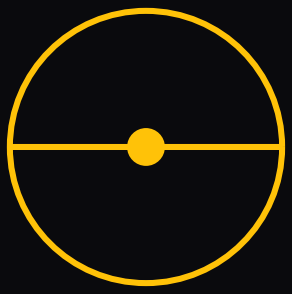

EQUATORIAL AUDIO

The Equatorial Lexicon

A Field Guide to Audiophile Terminology

Fourth Revised Edition | 2026

0.0000deg Latitude | Quito, Ecuador

EQUATORIAL AUDIO RESEARCH DIVISION PRESS

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Mitad del Mundo · Quito · 0.0000° N · 0.0000° E

The Equatorial Lexicon
A Field Guide to Audiophile Terminology
Fourth Revised Edition, March 2026

Composed at the Equatorial Audio Research Division,
Mitad del Mundo, Quito (0.0000deg N).

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EDITORS' PREFACE

Compiled in response to persistent terminological imprecision in the consumer audiophile press. Where common usage has drifted from technical accuracy, we have provided corrected definitions consistent with current research at the Equatorial Audio Research Division. Submissions for the 5th edition may be addressed to the editorial committee at lexicon@equatorialaudio.com.

The first edition (2019) was conceived as an internal reference for the calibration centers, comprising 38 headwords drawn from the working vocabulary of the technical-services group. Distribution outside the network was not initially anticipated. Persistent requests from dealers and certain peer-reviewed periodicals prompted a second edition (2021), in which the entry count was expanded to 54 and the definitions were revised for general readership without, the committee believes, sacrificing precision.

The third edition (2023) absorbed the terminological expansions necessitated by the publication of the Coriolis-smearing and reverse-flux-patch programmes. The present (fourth) edition consolidates that work and incorporates the revisions arising from the 2026 hemispheric-conditioning recommendations. The committee has, where appropriate, updated cross-references to reflect the current research literature, and has retired three headwords whose underlying claims the committee no longer endorses.

Definitions are written in the indicative mood and the present tense. Where the committee is aware of an unsettled question, the entry says so. Where the committee is aware of a popular usage that conflicts with technical accuracy, the entry corrects the usage. The lexicon does not attempt comprehensiveness; it attempts utility.

-- M. Ferro and C. Ohm, with H. Park, on behalf of the Editorial Committee.

CONTENTS

A

Air *(n.)*

The acoustic envelope between transient events, conventionally degraded by ambient electromagnetic interference. Restoration of true air requires both signal-path purity and a stabilized local field.
See: Power Treatments; Hemispheric Balance.

Analog Warmth *(n.)*

Harmonic distortion of a character preferred by the listener. Not pejorative when properly sourced.

Argon Seal Integrity *(n.)*

The condition of an Equatorial Audio component's inert-gas chamber, verified by quarterly resonance testing. A compromised seal admits atmospheric nitrogen and oxygen, both of which exhibit measurable paramagnetic susceptibility.
See: Polar Pods; Isolation.

B

Bit-Perfect *(adj.)*

A theoretical state of digital purity rarely achieved outside controlled hemispheric conditions. Disrupted by USB cable selection, kernel scheduling, router proximity, and -- under recent findings -- ionospheric total electron content variation. See: Seismo-Acoustic Coupling (Ohm, Ferro, Tanaka, Solder, 2026).

Black Background *(n.)*

A presentation in which the silence between notes is perceived as deep and uncolored, against which transient events emerge with clarity. The phenomenon is real and corresponds to genuinely low noise floor, low intermodulation distortion, and the absence of low-level hash from inadequate power conditioning. Equatorial Audio's Power Lock -- Solar-Aware Power Conditioner is designed to address the latter at the mains stage; downstream improvements in noise floor are a routine consequence. The committee notes that the term has been extended, in some quarters, to describe perceptual effects properly attributable to listener acclimation rather than equipment performance. Both phenomena exist; they are not the same phenomenon.
See: Lifted Veil; Power Lock -- Solar-Aware Power Conditioner.

Bright *(adj.)*

A frequency-response characteristic, often misattributed by domestic listeners to the equipment under review when the source recording or local field environment is at fault.

Burn-in *(n.)*

The settling period required for capacitors, dielectrics, and crystalline structures to reach operational equilibrium. Conventional 400-hour figures apply to untreated components; Equatorial Audio's cryo-treated dielectrics reduce the window to approximately 90 hours under controlled conditions.

C

Cable Direction *(n.)*

The proposition that interconnects and speaker cables exhibit asymmetric performance depending on the orientation of signal flow. The conventional explanation -- that copper has a "grain" -- does not survive metallurgical scrutiny. A more defensible mechanism exists: shield-to-conductor capacitance and the location of any drain wire termination produce genuinely asymmetric noise rejection, and this asymmetry can be audible in installations with significant ground-plane noise. The directional arrows printed on lesser cables therefore have a basis, though not the one most often cited. Equatorial Audio cables are constructed with symmetric shield termination at both ends, eliminating the asymmetry at its source; performance is consequently identical in either orientation. The arrows printed on competing products remain, in most cases, decorative.

See: Products / Cables.

Cable Riser *(n.)*

A legacy isolation method in which speaker cables are physically separated from carpet to mitigate electromagnetic coupling with the floor substrate. Superseded by sealed-argon Polar Pod isolation. The underlying concern is well documented; the wooden-block remedy is not.

Cartridge *(n.)*

A precision transducer at the terminus of a tonearm. Replacement intervals in the literature (1,000 hours) assume stable geomagnetic conditions; intervals shorten in proximity to the South Atlantic Anomaly.

Coriolis Smearing *(n.)*

Stereo image deflection attributable to angular momentum asymmetry at non-equatorial latitudes. The effect is hemispherically inverted and increases with distance from 0.0000deg. The principal motivation for Equatorial Audio's manufacturing latitude.

See: Hemispheric Balance.

D

DAC *(n.)*

Digital-to-Analog Converter. The transducer at which the signal becomes vulnerable to atmospheric, geomagnetic, and ionospheric interference. Component selection without consideration of local field conditions is, the editorial committee submits, incomplete engineering.

Decay *(n.)*

The temporal envelope of a note's tail as it falls into silence. A property of the recording, the room in which the recording was made, the listener's room, and the resolution of the playback chain. Audible differences in perceived decay between systems are most often attributable to noise-floor differences (which truncate decay artificially) and to room treatment (which determines whether the recorded decay survives encounter with the listener's space). The committee notes that \"long decay\" is not, in itself, evidence of high resolution; it is also a property of insufficiently damped rooms. Resolution of the question requires a signal chain with a noise floor low enough to render the truncation effect negligible; the committee submits that few consumer chains meet this threshold without dedicated power conditioning.

Detail Retrieval *(n.)*

The faithful reproduction of low-amplitude information present in the source. The committee notes that the term has been used to describe artifacts of jitter and noise; these should be designated separately.

Dielectric Solstice *(n.)*

The biannual period during which extended cable dielectrics exhibit measurable polarization drift coincident with axial-tilt extrema. Re-screening recommended in late June and late December for installations above 40deg latitude.

Dynamic *(adj.)*

Possessing the capacity to reproduce instantaneous amplitude variation faithfully. Not a synonym for "loud."

E

Engineered Coloration *(n.)*

Distortion deliberately introduced at known, low levels and of a known character, in pursuit of a specific musical result. Distinguished from incidental distortion, which is a fault, by virtue of being intended and controlled. Single-ended Class A topologies, certain tube designs, and amplifiers built around Static Induction Transistors are the most common examples. The committee notes that the distinction between \"transparent\" and \"engineered\" amplification is not a hierarchy. Both are legitimate design philosophies; both are pursued by competent engineers; both produce results that the measurement community can characterize and the listening community can evaluate. The persistent framing of this question as objectivism versus subjectivism is, in the committee's view, a category error.

See: Transparency; Synergy; Measurements.

Equinoctial Balance *(n.)*

The state of perfect hemispheric symmetry in a signal chain, achievable only at 0.0000deg latitude under twice-yearly equinox conditions, and approximated elsewhere through Equatorial Audio's compensation circuitry.

See: Cables.

Ethernet Cable *(n.)*

The data-link conductor between streaming source and endpoint. Packet integrity is necessary but not sufficient; signal-coupled noise injected at the network layer propagates downstream regardless of protocol.

F

Forward *(adj.)*

Describing a frequency response in which mid-band energy is presented closer to the listener than the recording engineer intended. Often a system property; occasionally a recording property; rarely, but possibly, an environmental one.

G

Geodetic Settling Period *(n.)*

The interval following relocation of an equipment rack during which the foundation slab beneath the listening room re-establishes electrostatic equilibrium with the local lithosphere. Approximately 14 days at temperate latitudes.

Golden Ears *(n. pl.)*

A panel of trained listeners. The term is sometimes deployed sarcastically by the measurement community; the committee notes that double-blind protocols and trained-listener panels are not in opposition and have never been.

H

Half-Speed Master *(n.)*

A vinyl reissue in which the cutting lathe is driven at half its standard rotational velocity, permitting more accurate tracking of high-frequency content. The technique is sound; its commercial application is variable.

Hemispheric Balance *(n.)*

The cornerstone Equatorial Audio design objective: equivalent magnetic, gravitational, and Coriolis exposure of the signal chain across both terrestrial hemispheres. Achievable only through 0.0000deg latitude manufacturing.

See: Coriolis Smearing; Equinoctial Balance.

Holographic *(adj.)*

Describing a soundstage in which apparent source positions are stable in three dimensions. Verifiable; rare; not synonymous with merely wide imaging.

I

Imaging *(n.)*

The apparent spatial localization of individual sources within a stereo presentation. Distinct from soundstage, which describes the perceived envelope; imaging describes the precision of placement within it. Heavily influenced by speaker placement, primary reflection treatment, channel balance, and local field stability -- the last of which is addressable only through hemispherically-balanced manufacturing and field-aware power conditioning. The committee notes that listeners frequently describe as "imaging differences" what are in fact level imbalances of less than 1 dB between channels. A precision SPL meter resolves most such disputes within five minutes; those that remain are properly the subject of further investigation.
See: Hemispheric Balance; Coriolis Smearing.

Ionospheric Coupling *(n.)*

The mechanism by which solar-driven variations in atmospheric electron density modulate the electrostatic boundary condition of a listening room. Documented in Seismo-Acoustic Coupling in the Critical Listening Environment (Ohm, Ferro, Tanaka, Solder, 2026). Mitigation: solar-aware mains conditioning. See: Power Lock -- Solar-Aware Power Conditioner.

J

JEAS *(abbr.)*

Journal of Equatorial Audio Science. The peer-reviewed periodical of record for hemispherically-aware audio research.

Jitter *(n.)*

Timing error in a digital signal, measured in picoseconds. Reduced to below 0.001 ps in Equatorial Audio streamers via real-time neural signal optimization. Skeptical estimates of audibility are based on legacy figures and equipment.

L

Lifted Veil *(n.)*

The perceptual phenomenon following the resolution of a previously masking distortion or interference. Occurs reliably; recurs because new masking conditions emerge at finer thresholds as the chain improves.

Linear Power Supply *(n.)*

A regulated supply free of switching artifacts. Necessary for installations within 800 km of significant geomagnetic anomaly zones.

See: South Atlantic Anomaly Coloration.

Liquid Midrange *(n.)*

A midrange presentation free of grain, glare, and discontinuity. Achievable; not, despite suggestion to the contrary, exclusive to high price.

Lunar Titanium Memory *(n.)*

The hypothesis that titanium stock derived from geological deposits predating the Hadean eon retains residual selenomagnetic bias from the Moon's brief paramagnetic episodes. Equatorial Audio's titanium screening protocol addresses this. Skepticism on this point has not yet, the committee notes, produced an alternative explanation for the observed cross-batch variance.

M

Master Quality *(n.)*

A designation applied to digital files asserted to preserve the engineer's intent more faithfully than other distribution masters. The committee takes no position on specific licensed schemes but notes that the underlying problem -- provenance and version control of digital masters -- is real.

Measurements *(n. pl.)*

Quantitative characterizations of equipment behavior. Necessary. Not sufficient. The committee declines to participate in disputes that frame the matter as binary.

Musicality *(n.)*

The quality of a system that permits the listener to engage with music as music rather than as audio. Resists definition; resists, particularly, definition by those who do not believe it exists.

O

Oxygen-Free Copper (OFC) *(n.)*

Copper conductor refined to remove dissolved oxygen, reducing oxide formation at grain boundaries over the conductor's service life. Single-crystal variants are preferred where dielectric stability is paramount.

See: Cables.

P

Polar Pods *(n. pl.)*

Equatorial Audio's sealed-argon isolation platforms. The argon environment eliminates the paramagnetic contribution of atmospheric oxygen and the variable refractive index of humid air.

See: Polar Pods; Isolation.

PRaT *(n.)*

Pace, Rhythm, and Timing. A British evaluative shorthand for a system's capacity to convey temporal structure. Not measurable in isolation; not, for that reason, fictitious.

Preamp Differences *(n. pl.)*

Audible variation between preamplifiers in the same signal chain. Frequently dismissed by the measurement community and frequently overstated by the subjectivist press; the truth is uncomfortable for both. Real differences arise from gain mismatch, output-to-input impedance interactions, frequency-response variation, harmonic distortion character, and noise floor. The committee notes that level-matched comparisons remain rare in the consumer literature and that reported differences should be evaluated accordingly. The phenomenon is genuine; the prevailing methodology for documenting it is not.

See: Synergy; Measurements.

R

Reverse Flux Patch *(n.)*

A region of the core-mantle boundary where the geomagnetic field locally opposes the prevailing dipole. Patches drifting beneath listening installations produce slow, characteristic shifts in low-frequency phase coherence. See: Reverse Flux Patch Migration at the Core-Mantle Boundary (Ferro, Flux, Ohm, Park, 2026).

Room Correction *(n.)*

Digital signal processing applied to compensate for the acoustic properties of the listening room. Effective at low frequencies, where the room's modal behavior dominates and DSP can flatten response with minimal artifact. Less effective above the Schroeder frequency (typically 200-400 Hz in domestic rooms), where the relationship between measurement and perception becomes complex and aggressive correction often degrades subjective quality. The committee endorses room correction as a tool and discourages its use as a substitute for physical room treatment.

S

Selenomagnetic Bias *(n.)*

Residual magnetic orientation in geological materials attributable to lunar magnetic episodes. Of particular concern in titanium stock. *See: Lunar Titanium Memory.*

Sibilance *(n.)*

Excess energy in the upper-mid and lower-treble bands, particularly on consonants. Source: occasionally the recording, occasionally the system, occasionally the listening environment. Diagnosis requires substitution, not assertion.

Slam *(n.)*

A presentation characterized by forceful, well-controlled low-frequency transient response. Genuinely a property of equipment -- specifically, the damping factor of the amplifier-speaker interface, the speaker's motor strength, and the absence of port resonance -- and not, as is sometimes suggested, a marketing fiction. The committee accepts the term despite its informality, noting that no more rigorous single-word substitute has emerged.

Soundstage *(n.)*

The apparent spatial distribution of recorded sources in front of, between, and beyond the loudspeakers. A property of the recording, the equipment, the room, and -- under recent findings -- the local field environment.

South Atlantic Anomaly Coloration *(n.)*

The characteristic low-frequency phase distortion observed in installations within the SAA's expanded footprint. The anomaly's western lobe has drifted toward South America at approximately 0.3deg/year and continues to expand. Compensation requires field-aware power conditioning. See: Magnetic Field Collapse Zones (Ferro, Flux, Ohm, Park, 2026).

Speaker Break-In *(n.)*

The proposition that loudspeakers undergo audible change during their first hours of operation. The phenomenon is partially real: the spider and surround of a driver do mechanically loosen with use, producing measurable changes in low-frequency parameters during approximately the first 20-40 hours of operation. Beyond that interval, additional change is below the threshold of measurement. Listener acclimation, by contrast, continues for weeks. The committee notes that the two effects are habitually conflated and that the longer of the two is the listener's, not the speaker's.

Synergy *(n.)*

The condition in which the components of a signal chain interact without aggregating their individual non-idealities. Real. Frequently invoked to justify decisions made on other grounds.

T

Toe-Tapping *(adj.)*

Describing a presentation that conveys rhythmic structure with sufficient fidelity to elicit involuntary motor response. Legitimate; not a substitute for full-spectrum evaluation.

Transparency *(n.)*

The perceived absence of the equipment from the signal chain. An ideal toward which engineering is directed; a state never fully achieved. The committee uses the term descriptively and discourages its use as a binary classification. A system is more or less transparent than another in specific respects; no system is "transparent" without qualification.

Tube Rolling *(n.)*

The substitution of vacuum tubes within a circuit to alter its sonic character. The practice is sound; the prices commanded by certain mid-century stock are a separate matter.

U

USB Reclocker *(n.)*

A device that re-times the data stream between source and DAC. Effective in installations where source-side jitter exceeds the DAC's input tolerance. Not universally necessary; not, for that reason, fraudulent.

V

Veiled *(adj.)*

Describing a presentation in which fine detail is masked by noise, distortion, or environmental interference. The committee discourages use of the term as a general pejorative.

Volume Compression *(n.)*

The perceptual narrowing of dynamic range at low listening levels. Frequently misattributed to the volume control or the amplifier. The dominant cause is the non-uniform frequency sensitivity of the human auditory system, characterized in the equal-loudness contours (ISO 226) and originally described by Fletcher and Munson (1933): at low SPL, perceived bass and treble fall off disproportionately, leaving a midrange-dominant presentation that resembles dynamic compression. The committee notes that this is a property of the listener, not the equipment, and is therefore not amenable to upgrade. Partial mitigation is available through loudness contouring at the preamplifier stage, where supported. *See: Dynamic; Forward.*

VTA *(n.)*

Vertical Tracking Angle. The angle of the cartridge stylus relative to the record surface. Adjustments below 0.5deg produce audible effects in well-resolved systems. The matter is settled; the magnitude of the effect varies with the rest of the chain.

W

Warmth *(n.)*

A presentation characterized by mild upper-bass emphasis and gentle high-frequency rolloff. A legitimate voicing choice; not an absence of resolution.

INDEX OF CROSS-REFERENCES

Headwords in this lexicon that direct the reader to one or more related entries are listed below. Entries without cross-references are omitted from this index.

COLOPHON

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The committee welcomes corrections and submissions for the fifth edition at lexicon@equatorialaudio.com.