# FRACTAL AUDIO SYSTEMS

# AXE-EDIT v 0.9.191 RELEASE NOTES & USER GUIDE

## WELCOME!

Imagine your Axe-Fx with a large color monitor, mouse and keyboard… with a hard drive to store virtually unlimited presets instead of a "mere" 384 user memories… with the ability to connect to the Internet to download new sounds. Axe-Edit adds these capabilities and more to the world's greatest guitar processor.

Axe-Edit offers a faster, easier way to edit the Axe-Fx Standard and Ultra for users with a Mac/PC computer and a MIDI interface. It allows you to browse, edit, manage, back up, update, and more.

This document does NOT cover "Preset Manager" because it is slated for replacement by "Axe-Manage" in the next major release.

## AXE-EDIT BETA VERSION

Axe-Edit is currently a BETA application. This means it is a WORK IN PROGRESS. We release it for your testing and general enjoyment, but cannot offer tech support except through our forum at http://fractalaudio.com/forum.

Beta software often has bugs and limitations.  Always see the documentation that comes with an Axe-Edit installer for important notes. The current version has many improvements over the last release and should prove more stable and enjoyable for all.



*The Main Axe-Edit Window*

## SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

- Mac OS: OS X 10.4+ (Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard)
- Windows OS: 2000, XP, Vista, Windows7, 32-bit or 64-bit versions
- CPU: Pentium4+ or equivalent AMD or newer, G4 or Intel Core Duo or newer
- Memory: 1GB or more
- Video: 1024x768 or greater
- Disk space: 30MB minimum, 150MB recommended
- 2-way MIDI interface, installed (with current drivers)

### About MIDI Interfaces

The number of available MIDI interfaces is great. Axe-Edit works with most of them, but some perform better than others. "System Exclusive" support is a must for use with Axe-Edit. A generally recommended interface is the new MIDISPORT 2x2 (Green) Anniversary Edition (USB). It works well under both Mac and Windows, is affordable, offers solid drivers and good performance. Our forum provides information on interfaces which have been shown to work well.

*Whichever interface you use, it should be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions, updated with the latest drivers, and connected to your computer before Axe-Edit launches.*

## CONNECTIONS

The diagram below shows a basic Axe-Edit setup. MIDI is a *control* protocol—it does not carry audio. You need to have your Axe-Fx connected to BOTH the MIDI interface/Computer, and some kind of amplifier, powered speaker system, or other monitoring device to be able to hear it. The Axe-Edit application does NOT utilize your computer's soundcard.

**BASIC AXE-EDIT CONNECTION DIAGRAM**
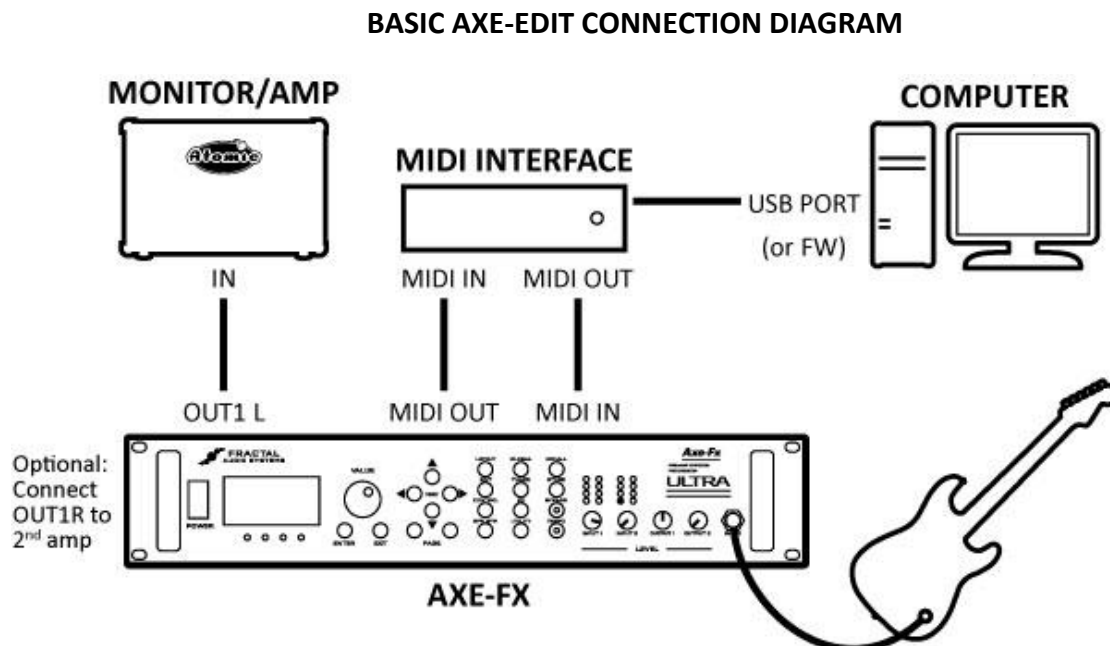


You DO NOT need to hook up your Axe-Fx to the computer soundcard. Axe-Edit will not produce any sound through your computer. It is an *editor*—a simple means of advanced remote control.

## INSTALLING AXE-EDIT

### Windows

Download the .exe installer from www.fractalaudio.com/products-axe-edit.html

Double click the installer icon and click through any security warnings to launch the Setup Program.
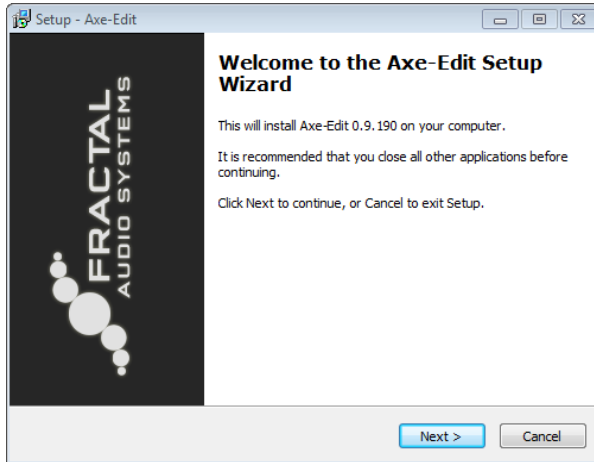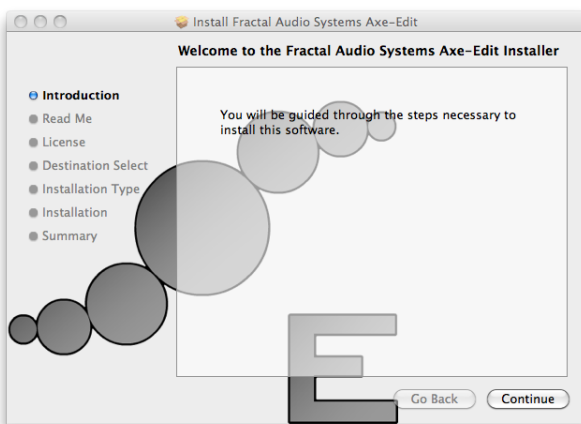


Accept the license agreement and continue through the remaining steps to install the application. Review the "README" which is displayed on screen and FINISH to launch Axe-Edit.

### Mac

Download the .dmg installer from www.fractalaudio.com/products-axe-edit.html

Double click the icon and click through any security warnings to launch the Axe-Edit installer.



Accept the license agreement and continue through the remaining steps to install the application. Review the "README" which is displayed on screen and FINISH to launch Axe-Edit.

## START UP & SETUP

Launch Axe-Edit using the icon in your applications folder (Mac) or the icon in your Start Menu (Win).

The first time you run Axe-Edit, you need to to choose a folder for user and program data. The default is a new "Fractal Audio" subdirectory under your documents. For best performance, network drives should not be used for the Axe-Edit data directory.
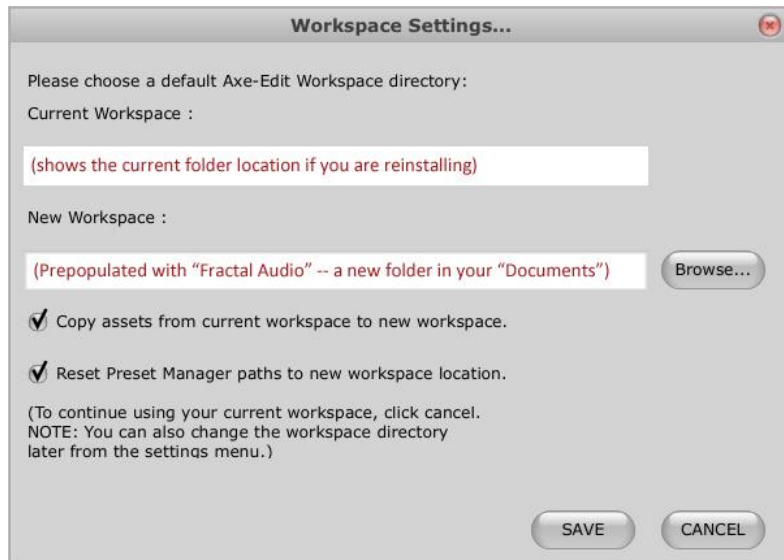


If you are reinstalling Axe-Edit and want to change the location of the program/user data directory, you can select to have files automatically copied to the new location.

A second option sets the default paths of preset manager views to their corresponding new folders in your data directory.

## MIDI SETTINGS

Before you can use Axe-Edit, you must properly configure the MIDI settings. Select this option under the [settings] button in the upper left of the main Axe-Edit window.
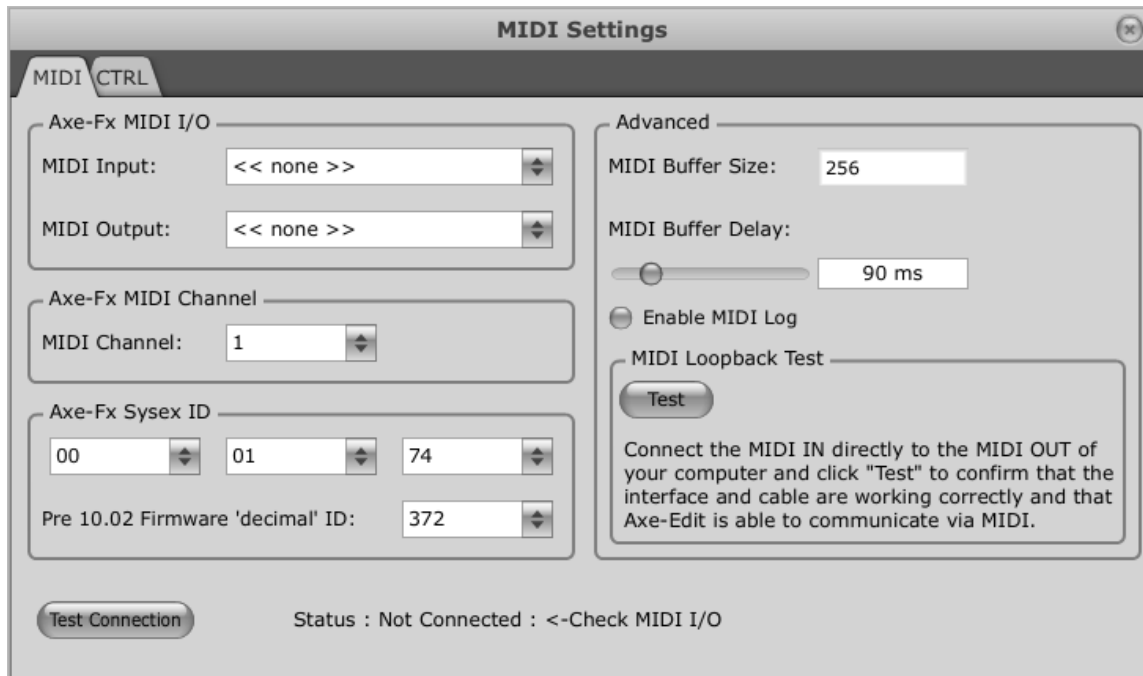
In the **MIDI settings** window, choose your **MIDI Input** and **MIDI Output** devices by name. If you are using the Axe-Fx on a non-default MIDI channel, select that value; otherwise, leave it set for 1.

As soon as you correctly set INPUT, OUTPUT, and CHANNEL, the Axe-Fx should be detected and will appear under **Status** at the bottom of the **MIDI Settings** window:



*See TROUBLESHOOTING on p.13 if your Axe-Fx does not appear in STATUS when polled after you make correct MIDI Input and MIDI Output device selections.*

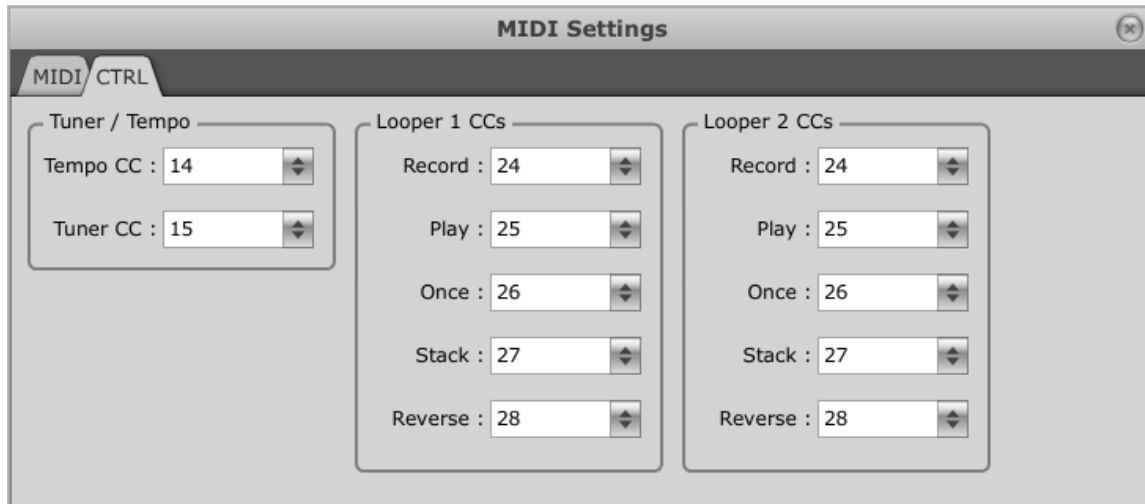## SYSEX ID

### CURRENT AXE-FX FIRMWARE
Axe-Edit is pre-configured for use with Axe-Fx firmware versions 10.02 and later, which use a hard-coded SysEx ID of **00-01-74**.

### OLDER AXE-FX FIRMWARE
Axe-Fx firmware versions 10.01 and earlier allow you to set the SysEx ID to any value from 0-127. To use Axe-Edit with older Axe-Fx firmware you must select a value in the "Pre 10.02 Firmware Decimal ID" dropdown to match that in your Axe-Fx under **I/O:MIDI:SYSEX ID.** The default setting on the Axe-Fx will be 125.

## CTRL SETTINGS (OPTIONAL)

The 2nd tab of MIDI Settings covers optional settings for using Tuner, Tempo, and the Axe-Fx Looper.



Axe-Edit can bring the Axe-Fx tuner display to your computer screen.
On the Axe-Fx:

1.  Ensure that **SEND REALTIME SYSEX** is set to **ALL** or **TUNER.** This setting can be found under **I/O:MIDI:SEND REALTIME SYSEX.**
2.  Ensure that the TUNER has some CC# number assigned. This setting can be found under **I/O:CONTROL:TUNER**

In Axe-Edit, open the CTRL tab of the MIDI Settings window and ensure that the setting for **Tuner CC, TEMPO CC**, and the various **LOOPER** controls match those found in the Axe-Fx under **I/O:CONTROL**

## OTHER AXE-FX SETTINGS

To ensure optimal operation of Axe-Edit's "Audition" features, please set IGNORE REDUNDANT PROGRAM CHANGES to **OFF** in the Axe-Fx under **I/O:MIDI:IGNORE REDUNDANT PC**

## TITLE BAR STATUS

Once you have made MIDI Settings, close the MIDI Settings Window. You generally won't need to re-visit these settings unless you change midi adapters/ports/etc.  Under normal circumstances, Axe-Edit communicates the status message which appears in MIDI SETTINGS via the application's TITLE BAR. This area is also used to show information about midi activity.



A "healthy" connection will show the Axe-Fx, firmware version, and SysEx ID. The IN and OUT meters in Axe-Edit are for future use and serve NO function in the application at present. CPU is approximate. Please see UTILITY:STATUS on the Axe-Fx for accurate readout of CPU and I/O information.

# USING AXE-EDIT

## SELECT A SOURCE

When you start Axe Edit, you should immediately select a SOURCE.



Source options include:

**Axe-Fx:** Use this to open, edit, and save presets to/from a <u>connected Axe-Fx Standard or Ultra</u>

**Bank File:** Use this to open, edit, and save presets to/from a <u>bank file</u> on your computer.

**Preset Folder:** Use this to open/edit/save presets to/from a folder on your computer where they are stored as individual .syx files (ex: those you've downloaded from other users, exported from the Save As menu, or found on Axe-Change)

Details about the currently selected Axe-Edit source appear above the preset name display. For example, the path and file name of a **Bank File** source will be displayed as a reminder of what you are editing.

You can change the source at any time, but be sure to SAVE any unsaved preset before doing so or it will be lost!

The Axe-Change source is for future use. It cannot be selected in Axe-Edit's source menu.

## AXE-FX SYNC

When using the **Axe-Fx** SOURCE, it is recommended that you perform a SYNC so that program names can be displayed in Preset Selection menus. Axe-Edit will remember names across sessions, but they will be grayed each time you exit to indicate that you should SYNC again in case of changes outside Axe-Edit.

To **SYNC** one **PRESET**, simply load it individually using the arrows ▲▼ or the preset selector menu.

Note: Loading presets in the Preset Manager will also SYNC corresponding entries in the Editor.

To SYNC an entire bank, choose **Sync this Bank** from the top of the preset menu page for that bank.



To SYNC all Axe-Fx banks at once, choose **Sync Banks from Hardware** under the Preset Selector Menu.



When you SYNC all banks, Axe-Edit will also give you the option to backup each axe-fx bank as a file. These backups will be found in the backups subdirectory of the workspace you selected upon axe-edit's first launch. Remember, each time you re-launch Axe-Edit, synced names will be grayed out on the chance they may have been changed outside of Axe-Edit since your last program session. You may ignore this effect if you're confident that the entries are indeed identical in both systems, or simply re-sync to be sure.

## EDITING PRESETS

Once you have selected a source and loaded a preset, it will be displayed in the main GRID EDITOR:
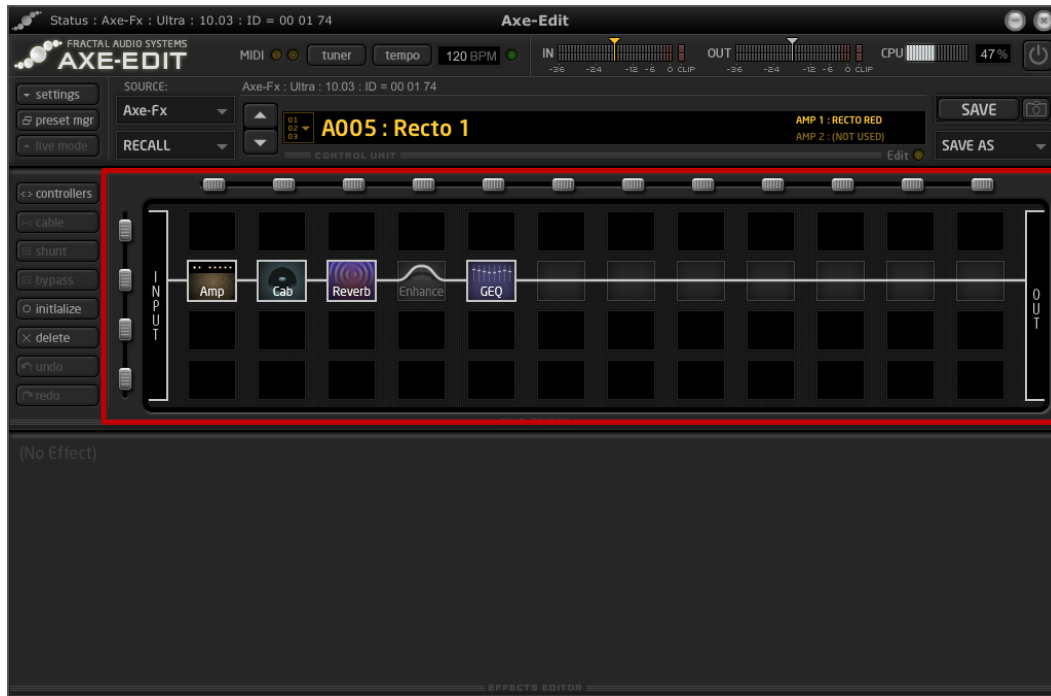


To make changes, click on any effect block in the preset, causing its parameters to appear in the EFFECT EDITOR beneath the grid.



Some effects have multiple pages of parameters, available via the tab buttons (green box above).

## SAVING EDITED PRESETS

When you've edited a preset and want to save changes, press the SAVE button (outlined in red, below). This saves it to the currently selected preset of the current source.



The SNAPSHOT button (outlined in green above) stashes a copy of the currently loaded/edited preset to the SPILL/SCRATCH area of the PRESET MANAGER, allowing you to go back later to revisit cool milestones. The names of snapshot programs will include a date/timestamp, so you may wish to rename them after reloading. Snapshots are cleared when you exit Axe-Edit, but you can manually save them first through the SPILL/SCRATCH area of the PRESET MANAGER.

## "RECALL" AND "SAVE AS" FEATURES

The RECALL dropdown includes operations which bring preset data into Axe-Edit.

- RECALL LAST SAVED VERSION provides a one-click way to throw away your edits and reload the current program from the Axe-FX or your currently opened source file or folder.
- RECALL FROM AXE-Fx EDIT BUFFER pulls in the contents of the Axe Fx edit buffer. The EDIT BUFFER is the special temporary memory space in the Axe-Fx. When a preset is loaded or recalled, it is placed here for playback and/or editing. This is useful to resync Axe-Edit when you make changes from the Axe-FX front panel.
- RECALL AXE-FX PRESET ### will poll the Axe-FX for the preset at this designated location (Available for Bank File/Preset Folder Sources only).
- AUTO RECALL is shown only when the SOURCE is Axe-FX. When it's ON, this option causes the Axe-FX to send each preset to the Editor as it is selected. When Auto Recall is OFF, the selected preset is loaded instead from a locally cached version created the last time it was SYNCED. Presets loaded in this manner are shown with their names dimmed in the display until a SAVE or RECALL is performed.
- IMPORT PRESET FILE or CSV allows you to load individual preset files within the current source.

## SAVE AS

The SAVE AS dropdown activates advanced operations which transmit or export data from Axe-Edit.

- SAVE TO NEW LOCATION allows you to re-direct an edited preset to a new memory location in the CURRENT SOURCE. Example: Open Axe-FX preset A:013 and save it to Axe-FX Preset C:382.
- SAVE AS AXE-FX PRESET - Use this option (available only when the source is a BANK FILE or PRESET FOLDER) to write the currently loaded preset to the Axe-FX at its original numbered location. (Example: Open Bank File Preset 15 into Axe-FX preset 15).
- SEND TO AXE-FX EDIT BUFFER pushes the current state of Axe-Edit back to the connected hardware. Use this if you have to reboot the hardware or to override changes made through the front panel.
- EXPORT PRESET FILE or CSV allows you to SAVE any preset as a file to any location on your computer.
- AUTO AUDITION causes any preset you load from a bank file, preset folder, or import to be automatically sent to the connected Axe-Fx (so you can hear it!) Turning Auto Audition OFF stops this from happening, at which point you will need to manually send or save programs to the hardware. Any parameter edits you make will still be sent, however, so tread carefully. While Auto-Audition is active, the setting for AUTO AUDITION AT NUMBERED LOCATION determines whether presets load into the current hardware preset number or the current software preset number. The former simply sends the preset to the Axe-Fx edit buffer. The latter sends a program change to the Axe-Fx to select the corresponding preset number before sending the new preset to the Axe-Fx.

## SAVING EFFECT BLOCK SETTINGS

Our beta team thought it would be good to include a tip about **Effect Block Settings**. Axe-Edit allows you to save **Effect Block Settings** so you can instantly recall them at any time in any preset. For instance, you could save a cool DELAY setting from a friend's best program and then insert it easily to another of your own presets with just a few clicks.

In the GRID, right/ctrl click on any block. Choose **SETTINGS>SAVE SETTINGS**. Give the new entry a name (20 chars. max) and click SAVE.

To recall a saved effect block setting, right/ctrl click on any grid location (populated or empty) and choose SETTINGS>RECALL SETTINGS. Select the submenu for the block type you saved, then find it and click it in the list of saved entries. Voila...Total recall!

*Note: In this version of Axe-Edit, you are limited to 128 TOTAL saved effect block settings.*
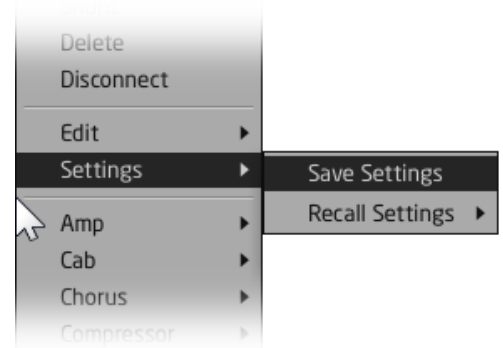
## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: How do I use "PRESET MANAGER"?**
**A:** In <u>Axe-Edit</u>, select Settings : Help : Preset Manager for more information.

**Q: How do I transfer user Cab IRs to the Axe-Fx?**
**A:** Use the Preset Manager. The following demo may be of help:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qphnI37Wdcw

**Q: Why is Axe-Edit nable to detect my Axe-Fx after it was previously working great?**
**A:** First, check that all MIDI Cables are connected correctly (see p. 2.) Check the <u>MIDI</u> <u>Input</u> and <u>Output</u> selections under Axe-Edit : MIDI Settings. If the correct selections appear there (or if you cannot make/find the choices you are looking for) your computer and MIDI interface may be to blame. USB MIDI interface problems are often solved by the following routine.

1. Close Axe-Edit.
2. Remove and reconnect the USB Midi interface.
3. Re-launch Axe-Edit and check its MIDI SETTINGS.

If this does not work, a more rigorous re-start process might help:

1. Disconnect your USB MIDI interface from the computer
2. Reboot the computer
3. Reconnect the MIDI interface to a different USB port
4. Re-launch Axe-Edit and check its MIDI SETTINGS.

**Q: Should I try different BUFFER and DELAY options under MIDI Settings?**
**A:** Typically not. These options allow expert users to fine tune the size and speed parameters of MIDI communication in your system. Different MIDI interfaces may require a tweak here, but it is best to leave these settings alone unless you have it on good authority that a change is required here.

**Q: Can I use Axe-Edit and the MFC-101 simultaneously?**
**A:** Yes, but you need special hardware. Both the MFC-101 and the computer need to be able to send MIDI messages to the Axe-Fx, while the Axe-Fx needs to be able to send MIDI to both of them in return. Messages from Axe-Edit do not need to reach the MFC-101, and messages from the MFC-101 do not need to reach Axe-Edit.

Depending on how you look at things, 3-way connection scenarios are complicated or simplified by the fact that the MFC-101 allows bidirectional MIDI communication over a single MIDI cable, and can even work with Phantom power. To take advantage of this capability, you will need to modify a standard hardware MIDI merger (like the MIDI Solutions 2-in 1-Out Merger).

More information can be found online in the unofficial Axe-Fx Wiki

## TROUBLESHOOTING

Each component of an Axe-Edit setup must work for the entire system to operate correctly. We will focus on the numbered areas below:
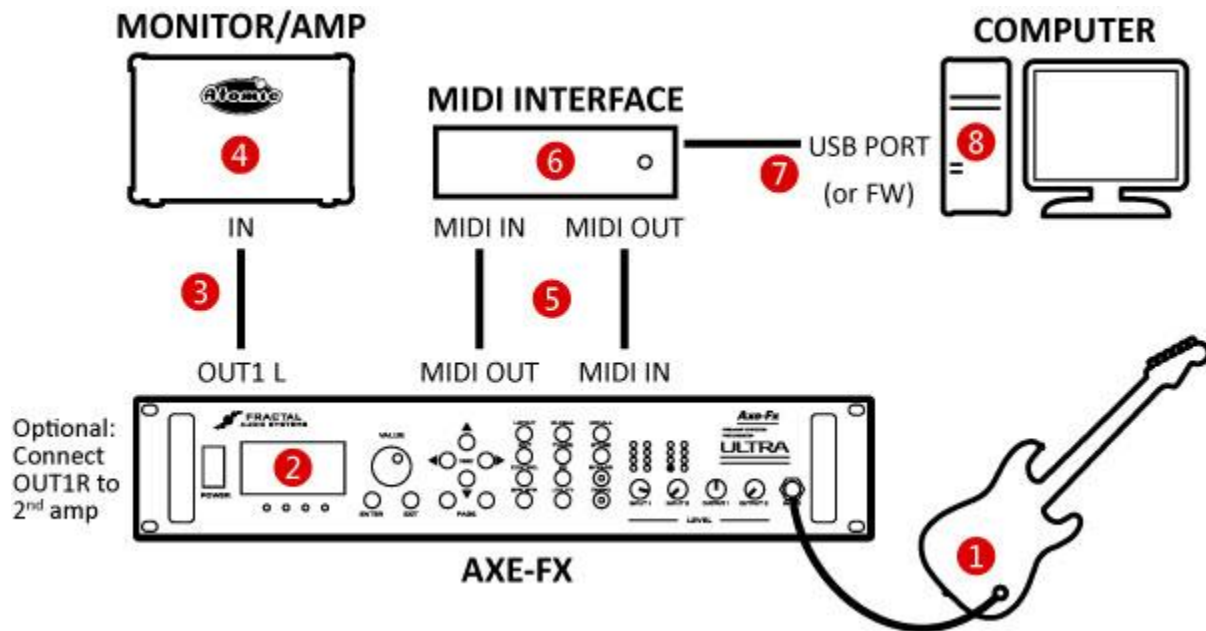


1-4: First, ensure that your Guitar, Axe-Fx, and monitoring system are working correctly by testing them with MIDI cables disconnected from the Axe-Fx. Check: your guitar and instrument cable, the Axe-FX input and output knob positions, Axe-Fx system settings (especially I/O MODE and I/O Audio), the cable to your amp/monitor, and the settings of that device. Restart your Axe-Fx, select a known good preset, and you should see the input meters lighting and be able to hear the Axe-Fx processing your guitar signal.

5: A common mistake, even among seasoned pros, is to have the Axe-Fx MIDI cables switched, or connected to the wrong ports altogether. *Double check these connections first* if Axe-Edit cannot detect a connected Axe-Fx. Be especially careful that you haven't used the MIDI THRU port by mistake…

6. Your MIDI interface may require certain settings of its own. Refer to the manufacturer's documentation for more information. An Axe-Edit LOOPBACK TEST (see below) can also help to confirm that your computer and MIDI interface are working correctly.

7. The connection between your MIDI interface and computer is critical. Be sure to use a working cable of the correct type according to the manufacturer's recommendation.

8. Your computer must have the correct, current driver installed for your MIDI interface. It is absolutely essential that you follow the manufacturer's instructions when installing such a device. A common mistake made when installing USB MIDI Interfaces, for example, is connecting the device before installing the driver. To correct problems caused by faulty installations, you typically need to remove the

device, uninstall the driver, re-install the driver, and reconnect the device (sometimes even choosing a different USB port at this point helps.)

6-8:  In worst-case scenarios, problems with a computer may prevent the correct operation or installation of a MIDI interface. Missing/incorrect/ incorrectly installed drivers, faulty hardware, OS settings, conflicts with other programs or devices, and a range of other possibilities can each be implicated. Fortunately, Axe-Edit now provides the means to perform a MIDI Loopback to test your COMPUTER, INTERFACE, and MIDI CABLE(s).

To perform a loopback test using Axe-Edit, connect the MIDI IN of your MIDI interface directly to its MIDI OUT.
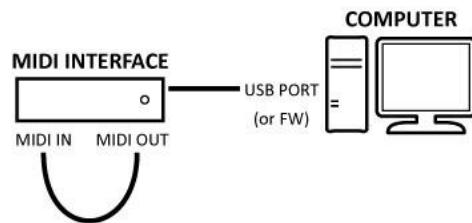


Open MIDI SETTINGS in Axe-Edit, ensure that the MIDI IN and MIDI OUT devices selected are those which you have cable together, and press the MIDI LOOPBACK TEST button.
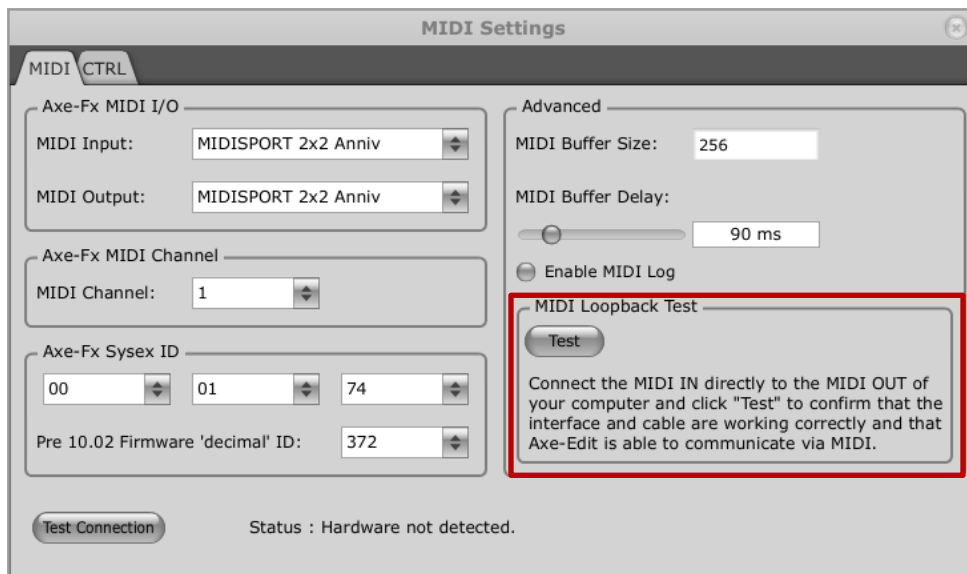


You will either see "Loopback test failed!" or "Loopback test passed." A successful test confirms that the computer, interface and midi cable are working correctly. It is a good idea to test both cables you'll use with Axe-Edit.  Note: "Cable only" type midi interfaces like the MIDISport UNO cannot be tested in this way without a barrel connector (ex: HOSA GMD-108)

## GETTING HELP

Axe-Edit is not officially supported by Fractal Audio, but we do offer help through our online forum at the address http://forum.fractalaudio.com/forums/48-Axe-Edit-Software-Editor