

Dante Network Quick-Start Cheat Sheet

The practical checklist for getting a Dante rig patched, synced, and talking before doors.

WHAT DANTE ACTUALLY IS

Dante moves multichannel digital audio over a standard Ethernet network instead of analog snakes or point-to-point digital cables. Devices show up in **Dante Controller** (free routing software from Audinate), where you patch inputs to outputs the same way you'd patch a snake, just in software, over a network cable.

BEFORE YOU PATCH IN

- **Use a dedicated network when you can.** Running Dante on a switch that's also carrying lighting, WiFi, or general office traffic invites problems as channel counts grow. A separate, dedicated switch for audio is the safest default.
- **Use a proper gigabit switch,** not a cheap unmanaged consumer switch, especially as channel count and network size grow. Managed switches give you QoS and diagnostics you'll want on bigger rigs.
- **Disable WiFi and unused network adapters** on any laptop running Dante Controller. A machine trying to route between two active network paths is a common source of "device not showing up" problems.
- **Know your IP addressing mode.** Dante devices default to automatic addressing and will self-assign on an isolated network. On a larger or shared network, static addressing set through Dante Controller is more predictable.

CLOCK SYNC BASICS

CONCEPT	WHAT IT MEANS
Clock Master	One device on the network is elected (or manually set) as the timing reference every other device syncs to.
Preferred Master	You can flag a specific device as preferred in Dante Controller so it wins the clock election, useful for keeping your console or primary interface in charge of timing.
Sample Rate / Word Clock	All devices on the same Dante network need to agree on sample rate; Dante handles the sync automatically once devices are on the network.

If you have a strong opinion about which device should be the timing reference (like your main console), set it as Preferred Master rather than leaving the election to chance.

COMMON TROUBLESHOOTING

- **Device not showing in Dante Controller:** confirm it's on the same subnet/VLAN as your controlling laptop, and check the physical link light on the switch port.
- **No audio on a routed channel:** check that the subscription actually shows green/connected in Dante Controller, not just patched, a yellow or red subscription means it hasn't actually locked.
- **Intermittent dropouts or clicks:** often a network issue upstream, look for switch mismatches, network loops, or another device flooding the same network.
- **Redundant (secondary) port confusion:** the secondary port is for redundant network topologies with compatible switches, it isn't a general-purpose second network connection. If you're not running a redundant network, leave it unused.

Quick glossary: **Unicast** sends audio to one specific destination; **Multicast** sends one stream to multiple destinations at once and is more efficient for things like sending the same feed to several monitor mixes. **Latency** in Dante Controller is a device-level setting that trades a small amount of delay for more reliability on a busy network, raise it if you're seeing dropouts on a large or complex network.