
Voxengo SPAN User Guide



Version 3.23

<https://www.voxengo.com/product/span/>

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Introduction

SPAN is a real-time “fast Fourier transform” (FFT) audio frequency spectrum analyzer plug-in for professional music and audio production applications.

SPAN provides you with a very flexible “mode” system which you can use to setup your spectrum analyzer preferences. You may specify Fourier block size in samples, FFT window overlap percentage, spectrum's visual slope. Beside that you can choose to display secondary spectrum of a desired type (e.g., real-time maximum, all-time maximum). Spectrum can be smoothed out visually for an easier examination.

SPAN supports multi-channel analysis, and can be set to display spectrums from two different channels or channel groups at the same time. Spectrum's color can be chosen to taste.

SPAN also features output level metering with adjustable ballistics and integration time, EBU R128, K-system metering (including calibration K-system metering). SPAN displays level metering statistics, headroom estimation, and clipping detection. Correlation metering is available as well.

Features

- Output signal power statistics
- Spectrum smoothing
- User interface window resizing
- True peak and clipping statistics
- Correlation meter
- EBU R128 LUFS/LU metering
- K-system metering (unweighted)
- Stereo and multi-channel analysis
- Mid/side analysis
- Internal channel routing
- Channel grouping
- Preset manager
- Undo/redo history
- A/B comparisons
- Contextual hint messages
- All sample rates support

Compatibility

This audio plug-in can be loaded into any audio host application that conforms to the AAX, AudioUnit, VST, or VST3 plug-in specification.

This plug-in is compatible with Windows (32- and 64-bit Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8, 10 and later versions, if not announced otherwise) and macOS (10.11 and later versions, if not announced otherwise, 64-bit Intel and Apple Silicon processor-based) computers (2.5 GHz dual-core or faster processor with at least 4 GB of system RAM required). A separate binary distribution file is available for each target computer platform and audio plug-in specification.

User Interface Elements

Note: All Voxengo plug-ins feature a highly consistent user interface. Most interface elements (buttons, labels) located at the top of the user interface are the same in all Voxengo plug-ins. For an in-depth description of these and other standard features, and user interface elements, please refer to the “Voxengo Primary User Guide”.

Spectrum

This bigger panel displays the spectrum (in the specified color) of the current channel group. Note that the secondary spectrum is displayed in a darker color. You may use the “narrow-band sweeping/soloing” mode by holding the “Ctrl” (“Command” on macOS) key. When this mode is not engaged, the plug-in does not affect the sound in any way.

The “Hold” switch allows you to hold spectrum updates temporarily for the purpose of visual comparison. Note that spectrum updates will be automatically resumed whenever you switch between channel groups.

The “Underlay” selector allows you to add an additional underlying spectrum (in a specified color) from another channel group of the current plug-in instance. If you would like to see spectrums of left and right channels together, please load the “Dual Mono” routing preset and set the “Underlay” selector to “Right”.

You may right-click on the spectrum to copy the current frequency pointer value to the clipboard (you may then paste it to an equalizer).

Even though in some audio host applications (e.g., Ableton Live) SPAN in VST format exposes 8 audio inputs, it does not mean it can display more than 2 spectrums at the same time. Please consider using GlisseEQ or SPAN Plus if you would like to perform cross-track multi-spectrum analysis.

The “Hide Meters and Stats” switch hides all meters and statistics panels and extends the spectrum analyzer panel.

The “Mode” selector allows you to select and edit spectrum’s display mode. Please refer to the “Voxengo Primary User Guide” (namely, the topic called “Standard Controls – Spectrum Mode Editor”) for in-depth information about spectrum mode settings.

Note that by default SPAN uses 4.5 dB per octave slope for the spectrum display which makes it look considerably “elevated” towards the higher frequencies in comparison to most other spectrum analyzers available on the market. This setting can be changed in the “Spectrum Mode Editor” window.

Statistics

This panel displays historic (since the last reset or playback start) statistical information for each channel of the currently selected channel group.

The “RMS”/“Integr” indicator displays integrated signal power estimation.

The “Max Crest Factor” indicator shows maximum crest factor (difference) between the RMS and peak RMS values reached. Peak RMS value is not displayed anywhere

on the user interface. 50 ms time window is used to estimate the peak RMS value. You may add the “RMS”/“Integr” and “Max Crest Factor” values together to obtain a peak RMS value. Note that when comparing the “Max Crest Factor” value in SPAN to plug-ins of other companies the peak RMS time windows should be matched in the plug-ins in comparison or otherwise the readings will be different, with shorter peak RMS time window (e.g. instant peak value) showing a greater “Max Crest Factor” value.

The “True Peak”/“Peak” indicator displays 1-sample output true peak/sample peak level. Basically, this indicator detects samples that will be clipped if signal is converted to a limited bit depth. The “TP” switch changes between “true peak” and “sample peak” level and clipping indication. The true peak clipping indication is also useful when using noise-shaping at low bit depth dithering settings since noise becomes powerful enough to go over 0 dBFS.

The “Reset” button can be used to reset counters and start statistical accumulation over.

Metering

The “Metering” selector allows you to choose the meter biasing mode. The “dBFS”, “dBFS.30” and “dBFS.15” modes apply no biasing. These three modes have a differing level meter range. The “dBFS+3” mode adds 3 dB to level meter indicator, the “RMS”/“Integr” values (peak level indication is unchanged in comparison to the “dBFS” modes). This mode can be used in combination with the “Align 0 dB” and “Slope=0” spectrum display mode to match spectral power to the level meter.

The “K-20”, “K-14” and “K-12” modes offer various K-system biasing modes originally offered by Bob Katz. The “K-20 C”, “K-14 C” and “K-12 C” implement level calibration modes. In these “K” modes level meter’s RMS integration and release time constants are fixed to 600 ms as per K-system specification, level meter’s integration time is not affected by plug-in’s “Settings” window. Weighting is not used in all these “K” metering modes.

The “LUFS” and “LU” modes implement EBU-R128 K-weighted metering standard, by following ITU-R BS.1770-4 and Tech 3341-2016 notes (most elements of the “EBU Mode” are offered, except EBU +18 scale; and no summary loudness level is displayed). The modes with the “ML” suffix display the momentary loudness on the level meter, with 0.4-second integration window, the “SL” modes reflect the short-term loudness, with 3-second integration window. Both modes also display integrated loudness on the “Integr” statistics panel. In these modes, level meter’s integration time is fixed and is not affected by plug-in’s “Settings” window. Integrated loudness level is updated only twice a second and only considers the recent 5 minutes of loudness measurements since reset/restart, due to real-time CPU restrictions. The “Max Crest Factor” calculation in LUFS/LU modes uses the same technique as in other metering modes; it is, however, performed using RMS integrated loudness level, not EBU-R128 loudness level, but it uses K-weighting.

Correlation Meter

This panel contains meter that shows average real-time correlation between two first input channels (500 ms average).

This panel also shows the average balance (in decibel) between two first input channels during the last 3 seconds. Negative values tell that the first (left) channel is louder by the specified amount in decibel.

Please read the topic named the “Knowledge Bit – Correlation” in the “Voxengo Primary User Guide” for a specific information on correlation values and their possible meaning.

Credits

DSP algorithms, internal signal routing code, user interface layout by Aleksey Vaneev.

Graphics user interface code by Vladimir Stolytko. Graphics elements by Vladimir Stolytko and Scott Kane.

This plug-in is implemented in multi-platform C++ code form and uses “zlib” compression library (written by Jean-loup Gailly and Mark Adler), “base64” code by Jouni Malinen, FFT algorithm by Takuya Ooura, filter design equations by Magnus Jonsson and Robert Bristow-Johnson, VST plug-in technology by Steinberg, AudioUnit plug-in SDK by Apple, Inc., AAX plug-in SDK by Avid Technology, Inc., Intel IPP and run-time library by Intel Corporation (used under the corresponding licenses granted by these parties).

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