

ON TEST

Oehlbach  
Digi Bridge



lite

Test rating

2022

*Recommendation*

[www.lite-magazin.de](http://www.lite-magazin.de)

Oehlbach Digi Bridge

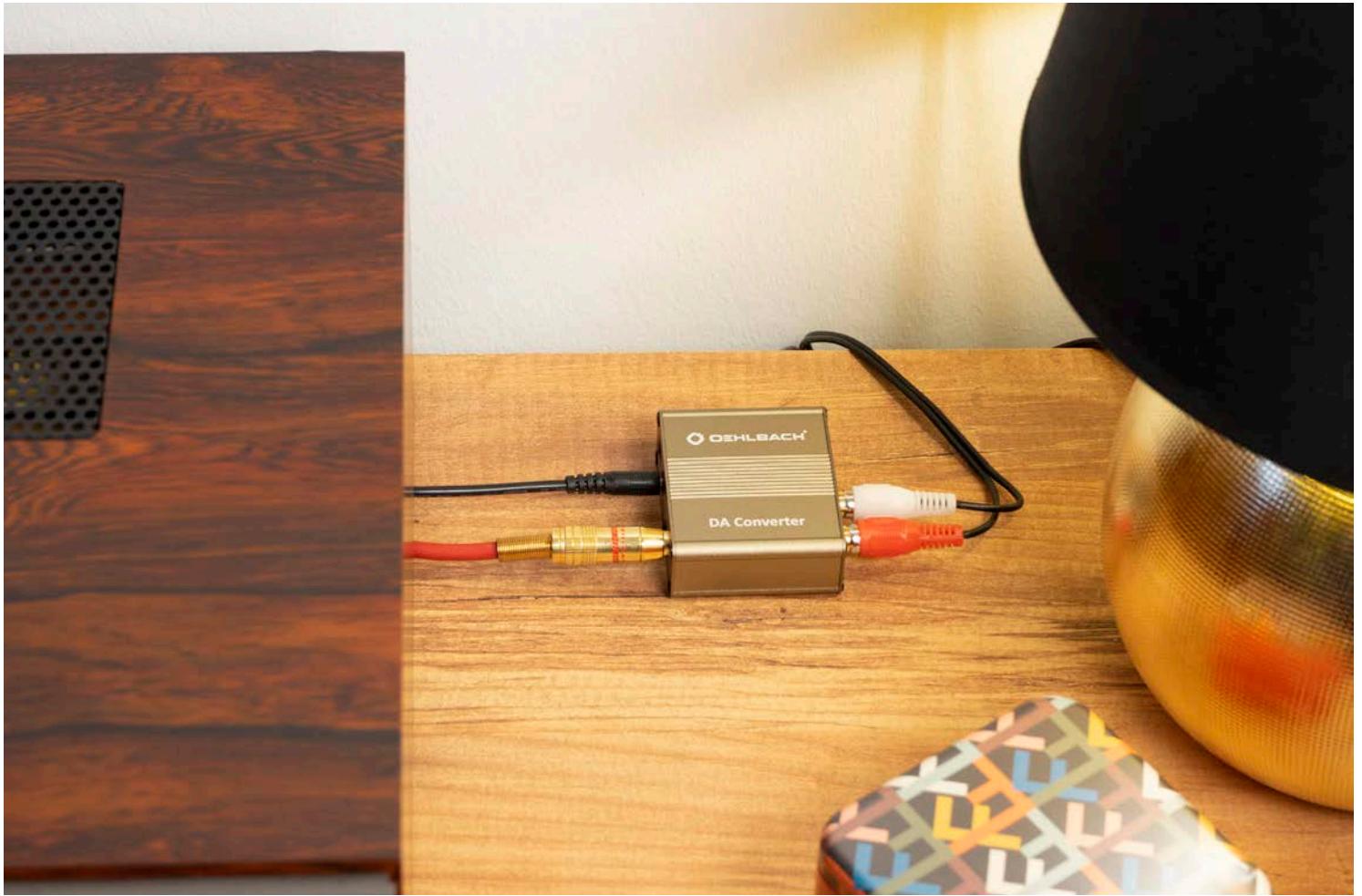
# PRACTICAL, COMPACT DIGITAL-TO-ANALOG CONVERTER



Practical  
all-rounder

■ Quit small  
and inconspicuous





*The Digi Bridge from Oehlbach is the bridge between modern digital and existing analog technology.*

## Oehlbach Digi Bridge

# Practical, compact digital-to-analog converter

**With the Digi Bridge, Oehlbach presents bridge technology in the literal sense. And addresses a classic problem. The change from old analog to new digital technology. The test candidate from Oehlbach is intended to bridge this gap. With high-quality cables for each life situation the manufacturer inspires for a long time. Can the level also be maintained with devices? Let's take a closer look and find out whether this is a real problem solver or just another gadget on the test bench.**

By now, people have become accustomed to small loudspeakers. Most current smart TVs still have cinch inputs so that VHS devices or old video game consoles can be connected. But as soon as it comes to analogue outputs, the yield is usually much smaller. If you want to connect your modern TV set to a stereo system or active loudspeakers, you're left with nothing, at least in the figurative sense. There is not enough money in the budget for a modern stereo system.

And the speakers built into the smart TVs can at best be regarded as a makeshift solution that is only good for the sound of the daily news. So what now? I have a few good speakers. The only thing missing is the possibility to connect TV and stereo. Some sets have a jack socket, but this is only for headphones. But this is only intended for headphones and is hardly capable of supplying enough juice for large speakers. Not to mention the qualitative conversion of the sound. For this scenario, the test candidate is exactly the right gadget.

### Performance Oehlbach Digi Bridge

The inconspicuous, small box performs a simple but extremely practical task. It creates the bridge for the audio signal between the optical output on the TV and the analogue sound converter. This little helper is not a decoder and cannot process sound for multiple channels. If the playback device outputs a surround or DTS signal, nothing happens.



With an optical Toslink input, the small converter is a good addition to modern smart TVs. Streaming players can transmit HiRes via coaxial S/PDIF. A small switch switches between the sources if necessary.

We are dealing here with a pure converter. It converts a digital data stream into an analogue signal. It is essential that the signal is output from the player as a PCM signal. All the devices I tested do this by default. In case of doubt, the corresponding output mode can be found in the settings of the respective device. Sample rates from 32 to 192 kilohertz are supported. The bit depth can be 16 or 24. The digital audio signal can be fed through an optical Toslink cable or an electrical coaxial cable.

### Short digression: What is PCM

Pulse code modulation is the process of converting analogue signals into binary data. This method is probably best known in the audio sector. The signal is sampled several thousand times per second. For a CD, for example, 44,100 times. The number of samples per second is called the sample rate. And the higher the sample rate, the more detailed an analogue signal can be stored. At the time, 44.1 kilohertz was set for CDs for good reasons. It represents the minimum number of times a sound must be digitally sampled before it can be converted back into an analogue signal without audible loss. Depending on the area, higher sample rates can be used. In video, for example, 48 kilohertz is the standard. But that's just a side note. What is important for us is that the Digi Bridge does not convert further encoded audio data into an analogue signal.

### Structure and optics

The Digi Bridge is quite small and inconspicuous. The brown metallic alloy fits very well, in my opinion. Brown as a classic colour scheme for domestic entertainment electronics. The metallic shine as a reference to the modern, digital present. Whether this is a coincidence or a statement remains to be seen. In any case, it is chic. The whole thing is made of sturdy metal and firmly screwed together. No plastic, no glue.



Recommendation

www.lite-magazin.de

Modell:	Oehlbach Digi Bridge
Product category:	Digital-to-analogue converter
Price:	76,99 Euro
Warranty:	2 years
Versions:	- Metallic brown
Distribution:	Oehlbach Kabel GmbH, Köln 02203 2974700 www.oehlbach.com/de

Dimensions	
(HWD):	23 x 62 x 54 mm
Weight:	210 g
Inputs:	1 x S/PDIF coaxial 1 x Toslink optisch
Outlets:	1 x Cinch Stereo 1 x 3,5 mm Klinke
Supported	
Sampling rates:	- PCM bis 192 kHz, 24 Bit

Scope of delivery
1 x Digi Bridge
1 x USB power supply
1 x Operating instructions

Pros and cons
+ compact dimensions
+ versatile
+ stable, high-quality workmanship
+ clean, neutral sound
- PCM only
- USB cable quite short

Grading	
Rating:	Recommendation
Class:	entry-level
Price / Performance:	very good





Despite the compact dimensions and a place of use that will probably often be out of sight, Oehlbach offers a sturdy metal housing.

The construction is very simple. On one side, the digital signal is fed in. There is one socket for an optical Toslink cable and one for an electrical coaxial cable. The source can be selected by means of a small switch. It would also be possible to connect different devices, for example a console and a CD player. On the other side, the analogue signal can be tapped. Gold-plated cinch connections and a 3.5 millimetre jack socket are available for this purpose.

## Connection and commissioning

Two options are available for the power supply. Oehlbach includes a USB socket adapter and a relatively short cable with a hollow plug. If you need a little more flexibility for the set-up location, you can use the micro USB socket next to it for the power supply. The converter requires just five volts of input voltage. Therefore, there is basically no limit to the cable length. As soon as the power supply is established, a small green LED lights up. This is clearly visible, but not so bright that you have an unwanted light source behind the TV. For the setup, I connect the Digi Bridge to the audio output of my Smart TV with a Toslink cable. I set the switch to Optical and connect my stereo system via the RCA plugs. And what can I say. Everything works as it should. Clean, dynamic sound comes out of the speakers of my stereo system. There is no trace of buzzing, hissing or other unwanted accompanying noises.



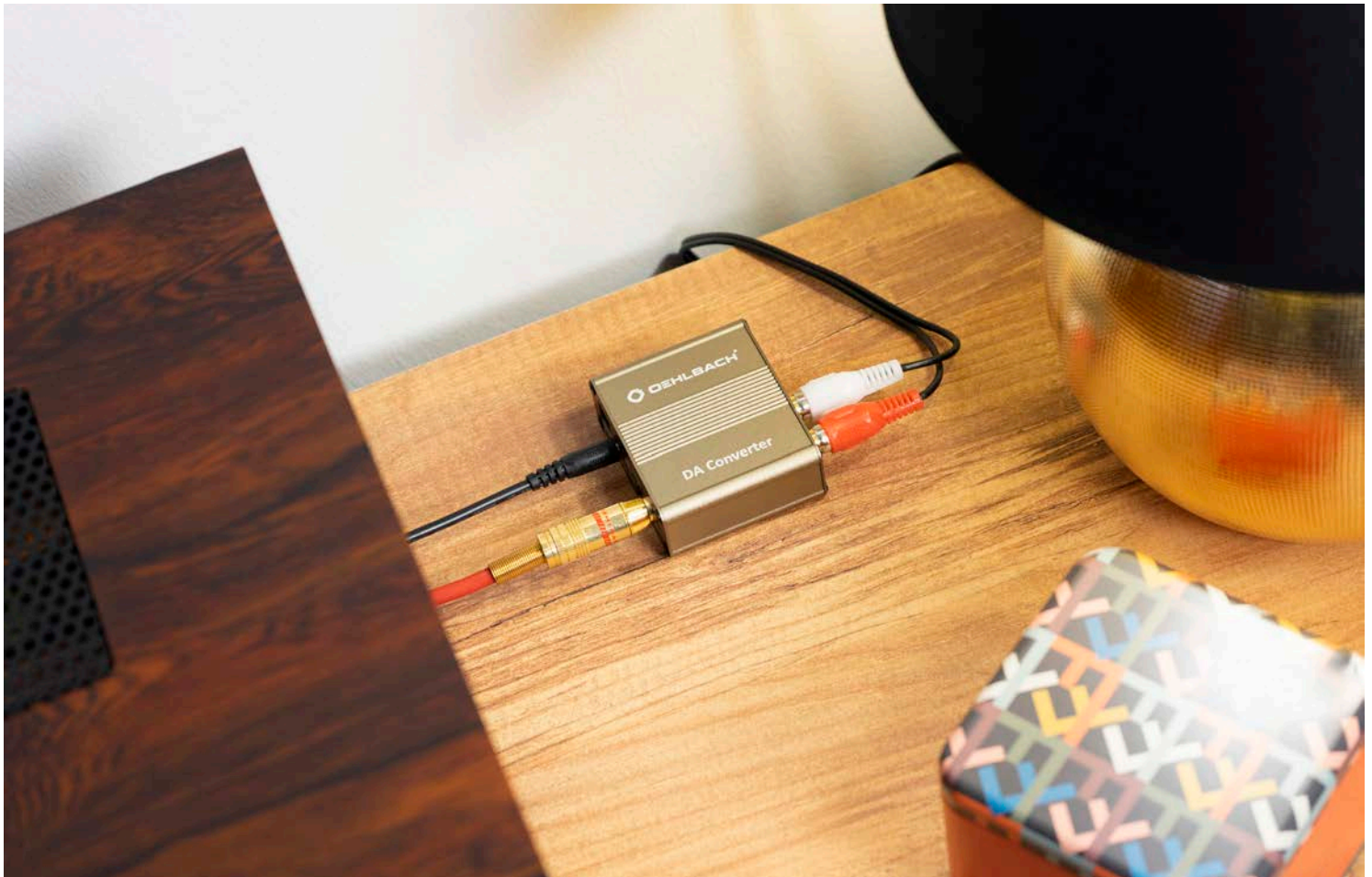
The RCA connector allows the DAC to be connected to virtually any with virtually any analogue amplifier. If required, a 3.5 millimetre output is also available.

## Field test

I start the practical test with Christopher Nolan's film "Tenet". Plenty of information-packed dialogue and action with an official noise level are the order of the day here. Weaknesses of the playback equipment are quickly and mercilessly revealed. Oehlbach's small conversion box gives no cause for complaint. Everything from the booming soundtrack to the gunshots can be heard clearly, and the stereo sound has a good spatiality that is fun to listen to. The dynamic range is reproduced absolutely unadulterated. As far as volume is concerned, there are also decent reserves. The sound is passed on to the sound transducers true to detail and without distortion. Before any noise would be perceived, the next explosion would perforate the eardrum. A signal-to-noise ratio is not officially stated, but that doesn't matter, because there is no unwanted background noise. Subjectively, I have the feeling that the separation of the channels works a little better when connected to the RCA outputs than with the jack socket.

## Practical all-rounder

The Digi Bridge has also proven to be a practical helper in other situations. Shortly after moving house, I only had a PC monitor available for gaming. Since PlayStation and the like usually have a digital audio output, nothing stands in the way of a connection to the stereo system. Headphones in all honour, but it's simply better to gamble with a proper boom in the room. Another example is my CD player, which I actually wanted to recycle because the left RCA output no longer makes a sound. But since it also has a coaxial output, it can continue to do its job. And as far as musicality is concerned, the little box from Oehlbach is a stout performer and does not make any audible mistakes. The sound is reproduced crystal clear and should be perfectly satisfactory for users without high demands. For the price, a very good performance.



## Conclusion

The Oehlbach Digi Bridge is one of those gadgets that I would describe as a real problem solver. Especially for those who own a good stereo system and want to continue using it with modern TV equipment. Also a good thing as an interim solution. This way you can invest in a new TV or beamer and save on a new system with digital receiver without having to do without good sound in the meantime. Depending on the situation, the test candidate can be the MVP of a setup. A must-have for every adapter drawer, in my opinion. At 76.99 euros, it is also a very fair price for the quality offered. No-name products offer the same function for half the price. But as my grandfather used to say: If you buy cheap, you buy twice. I'm sure he would have recommended this purchase without reservation. I can only agree.

*Test & Text: Dominik Schirach  
Fotos: Simone Maier*

