CAD Ethernet Control - £1250

Streaming has come a long way. Some say too far, its undermining everything that vinyl lovers have said, and are saying in some circles, that anything not analogue at source is not HiFi.

Others are saying that how can a stream of noughts and ones carried on tiny cables and or sent through the ether on a "dirty" carrier (broadband) can reproduce the subtleties of a music performance?

On the market is a range of add-ons designed to clean up digital streaming data and bring digital audio and analogue audio closer together.

The Ethernet Control is the latest addition to the CAD arsenal of products designed to clean up the data flow into our hifi systems.

The best way to describe the Ethernet Control is to quote CAD:

"The CAD Ethernet Control is designed to reduce unwanted high frequency noise on the Ethernet Network connection in audio and video equipment and will work with both streaming services (Spotify, TIDAL, Qobuz, etc.) **and** *locally stored music files".*

Paul Clark from the HiFi lounge in Biggleswade sent me an ethernet control to write a customer review. This is not my first review for Paul, I have reviewed many similar products over the past few years, mainly similar but not the same solutions to noise and such like on the incoming data that prevents the full capabilities of the audio stream being realised.

I already use an ADOT MC02 Audiophile Fibre Network Connectivity kit and a CAD USB control in my system. Both of these pieces of kit reduce the level of noise that my HiFi Rose RS520 streaming amplifier "sees" from the Sky full fibre broadband connection into my house. I have also invested in shielded ethernet cables from Audioquest (Vodka and Cinnamon) plus Curious Cable Ethernet.

With this level of "digital cleaning", for want of a better term, already working hard to reduce noise and interference I was not expecting a great improvement in my listening enjoyment from the CAD Ethernet Control (CADEC). I decided to remove the ADOT and the CAD USB Control when reviewing the CADEC.

I listened to the system like this (no digital cleaning at all) for a few days, the drop in sound quality was substantial I must admit. Having used the CAD USB Control for a few years now and the ADOT for a bit longer I expect to hear more from recordings now, not more bass or crisper highs for example but more enjoyment from hearing more of what the musicians put into their performance and how recording Engineers had captured it.

Improvements were immediately noticeable with the CADEC plugged directly into the RS520 that was connected directly to my Sky router via the Curious Cable Ethernet cable. A palpable sense of being more involved in the performance was obvious on some recordings, for example on the track Galaxia from the Fourplay album *Heartfelt* (Tidal Flac 16/44.1 MQA) the musicians were more of a whole yet I could pick each one out easily. There is some chatter on this track between musicians that was easily heard. This increased sense of being there was very enjoyable. The musicians al seemed to be having a good time, getting their elbows out so to speak.

On the track Afterglow Lydia Ainsworth's album *Darling of the Afterglow* (Tidal Flac16/44.1). Ainsworth's voice was a mesmerising entity floating in space, a halo of ambience surrounding her. A track I use for bass articulation and dexterity is on the track Bass and Drum Intro on Nils Lofgren Band Live (Tidal Flac 16/44.1). The bass playing is immaculate and with the CADEC it I was immediately aware of an enhanced sense of speed in the bass playing coupled with more air movement in the room if that was possible. I'm not sure if that is what happened but that's what I was aware of.

I listened for many more days on and off and took the CADEC to my mate Paul to listen to. We were unable to fit it to the ethernet RJ45 on his NAD M66 due to the close proximity of two RCA sockets. We plugged it into his ADOT MC02 kit then via his Curious Cable Ethernet cable into the M66. The improvements in the sound seemed less obvious but nevertheless audible and detected.

Back home I reinstalled the CADEC directly into the RS520 to remind myself of the sound before I took it for my friend Paul to experience. Then I removed it and put my system back (ADOT MC02 kit and the CAD USB control) and listened to the system. There was a drop in sound quality but not by a substantial amount, very subtle but perceptible for sure. My system is very good at allowing music to reach out to me, being articulate and detailed providing an excellent foundation for musical enjoyment. Returning the CADEC back into the system resulted in a better sense of flow if you like to the music.

In summary, the CAD Ethernet Control "does what it says on the tin". This is clearly demonstrated in the increased smoothness and articulation brought to the music played. Musicians were more easily identified, small details could be sensed for example like musicians and vocalists moving around in the soundstage, enhanced personal satisfaction during listening sessions brought about without doubt by the "digital cleaning" on offer.

At £1250 the CADEC was tempting. I returned it to the Hifi Lounge reluctantly. Currently, with the ADOT and USB control my data stream is already being cleaned. I also use a PS Audio Stellar P3 to clean the AC power to the RS520 and the ADOT. However, I do miss the CADEC. Perhaps I can twist Paul Clark's arm for another listen!

My reference system –

- Sky full fibre Broadband
- HiFi Rose RS520 streaming amplifier
- PS Audio Stellar P3 power regenerator
- Usher Mini Dancer 2 loudspeakers
- Townshend Audio Seismic Podiums
- Two tier Atacama Vogue bamboo equipment stand
- ADOT MC02 Fibre Network Kit
- CAD USB Control

Cables –

Route	Manufacturer/Model	Termination
Incoming fibre to Sky hub (replaced copper/hybrid/ADSL cable)	3m Audioquest Cinnamon (directional)	RJ45
Sky Hub to ADOT MC02	1m 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
ADOT media converter to HiFi Rose RS520	0.8m Curious Ethernet Cable (directional)	RJ45
Speaker cables – main single wire	Black Rhodium Proto 3400 complete with ferrite RF reduction	Locking bananas
Speaker cables – jumpers	Black Rhodium Waltz	Locking bananas/spade
Power cables	Nanotec Strada 309 (custom made)	Furutech gold plated both ends with audiophile fuses