Having an open mind is not as simple as it sounds. Many of us through upbringing, work and our hobbies can form rigid views that are hard for some to look at differently when faced with an alternative view.

My hobby is HiFi, it has been my passion from when I first heard a pair of Dynaco A25 speakers driven by a Rogers Ravensbourne amp fed from a Garrard SP25/Shure combo turntable in 1971 that I bought on hire purchase!.

Over the years my system has changed, but my fundamental belief has always been that the first principle with upgrades or changes to kit is to see how far I can go with the current set up before embarking on change to amplifier speakers or source. I have an open mind and over the years have experimented with power conditioning/regeneration, different cables, sound and vibration isolation to name but a few.

Fortunately, this open-minded view has saved me money. My current reference system of Streaming amp, server and speakers have been in situ for over 4 years now, speakers since 2009.

In recent years there has been an increase in the availability of audio grade ethernet cables, audio grade ethernet switches and analogue/digital and power supply grounding devices.

A quick look at my reference system and cabling inventory below will show you that I have invested in lowering the noise floor to achieve more enjoyment and pleasure from the music that I listen to almost every day.

Paul Clark asked me at a recent visit to the HiFi Lounge if I knew anything about the ADOT Fibre Network Kit that had been "sitting around for a while". I had not heard of it and came away with a sample MC02 to review.

Originally designed for use with Melco S100 servers (MC01), the MC02 has two media converters, 1.5 metre fibre links and a linear plug top power supply that adds no noise when powering up the media converters, basically the two black boxes orange fibre cable and the LPSU. Build quality is superb, is well packed in a sturdy box and good instructions on how to slip the system into a networked streaming application. All visible and internal components are of the highest quality. Installation was a breeze, Paul advising me on the dipswitch settings on the media converters.

ADOT explains that behind the 0's and 1's, hi-fi electrical signals are still analogue, and just as susceptible to the influence from noise and interference. This additional noise damages the integrity of the pulse edges. This uncertain transition point, of a noisy pulse edge, results in timing errors and jitter. By breaking the conducted signal, we remove the interference and isolate the hi-fi system. This is done with fibre optics—now the data can be communicated to the digital components, but without any risk of introducing any conducted interference and noise.

When Paul asked for a review, I was using a well-respected and reviewed 8 port audio grade ethernet switch to isolate the incoming data before it enters my Innuos server. I have been enjoying great pleasure listening to my system, especially with improvements this piece of kit had been providing

since it was purchased, in pace, rhythm and timing. The ADOT MC02 and the audio grade ethernet switch are very similar price wise, the switch at £499incl VAT and the MC02 at £550incl VAT. Essentially, they are designed to do the same thing, isolating our servers from digital noise, see comments by ADOT above. I have read that ethernet is great at sharing noise on a network.

Since early June I have been enjoying the benefits of full fibre installation into the house. Fibre cabling generally provides better data transfer as the data is transmitted via light rather than through cable. Fibre stops at the wall socket unfortunately, copper then to the router and then to the Innuos Zenmini III server. So that the MC02 could run in, I took out the switch and installed the MC02 (with dipswitches set at 100Mpbs) and waited a week listening to background music sourced from Radio Paradise (MQA stream) via BluOs.

So that I could tell what the MC02 could do when serious listening began, I took it out of the data stream and listened to my system for a few hours without it, i.e. no data stream isolation. After an hour or so listening to my reference tracks as described below it was immediately obvious during this period that the sound of my system had changed dramatically.

The soundstage had substantially collapsed, bass was flabby and had lost some depth plus the amount of inner detail I am used to was lost. Pace, Rhythm and Timing (PRaT factor) all sadly lacking. I was not enjoying what I was listening to at all finding it tracks very uninteresting with my concentration wavering.

No point in listening to this configuration any more, I re - installed the MC02, powered from one of my PS Audio Stellar P3 regenerated power outlets as before and began serious listening.

So, what did I listen to? My usual review set of songs.

I have various albums that I use for reviews. I know these albums and tracks well and chose them for their fine recording quality but also for musical enjoyment and the ability to draw the listener in.

Artist	Album	Track	Source
Black Atlas	Dream Awake	*Do For Love*	TIDAL FLAC 44.1kHz 24bit 2ch MQA 44.1kHz
Nils Lofgren	Acoustic Live	*Keith Don't Go*	TIDAL FLAC 44.1kHz 16bit 2ch
Nick Warren	La Fabrica (EP)	*La Fabrica (Club Mix)*	TIDAL FLAC 44.1kHz 16bit 2ch
Vince Guaraldi	A Boy Named Charlie Brown	*Charlie Brown Theme*	TIDA FLAC 48kHZ 24 bit 2ch MQA 192kHz
The Staves	Mexico	*Mexico*	TIDAL FLAC 44.1kHz 16bit 2ch MQA 44.1kHz

First impressions were favourable, for a start all of my system attributes lost without the switch and the MC02 returned, but with an increased sense of openness allowing a more relaxed and informative listening experience to return to my listening room!

The PRaT factor had returned and I was once again able to hear music that I could enjoy and it was so much easier to listen to, artists were so much clearer in the mix with wider soundstage and deeper more articulate bass.

For example, subterranean bass on the Black Atlas track was a tad lower but was tighter and had more impact.

Nick Warren is a master at creating sonic soundscapes, on La Fabrica (Club Mix) he mixes vocals with electronic sounds in an almost mesmerising fashion. Drum beats dominate up to the 1minute 30 second point when deep bass cuts in and drives the track thereafter. With the MC02 I could hear way more into the mix, with sounds masked before (even though I knew they were there when using the switch).

I noticed that on the Nils Lofgren Keith Don't Go his guitar playing seemed more relaxed if that makes sense? Pace was enhanced the speed of his fingers on strings and fret was breath-taking. His vocals were also easier to listen to.

The Vince Guaraldi Trio are so laid back. The performances on this album are mesmerising, to the point that I was able sink into the mix like walking between the speakers and saying hi to Vince himself.

The Staves appeared to be more in harmony with each other more of the timbre of each of the sisters voices more discernible.

These differences were more than subtle when compared to the audio grade switch. I swapped the MC02 with the switch. Listened again to reference tracks and swapped back to the MC02, listened again to the reference tracks.

With the MC02 I was getting more enjoyment from the music. This could only mean that the MC02 was allowing my system to deliver greater clarity/transparency and detail, in addition to enhanced pace, rhythm and timing.

I have upgraded my system with the ADOT MC02, another step in my quest to conquer noise, the final frontier.

My current reference system:

Equipment -

Sky full fibre Broadband (replaced copper/fibre hybrid)
Innuos Zenmini III plus Innuos LPSU
NAD M10 streaming amplifier (Dirac pro in use)
PS Audio Stellar P3 power regenerator
Usher Mini Dancer 2 loudspeakers
Townshend Audio Seismic Podiums
Three tier Atacama Vogue bamboo equipment stand
ADOT MC02 Fibre Network Kit (replaced my audiograde switch)

Cables:

Route	Manufacturer/Model	Termination
Incoming fibre to Sky hub (replaced copper/hybrid/ADSL cable)	Audioquest Cinammon (directional)	RJ45
Sky Hub to ADOT MC02	Audioquest Vodka (directional)	RJ45
ADOT MC02 to Innuos Zenmini III	Audioquest Vodka (directional)	RJ45
ADOT media converter to media converter (black box to black box)	ADOT Fibre Optic (non directional)	Single Mode Duplex Fibre Optic Adapter
Innuos Zenmini III to NAD M10	Curious Ethernet Cable (directional)	RJ45

Speaker cables – main single wire	Black Rhodium Proto 3200 complete with ferrite RF reduction	Locking bananas
Speaker cables – jumpers	Black Rhodium Proto 3200	Locking bananas/spade
Power cables	Nanotec Strada 309 (custom made)	Furutech gold plated both ends with gold plated fuses