

A frequently asked question is:

Do you use analogue power amps or class D ?

This is an understandable question, based on the frequent misconception that class D amplifiers are 'digital' amplifiers.

Class D amplifiers are a type (class) of analogue power amplifier. The "D" in 'class D' does not mean digital.

The key point in classifying an amplifier type as 'digital' is ; does it have an analogue to digital converter in the signal path ?

In a class D power amplifier the analogue signal is not digitized or quantized anywhere in the signal chain. The signal is not converted into "digits", "bits" and "bytes" or "quanta" by an analogue to digital converter. The signal remains an analogue quantity, from input to output.

Some recent discussions about class A/B versus class D power amplifiers are based on the fact that a few guitar amplifier manufacturers are making a marketing feature out of their use of class A/B amplifiers, which they call "pure analogue" rather than class D amplifiers which they infer as being "digital".

The fact is that class D amplifiers are also "pure analogue".

As a result, there are now people who mistakenly think that class D power amplifiers are digital, which they are not. Add to this the inference from some people that analogue is good, digital is bad, and you get the misconception that class D power amps are somehow inferior.

So; Class D compared to class A/B ?

Class D is a type of analogue power amplifier which is inherently lighter in weight and much more efficient than most other types of power amplifier, such as the class A/B amplifier used in many guitar amplifiers.

A well designed class D amplifier will sound as warm, accurate and dynamic as any well designed class A/B amplifier, but with the ability to have a lot more clean power and headroom in a much smaller and cooler-running unit.