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**Tascam M-3500 refurbishment**

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04-06-2010 #26

Join Date: Feb 2010  
 Location: Germany  
 Age: 32  
 Posts: 152  
 Rep Power: 643608

**timkroeger**  
 Custom Title User

Hey AshokanKid,

nice consoles you have there! Now you only need the additional full meter bridges 😊 Just for comparison, I paid EUR 1,500 for one M-3500 but it had only a few crackling pots, albeit being really dirty. But it came with a custom stand, the full meter bridge and 9 unbalanced + 5 balanced patch bays and almost full cabling to/from the patchbays.

Looking forward to you going over those boards. Just don't spray the faders with any kind of fader lube 😊 Oh, if you don't need the M-520 anymore, I'll take it off your hands 🍷

I got a manual direct from Tascam Support put it was a printed PDF and the quality was mediocre. Better than nothing though. I'd scan it but it would make no sense as the quality would deteriorate further.

Regarding the software, I have no idea!

Cheers  
 Tim

<http://tubegeek.de>

04-06-2010 #27

Join Date: Jul 2009  
 Posts: 2,421  
 Rep Power: 5500053

**miroslav**  
 Cosmic Cowboy

Quote:

Originally Posted by **AshokanKid** ▶

*Call me crazy, but I just bought a "Matched Pair" of one Tascam M-3500 and one M-3700 from the same guy for \$750 "as is".*

I looked at both of those boards...but decided to pass.

I already have a mint, fully working 24-channel M-3500...and I was considering one of those just for the larger, 32-channel frame.

I was thinking that if I got it, I would strip it out and load it up with my channel strips (which I know work) and I also had two spare 4-channel modules...so I would have been able to completely fill out the 32-channel frame with my own electronics.

Heck...I even found a meter bridge extension on eBay for the 32-channel....for only \$100!

But...after thinking about it I decided that adding 8 more channels wasn't really worth all that effort! 🍷

Not to mention, I would have to spend about a \$1000 total, w/meter bridge extension, the pick-up/hauling expenses, lots of my time...etc. I could have then parted out the other modules and broken even on it the deal...though there's less and less interest in these boards on eBay and most are being sold off for cheap (as you found out).

Someone parted one out not too long ago...and no one was buying...

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Anyway...I'm sure between the two of them you will be able to get at least one full operational console with some work and cleaning...so you will have a nice mixer when you are done!  
IMO...keep the 3500 and part out the 3700.  
The automation is not that hot IMO, plus you have the motorized faders to deal with...so when one goes, it will be harder to replace (not sure if TASCAM still stocks those)...but the regular faders can be found new if needed.

Too bad you missed out on the meter bridge extension....it would have made the console!

**miroslav**



**Miroslav Music - YouTube**

*"If it sounds right, it is right!"*



04-06-2010

#28



**AshokanKid**

Newbie

Join Date: Mar 2010

Location: Lower Hudson Valley of New York State (Catskill Mountain Region)

Posts: 20

Rep Power: 0

**Console Muuseum for Aging Tascam Mix Desks**

Hiya Tim;

Yeah., I just saw an M-3500 sell for \$499 US with the stand and meter bridge, but NO power supply! That was sold separately (to a different buyer?!) for \$165. Strange.

That console was about a 4 hour drive from me and I did not really see it until after the fact, but there is another one for \$600 with everything, but it is about a 14 hour drive. Yikes,.

I have not even had a chance to mess with the M-520 yet, so I have no idea WHAT the heck I am going to do with all of these things. Retirement Home for Aging Analog Tascam Consoles, perhaps?

I went to your web site and really like the format of DokuWiki. At first I thought that it was a Drupal site. Did you set that up yourself? It says that it is a modified version. I like the shadowbox pix.

I have a few sites myself, mostly Drupal, and am looking for exactly that picture management functionality. I Dled the DokuWiki package to play with and see if that may work for some projects.

I'll keep you posted if I want to sell the M-520, but I almost suspect that the M-520 could become my main console and the M-3500 and M-3700 just ongoing projects. Have not seen them yet.

Thanks so much again for your complete postings and inspiration. Now I feel more "vindicated" with my shed, closets, basement and garage all full of similar projects in various states of effort.

Scott C.



04-06-2010

#29



**AshokanKid**

Newbie

Join Date: Mar 2010

Location: Lower Hudson Valley of New York State (Catskill Mountain Region)

Posts: 20

Rep Power: 0

**M-3500 & M-3700 Meter Bridge ?**

Quote:

Originally Posted by **miroslav**

*I looked at both of those boards...but decided to pass.*

*Heck...I even found a meter bridge extension on eBay for the 32-channel...for only \$100!*

*IMO...keep the 3500 and part out the 3700.*

*The automation is not that hot IMO, plus you have the motorized faders to deal with...so when one goes, it will be harder to replace (not sure if TASCAM still stocks those)...but the regular faders can be found new if needed.*

Too bad you missed out on the meter bridge extension....it would have made the console!

Hey there;

Yeah., would have been GREAT to have the MB with these beasts, but you say that you found one for \$100?! Cool., that will be what I will keep my eyes peeled for now and for the future.

Are you in the New York area? Or perhaps that was why the mixers would have been more costly for you, with shipping. I am only about an hour from the seller and so hopefully one single trip for both.

Is the automation for the M-3700 really that problematic? I have been doing some research and there sure is not a lot of info on these venerable old desks. Tascam will sell me a manual for \$50!?

Wanna sell me that 32 channel MB ? ;-)

Scott



04-06-2010

#30



**AshokanKid**  
Newbie

Join Date: Mar 2010  
Location: Lower Hudson Valley of New York State (Catskill Mountain Region)  
Posts: 20  
Rep Power: 0

### → Tascam M-3700 Automation Capability

Quote:

Originally Posted by **miroslav**

*IMO...keep the 3500 and part out the 3700.  
The automation is not that hot IMO, plus you have the motorized faders to deal with...so when one goes, it will be harder to replace (not sure if TASCAM still stocks those)...but the regular faders can be found new if needed.*

I just got a reply to my post on GearSlutz regarding the automation on the M-3700 and he seemed to indicate that the faders are NOT motorized. Is this true? Here is the gist of that post from GearSlutz;

"It's very useable without the automation software.

You need to get timing information from your recorder. I've used a Mackie SDR, currently have an Alesis HD24xr or whatever it is. You run a midi cable from the recorder to the board, and you'll probably have to configure the recorder to send midi timecode. I believe the 3700 must be configured as well. I assume you can send timecode from a computer as well, but I've never tried it.

Once you have that accomplished, the board knows where you are in the song and you just have to write automation info. You do this by using the buttons around the jog-wheel (global settings) and the buttons below the faders (per channel). The options are read, write, and ignore I think. You set the channel automation to Write and adjust the channel fader - the 3700 will save the volume level. When you're done hit the channel Read button (or the global Read button, which will set all channels to Read) and your volume changes will be repeated as you play back the song. Don't expect the faders to move!"

Another post that I found also suggested getting the Tascam manual;

"This is a very basic explanation of how to get sound through the M3700 - you should really think about contacting Tascam directly (tascam.com) and ordering the Operation and Service Manual. Without it you'll barely scratch the surface of what this mixer can do. It's MIDI and automation capabilities are huge. I've been running this console in a commercial application for more than 10 years with Pro Tools, analog multi-tracks and digital hard disk recorders. I still have no desire to replace this console because I haven't found another that will do what this one does."

Hmmm.,



04-06-2010

#31

**pianodano**  
I'm 10-7 over it and out

Join Date: Jan 2004  
Location: Boat . . . on the water  
Posts: 265  
Rep Power: 147349

My brother has a M3700. I don't recall the faders being motorized. I think it just takes a snapshot. Next time I talk to him, I'll ask though.

Regards,

Danny

I'm a builder. If you see me running, get out of the building.



04-06-2010

#32

 **miroslav**  
Cosmic Cowboy

Join Date: Jul 2009  
Posts: 2,421  
Rep Power: 5500053

Actually...I don't think they are motorized...it's all MIDI fader/volume position info...though they are still different than the straightforward faders in the 3500.

I use to use an external automation package with my 3500 (Niche ACM), which basically did that same thing that the 3700 can do via MIDI, and since it was also available as a computer app, there was a graphic user interface, much more user-friendly than the basic 3700 automation hardware....but it's still nice to do basic automation stuff if you really need it.

I only used my automation package a few times, and found it was much easier to just "work the board"...it's not like it's a large format console with a 100 channels to have to control manually! 🎧

Besides, since I now use a DAW for playback and mix through my 3500...these days I rarely move any faders when mixing down. I usually pre-set all my levels in the DAW via software (not the typical DAW volume automation..I do it with Object manipulation in Samplitude)....then for the mixdown, I just sit back and listen, though maybe I nudge a fader here and there occasionally. 😊

Yes, I am in NY...actually further south than you...but still, it would have been a ride and time/effort to go pick up the consoles...I just wasn't that motivated since I have a fully working one along with spare modules and other parts.

AFA the meter bridge extension...I never bought the one for the 32-channel , I just meant that I saw it for sale on eBay at the same time the two boards you bought were on sale...when I was considering the idea of converting to a 32-channel.

My 24-channel has the meter bridge from the day I bought it new back in 1990.

They are decent boards, mine has been working without a hitch for 20 years!!!  
(Did I just jinx myself?) 🙄

Anyway, I believe the 3500 has better/simpler grounding (less issues) than the 3700 with its extra wiring and MIDI automation.

I just don't think the automation is a major bonus. If it was VCA/moving faders instead of MIDI volume...that would be different.

**miroslav**



**Miroslav Music - YouTube**

*"If it sounds right, it is right!"*



04-06-2010

#33



**AshokanKid**  
Newbie

Join Date: Mar 2010  
Location: Lower Hudson Valley of New York State (Catskill Mountain Region)  
Posts: 20  
Rep Power: 0

➔ **Tascam M-3700 Automation Capability**

Quote:

Originally Posted by **miroslav**

*I only used my automation package a few times, and found it was much easier to just "work the board"...it's not like it's a large format console with a 100 channels to have to control manually!*



*Yes, I am in NY...actually further south than you...*

*AFA the meter bridge extension...I never bought the one for the 32-channel , I just meant that I saw it for sale on eBay at the same time the two boards you bought were on sale...*

*They are decent boards, mine has been working without a hitch for 20 years!!!  
(Did I just jinx myself?) 🤔*

*Anyway, I believe the 3500 has better/simpler grounding (less issues) than the 3700 with its extra wiring and MIDI automation.  
I just don't think the automation is a major bonus. If it was VCA/moving faders instead of MIDI volume...that would be different.*

Hey,

OMG., further south than me? Not by much., we're neighbors~! GREAT web site, by the way., very cool and some amazing looking gear. You gotta know the guys at Alto Music, though I have not been there in years.

Chances are good that I will be using Nuendo, Cubase or like and selling off my TSR-8 and 3030 machines, alas., and so I will likely be mixing as much ITB as out. The M boards are more for pres and perhaps mixdown.

People often berate the Japanese, and especially Tascam electronics, but it is usually well designed and well built, especially the higher end of things relatively, which these boards were.

I do not know (and may never) how these mixers would compare to a Neve, SSL, Harrison or the like, but Japan studied and learned from us (USA) and the British electronics can occasionally be a bit hinky.

I do know that every British car that I ever owned had more wiring and electrical issues than anything else, FWIW~! The Tascam gear is solid and dependable and certainly viable it would seem.

In any event, I certainly prefer the Crafted Japanese electronics to the China stuff, like Mackie, et. al., at least for now anyway, so I am certain that your own M-3500 will give you another good 20~!



04-06-2010

#34



**miroslav**  
Cosmic Cowboy

Join Date: Jul 2009  
Posts: 2,421  
Rep Power: 5500053



I use to live further up north...in Columbia County just north of Red Hook, right across the river from Saugerties...  
...but I moved south about 11 years ago. I'm down by Middletown now.

How's the reservoir...still closed off to public access? I remember when they closed it right after 9/11 for fear of someone dumping toxins into it. I use to drive by it all the time when I would go skiing up at Hunter...but I stopped skiing about 5 years ago, just wore out my hip and knees from skiing too much!



Now spend most of my free time in my studio.

**miroslav**



**Miroslav Music - YouTube**  
*"If it sounds right, it is right!"*



04-06-2010

#35



**AshokanKid**  
Newbie

Join Date: Mar 2010  
Location: Lower Hudson Valley of New York State (Catskill Mountain Region)  
Posts: 20  
Rep Power: 0

**Ashokan Reservoir**

Quote:

Originally Posted by **miroslav**  
*How's the reservoir...still closed off to public access? I remember when they closed it right after 9/11 for fear of someone dumping toxins into it.*



*Now spend most of my free time in my studio.*

Reservoir is open more or less, though they did keep a part of the crossing closed for good.

Right-O to spending more time in the studio., Looking forward to that time myself., though prefer not to have my hip ask me to.

If we all had a studio like yours, spending time there would be even more fun and rewarding, dare I say.



06-25-2010

#36

 [jcdlc72](#)  
Registered User

Join Date: Jun 2010  
Location: Caracas, Venezuela.  
Posts: 1  
Rep Power: 0

Greetings to all!

I reckon I will be watching this thread more often than not, since I've just bought a 32-channel, full bridge M-3500 a couple months ago, and is currently in storage until I finish building my new studio, where it will reside. It is used -obviously...-, so I guess I will spend some quality time with it performing maintenance duties, and this thread is wonderfully all about it.

Congrats on what seems to be a wonderful work!



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