing any issues. Nonetheless, we recommend doing so as future firmware versions will employ the newly introduced GUI-based update process.

Thank you for your patience in awaiting this update and for your continued support. We value your feedback and look forward to bringing you even more exciting updates in the future. A follow-up with the Okto Research 2023 newsletter, detailing our future plans, will be coming shortly. Until then, happy listening!

Pavel Krasensky, Okto Research founder and developer