

BLUEFISH'S SYNAPSE CONVERTER VERSUS BLACKMAGIC HOW DOES IT COMPARE?

Published on June 23, 2022



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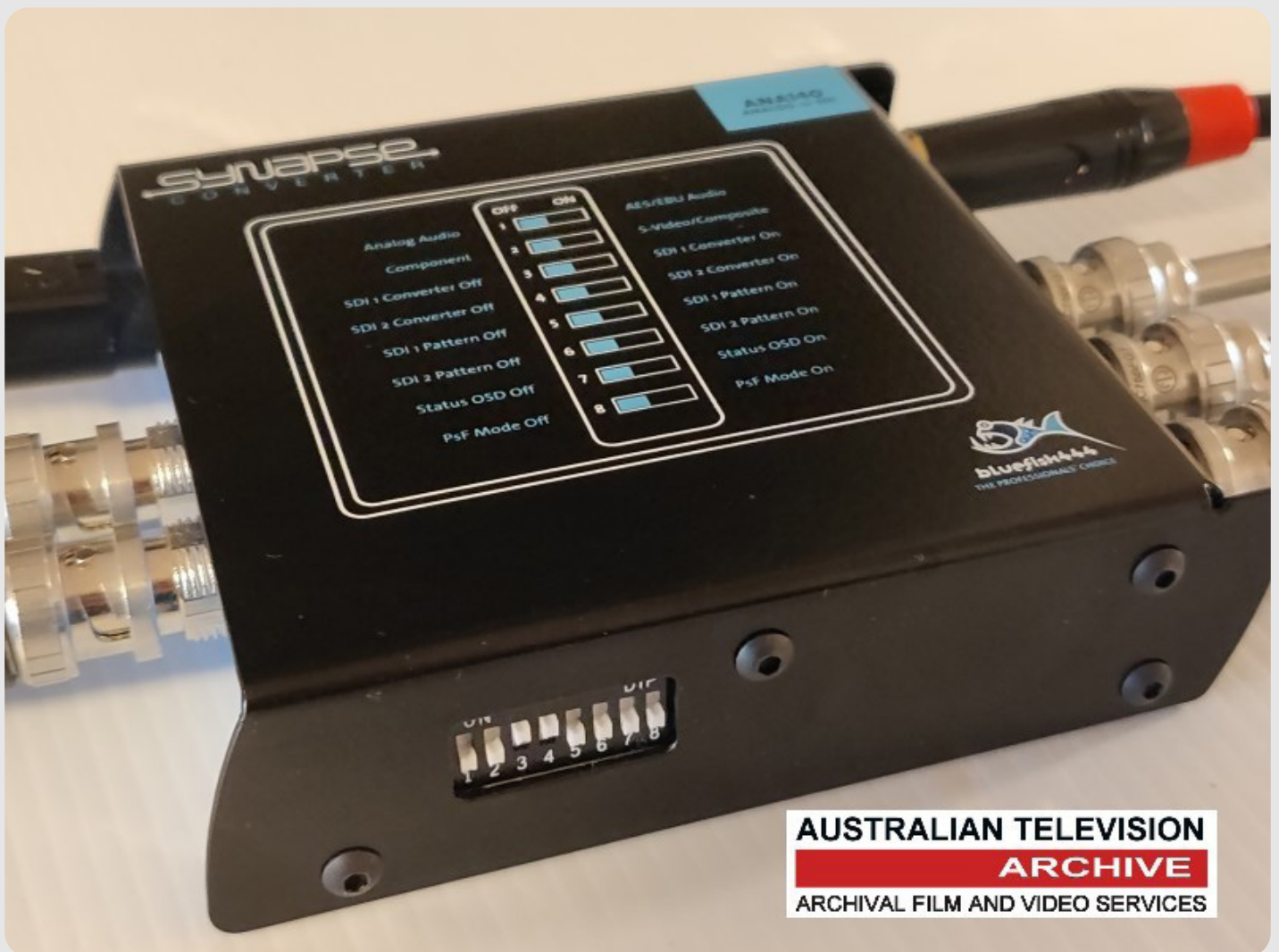
The digital world may be here to stay however, analogue is still the king in the world of videotape archives. With all the new digital offerings each year it's becoming harder and harder to find anything compatible with the old analogue technology. That's where these handy converter boxes come in!

These small converters allow you to convert any old analog video signal into a modern digital SDI signal whilst also allowing you to embed analogue audio into the stream.

I regularly use such converters on a daily basis for converting the analogue signals from broadcast videotape machines during the digitisation process.

Depending on the situation I use anything from the older high-end TBC (time base correction) / converters by Snell or Leitch, as well as the lower-end "portable" converters such as these - but how do these offerings from Bluefish & Blackmagic compare?

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First up, if you have been following me on social media you will see that my experiences with Blackmagic products have been, well ... not altogether positive. I've tended to find their range is built to suit a particular market which doesn't always meet industry standards or day-in/day-out use. My working experience using Blackmagic converters has found them to be quite temperamental, requiring a lot of plugging and unplugging (as they did not always recognise they had a signal connected.) Over time, one by one they just stopped working, even the "heavy duty" models.

Throwing away my last (now dead) converter I made a post on social media expressing my disappointment in their lifespan. From the responses, it seems I was not the only one who had bad experiences.

Later I was given the opportunity to "road test" one of Bluefish444's Synapse ANA140 converters for comparison and though I was skeptical at first I am pleased to say - it performs flawlessly - it actually does what it says! .. No issues with audio sync or unlocked or garbled audio, I've connected and disconnected it thousands of times (while its still on) - and it's still working!

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Like the Blackmagic converters it does get hot (make sure you place it where it can “breathe” - do not place it on carpets!). I also had to obtain an XLR “Y” cable as this box does not come with one (it puts both channels of audio into a single input rather than the two normally used). The power connector is quite odd and you have to pay attention it’s inserted with the right orientation.

The small dip switches can be very handy as they can be set to output a test pattern, or a small OSD. I find this very useful when dealing with a bunch of cabling in a system to quickly confirm the routed output is indeed coming from this converter as the source!

Overall I really can’t fault its performance or output quality and so far it’s been totally compatible across all the older SDI and broadcast equipment - no unlocked audio issues / garbled sound that currently plagues the most recent generation of Hyperdecks. Overall I am very happy with its performance. Obviously, time will tell how long its actual lifespan compares and if it justifies its higher price tag of \$595 USD versus Blackmagic’s \$195 USD

However, if you are seeking a box with the best compatibility and performance I can highly recommend Bluefish444’s Synapse Analogue to SDI Converter.

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The Australian Television Archive is a private business supplying preservation grade archival film and videotape recovery/digitization services as well as archival footage research and supply to the broadcast industry both in Australia and overseas.

Get in touch today to see how I can help you! contact: info@austvarchive.com

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