

# USER GUIDE

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ACR500HDMI-T    ACR500DP-T-R2

# AGILITY ZERO U TRANSMITTER

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24/7 TECHNICAL SUPPORT AT 1.877.877.2269 OR VISIT [BLACKBOX.COM](http://BLACKBOX.COM)



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## **FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION AND INDUSTRY CANADA RADIO FREQUENCY INTERFERENCE STATEMENTS**

This equipment generates, uses, and can radiate radio-frequency energy, and if not installed and used properly, that is, in strict accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, may cause interference to radio communication. It has been tested and found to comply with the limits for a Class A computing device in accordance with the specifications in Subpart B of Part 15 of FCC rules, which are designed to provide reasonable protection against such interference when the equipment is operated in a commercial environment. Operation of this equipment in a residential area is likely to cause interference, in which case the user at his own expense will be required to take whatever measures may be necessary to correct the interference.

Changes or modifications not expressly approved by the party responsible for compliance could void the user's authority to operate the equipment.

This digital apparatus does not exceed the Class A limits for radio noise emission from digital apparatus set out in the Radio Interference Regulation of Industry Canada.

Le présent appareil numérique n'émet pas de bruits radioélectriques dépassant les limites applicables aux appareils numériques de la classe A prescrites dans le Règlement sur le brouillage radioélectrique publié par Industrie Canada.

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## **INSTRUCCIONES DE SEGURIDAD**

### **(NORMAS OFICIALES MEXICANAS ELECTRICAL SAFETY STATEMENT)**

1. Todas las instrucciones de seguridad y operación deberán ser leídas antes de que el aparato eléctrico sea operado.
2. Las instrucciones de seguridad y operación deberán ser guardadas para referencia futura.
3. Todas las advertencias en el aparato eléctrico y en sus instrucciones de operación deben ser respetadas.
4. Todas las instrucciones de operación y uso deben ser seguidas.
5. El aparato eléctrico no deberá ser usado cerca del agua—por ejemplo, cerca de la tina de baño, lavabo, sótano mojado o cerca de una alberca, etc.
6. El aparato eléctrico debe ser usado únicamente con carritos o pedestales que sean recomendados por el fabricante.
7. El aparato eléctrico debe ser montado a la pared o al techo sólo como sea recomendado por el fabricante.
8. Servicio—El usuario no debe intentar dar servicio al equipo eléctrico más allá a lo descrito en las instrucciones de operación. Todo otro servicio deberá ser referido a personal de servicio calificado.
9. El aparato eléctrico debe ser situado de tal manera que su posición no interfiera su uso. La colocación del aparato eléctrico sobre una cama, sofá, alfombra o superficie similar puede bloquea la ventilación, no se debe colocar en libreros o gabinetes que impidan el flujo de aire por los orificios de ventilación.
10. El equipo eléctrico deber ser situado fuera del alcance de fuentes de calor como radiadores, registros de calor, estufas u otros aparatos (incluyendo amplificadores) que producen calor.
11. El aparato eléctrico deberá ser conectado a una fuente de poder sólo del tipo descrito en el instructivo de operación, o como se indique en el aparato.
12. Precaución debe ser tomada de tal manera que la tierra física y la polarización del equipo no sea eliminada.
13. Los cables de la fuente de poder deben ser guiados de tal manera que no sean pisados ni pellizcados por objetos colocados sobre o contra ellos, poniendo particular atención a los contactos y receptáculos donde salen del aparato.
14. El equipo eléctrico debe ser limpiado únicamente de acuerdo a las recomendaciones del fabricante.
15. En caso de existir, una antena externa deberá ser localizada lejos de las líneas de energía.
16. El cable de corriente deberá ser desconectado del cuando el equipo no sea usado por un largo periodo de tiempo.
17. Cuidado debe ser tomado de tal manera que objetos líquidos no sean derramados sobre la cubierta u orificios de ventilación.
18. Servicio por personal calificado deberá ser provisto cuando:
  - A: El cable de poder o el contacto ha sido dañado; u
  - B: Objetos han caído o líquido ha sido derramado dentro del aparato; o
  - C: El aparato ha sido expuesto a la lluvia; o
  - D: El aparato parece no operar normalmente o muestra un cambio en su desempeño; o
  - E: El aparato ha sido tirado o su cubierta ha sido dañada.



**CHAPTER 1: SPECIFICATIONS..... 6**

**CHAPTER 2: WELCOME ..... 7**

**CHAPTER 3: INSTALLATION ..... 8**

Connections.....8

Video link.....9

Network link.....10

USB and power connections.....11

**CHAPTER 4: CONFIGURATION ..... 12**

Initial configuration.....12

Manual factory reset.....12

Browser-based configuration utility.....13

Restoring a backup firmware image.....14

Performing an upgrade.....15

**CHAPTER 5: OPERATION ..... 16**

Status indicators.....16

Resetting.....17

**CHAPTER 6: FURTHER INFORMATION ..... 18**

Appendix A - Supported video modes.....18

Appendix B - Configuration pages.....19

Appendix C - Dimensions.....29

Appendix D - Tips for success when networking Agility units.....30

Appendix E - Troubleshooting.....32

Appendix F - Glossary.....34

Appendix G - Open source licenses.....37

**SAFETY INFORMATION ..... 54**



## CHAPTER 1: SPECIFICATIONS

- Approvals: CE, FCC
- Hardware Compatibility: All computers with DVI-D or DisplayPort digital video and USB interfaces
- Software Compatibility: Operates with all known software and operating systems including Windows®, Linux®, Unix®, BSD, all Sun® OS, all Mac® OS, NetWare®, etc.
- Operating Temperature: 32 to 104°F (0 to 40°C)



## CHAPTER 2: WELCOME

Thank you for choosing the Black Box Agility family of high capacity digital extenders/switches. By encoding high quality video, audio and Hi-Speed USB data into Internet Protocol (IP) messages, Agility units offer flexible ways to link peripherals and systems via standard networks.

This guide covers the Agility Zero U unit, a highly compact dongle which can be attached to its host computer and transfer high quality video (single link DisplayPort™ or HDMI™ according to the chosen model) and Hi-Speed USB signals across your network.

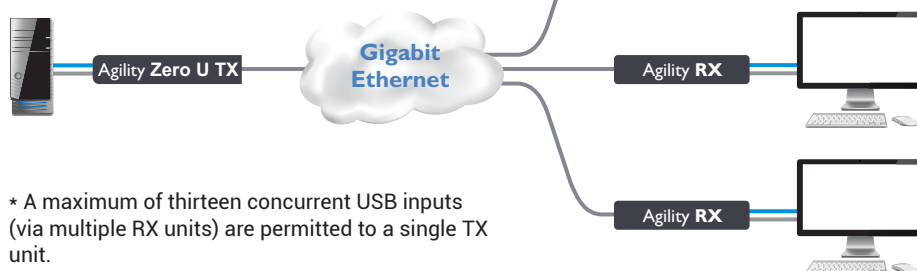
### One-to-one configuration

The simplest configuration links one RX unit to a single TX unit, either by a direct link or over much greater distances via a high speed network.



### One-to-many configuration

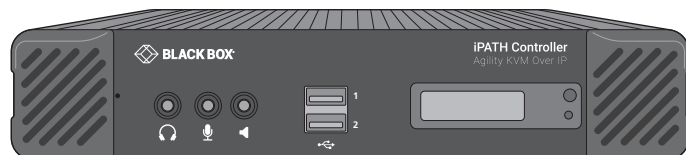
Using multicast techniques, an unlimited number of receivers\* can receive video and audio data streams from a single TX unit.



\* A maximum of thirteen concurrent USB inputs (via multiple RX units) are permitted to a single TX unit.

## AGILITY UNITS AND THE BLACK BOX IPATH AGILITY CONTROLLER

Where multiple Agility units are used on a network, we have developed the Black Box iPATH Agility Controller to allow comprehensive and secure central control of all Agility units and users.



When using an Black Box iPATH Controller to configure Agility units, it is vital that all Agility units that you wish to locate and control are set to their factory default settings. Otherwise they will not be located by the Black Box iPATH Controller. If necessary, perform a [factory reset](#) on each Agility unit.

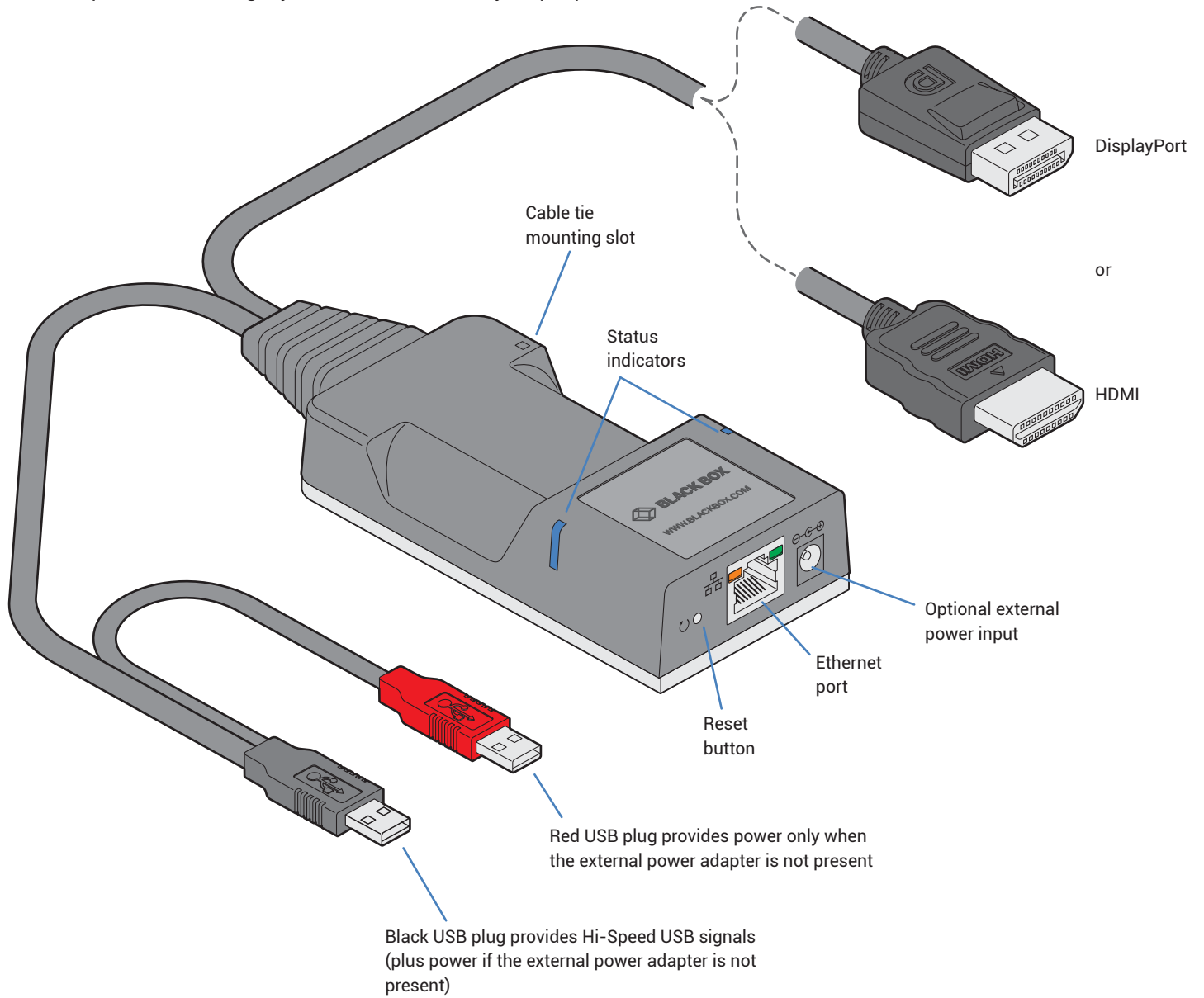
Note: If you are using one or more Agility Zero U Transmitter units within an installation managed by an Black Box iPATH Controller, the Black Box iPATH Controller must be running firmware version 4.7 or above.

Please also see [Appendix C - Tips for success when networking](#)

# CHAPTER 3: INSTALLATION

## CONNECTIONS

Installation involves linking the Agility Zero U unit to various ports on the host computer, while the Agility RX unit is attached to your peripherals:



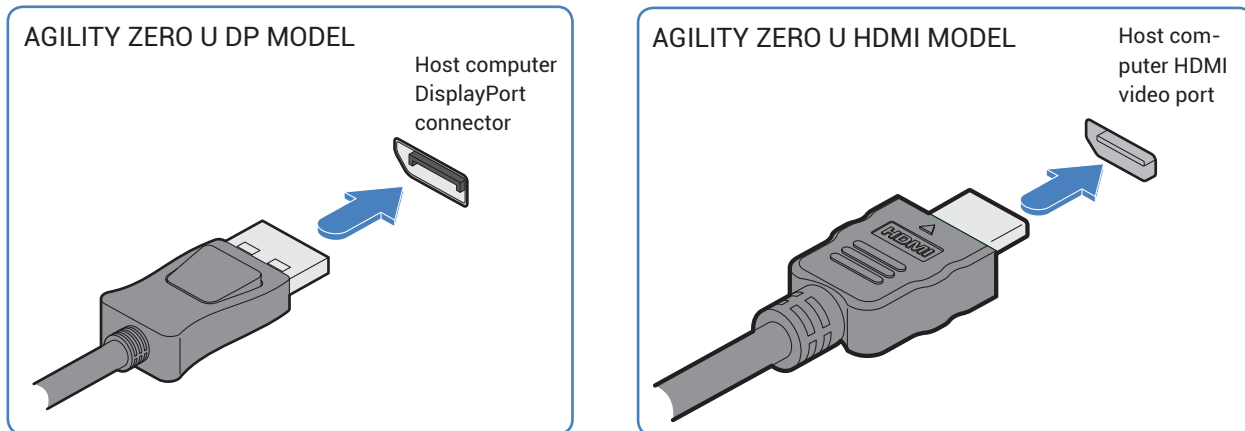


## VIDEO LINK

Each Agility Zero U unit is supplied with either a DisplayPort™ or HDMI connector (model dependant). Video signals at pixel clocks up to 300MHz (equivalent to a maximum resolution of 2560 x 1600 at 60Hz) are permissible. Two channel digital audio is also supported via the video connector.

### TO MAKE A VIDEO LINK

1 Connect the Agility Zero U video connector to the DisplayPort™ or HDMI socket of the host computer:



## SUPPORT FOR AUDIO

The Agility Zero U can derive its (digital) audio feed either from the USB connection or from the video link (i.e. embedded audio within the DisplayPort/HDMI signal). In both cases, the digital audio is converted to analog as it is transferred to the receiver(s), where it is output via their 3.5mm jack(s). The two audio sources are controlled from the System Configuration page of the internal utility (see page 20) as follows:

- When the *Enable Audio-1* option is checked, the Agility Zero U arranges a bi-directional audio stream with the host computer via the USB connection.
- When the *Enable Audio-2* option is checked, the EDID definition of the DisplayPort or HDMI connection will be altered to permit a uni-directional audio stream via the video output. This allows the use of embedded audio, even when the video display itself does not support audio.

*Note: It is possible for both options to be enabled at the same time without issue.*

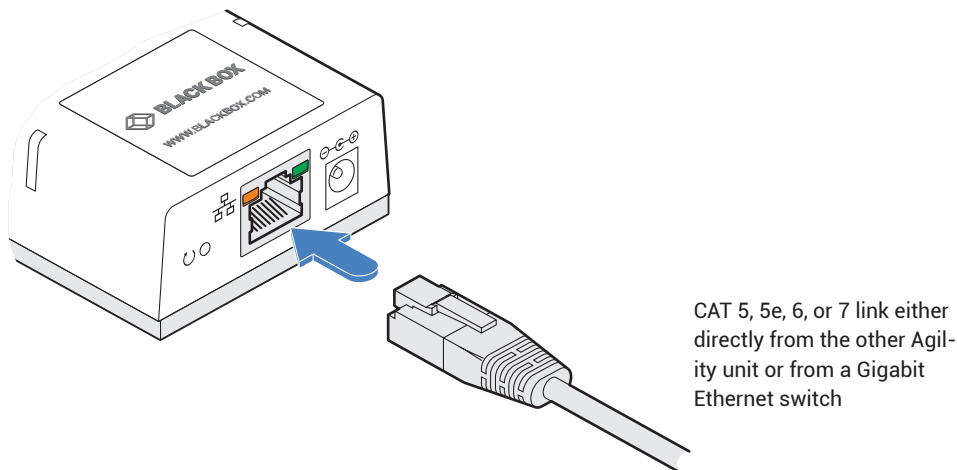
## NETWORK LINK

Agility transmitters and receivers can either be connected directly to each other or via a high speed network.

A single Gigabit Ethernet port is located on the front panel. For direct links via Ethernet cable, the length of cable should not exceed 100 metres (328 feet). Network cables used for connections may be category 5, 5e, 6 or 7 twisted-pair cable. The Agility Zero U unit has an auto-sensing capability on its network interfaces, so for direct point-to-point connections, no 'crossover' Ethernet cable is required.

### TO LINK THE AGILITY ZERO U UNIT

- 1 Connect a CAT 5, 5e, 6, or 7 cable to the Gigabit Ethernet socket on the front panel of the Agility Zero U unit.



- 2 Connect the other end of the cable either directly to an Agility receiver or to a Gigabit Ethernet switch, as appropriate.
- 3 [For connections via a network] repeat steps 1 and 2 for the other Agility unit(s).

## USB AND POWER CONNECTIONS

The Agility Zero U unit is designed to be as flexible as possible. It can either operate using an optional external power adapter (see page 3) or derive all of its power from its two USB plugs. The main advantage offered by using an external power adapter is that it allows the Agility Zero U unit to be active before the host computer; thus allowing a remote user to access the host's initial boot up and access the BIOS menu, when required.

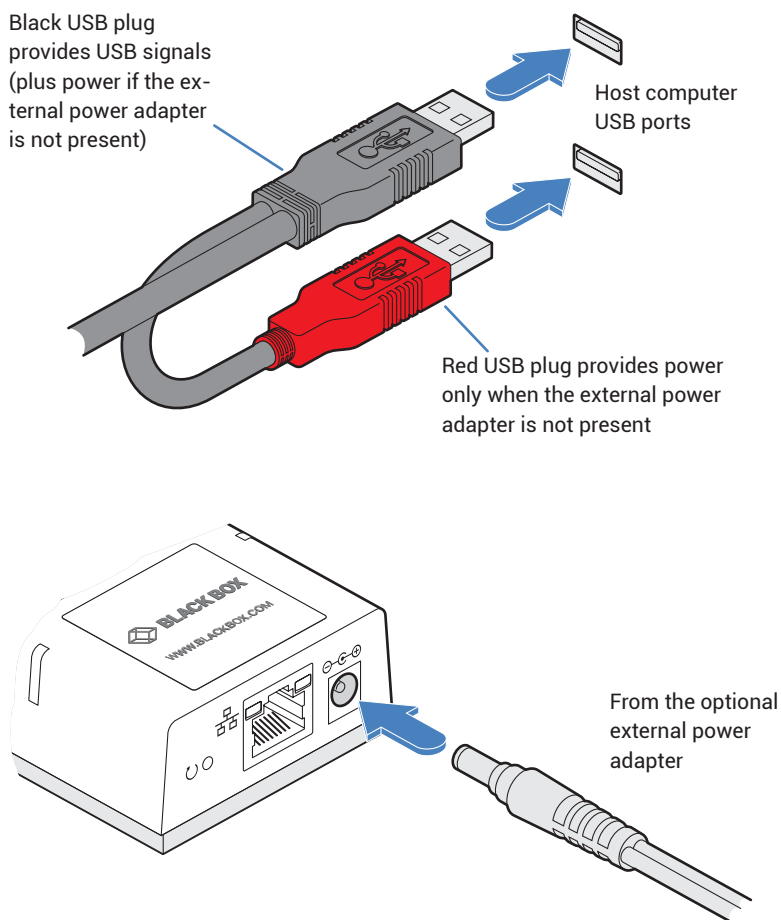
If powered by USB only, then both the black and red USB plugs need to be connected.

If powered by external power adapter, only the black Hi-Speed USB plug needs to be connected, for signal purposes. Whenever, the external power adapter is attached and operating, then power will be taken from it rather than the USB plugs. There is no problem if the red USB plug remains connected while the power adapter is used.

This is summarized as follows:

Power adapter	Black USB	Red USB	Power sourcing behavior
✗	✓	✓	Power taken from both USB plugs.
✓	✓	✗	Power taken from power adapter only.
✓	✓	✓	Power taken from power adapter only, unless it becomes unavailable, in which case power will be taken from both USB plugs after a short interruption.

*Note: The USB plugs do not operate as a seamless failover for the external power adapter; there will be a short interruption as operation switches from one power source to the other.*



## SUPPORT FOR AUDIO

The Agility Zero U can derive its (digital) audio feed either from the USB connection or from the video link (i.e. embedded audio within the DisplayPort/HDMI signal). In both cases, the digital audio is converted to analog as it is transferred to the receiver(s), where it is output via their 3.5mm jack(s). The two audio sources are controlled from the System Configuration page of the internal utility (see page 20) as follows:

- When the *Enable Audio-1* option is checked, the Agility Zero U arranges a bi-directional audio stream with the host computer via the USB connection.
- When the *Enable Audio-2* option is checked, the EDID definition of the DisplayPort or HDMI connection will be altered to permit a uni-directional audio stream via the video output. This allows the use of embedded audio, even when the video display itself does not support audio.

*Note: It is possible for both options to be enabled at the same time without issue.*

## CHAPTER 4: CONFIGURATION

### INITIAL CONFIGURATION

Agility units are designed to be as flexible as possible and this principle extends also to their configuration.

#### DIRECT LINKING

Where Agility transmitters and receivers are directly linked to each other, very little configuration action is required, provided that they have their factory default settings in place. If the standard settings have been changed in a previous installation, you merely need to perform a factory reset on each unit.

#### NETWORKED LINKING

Where Agility units are connected via networked links, you can either configure them individually, or configure them collectively using an IPATH Agility Controller:

- **Configuring networked Agility units individually** - You need to specify the network addresses of the Agility units so that they can locate each other. This is done by running the [Browser-based configuration utility](#) on a computer system linked to the same network as the Agility units.
- **Configuring Agility units collectively** - The iPATH Agility Controller allows you to configure, control and coordinate any number of Agility transmitters and receivers from a single application.
  - *If you are using one or more Agility Zero U transmitters within an installation managed by an IPATH Agility Controller, the IPATH Agility Controller must be running firmware version 4.12 or above.*

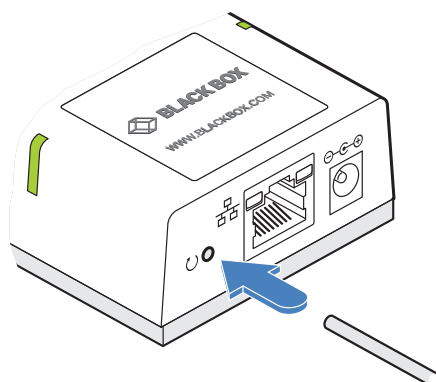
**IMPORTANT:** When using IPATH to configure Agility units, it is vital that all units that you wish to locate and control are set to their factory default settings. Otherwise they will not be located by the IPATH Agility Controller. If necessary, perform a factory reset on each Agility unit.

### MANUAL FACTORY RESET

A factory reset returns Agility Zero U unit to its default configuration. You can perform factory resets using the [Browser-based configuration utility](#) or by using this direct manual method.

#### TO PERFORM A MANUAL FACTORY RESET

- 1 Power on the Agility Zero U unit.
- 2 Use a narrow implement (e.g. a straightened-out paper clip) to press-and-hold the recessed reset button on the front panel for roughly fifteen seconds, until the indicators turn **blue** (*Note: alternating red/green indications will occur during the fifteen second period while the button is still pressed*).



Use a straightened-out paper clip to press the reset button for roughly 5 seconds

- 3 Release the reset switch.

The indicators will remain **blue** for a short while (less than ten seconds) while Agility Zero U unit configures itself and should then change to **green** if all connections are correct; or **orange** if one or more of the video, USB and/or network links are missing.

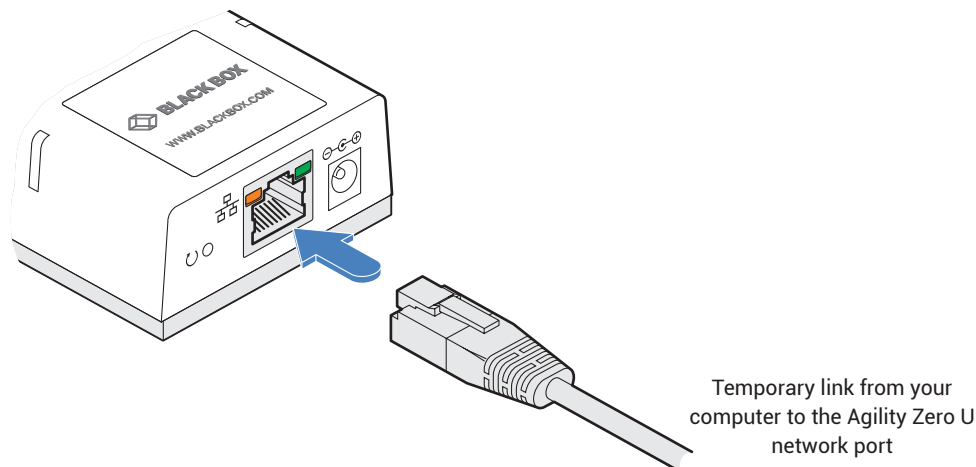
**NOTE:** If you are performing a factory reset and intend to disconnect the power immediately after the reset, you must wait at least 30 seconds after you have released the reset button for it to complete the process.

## BROWSER-BASED CONFIGURATION UTILITY

The browser-based configuration utility within all TX and RX units requires a network connection between the Agility Zero U unit and a computer on the same network. The configuration utility allows you to perform many important functions. Please see [Appendix B](#).

### TO CONNECT A COMPUTER TO ACCESS THE CONFIGURATION UTILITY

- 1 Connect a CAT 5, 5e, 6, or 7 link cable to the network port on the front panel. The port automatically configures itself, so no cross-over cable is required (but is supported if you do use one).



- 2 Connect the other end of the link cable directly to the network port of your computer.

### TO ACCESS THE BROWSER-BASED CONFIGURATION UTILITY

- 1 Temporarily connect the Agility Zero U unit and your computer, as discussed left.
- 2 Run a web browser on your computer and enter the IP address of the Agility Zero U unit:

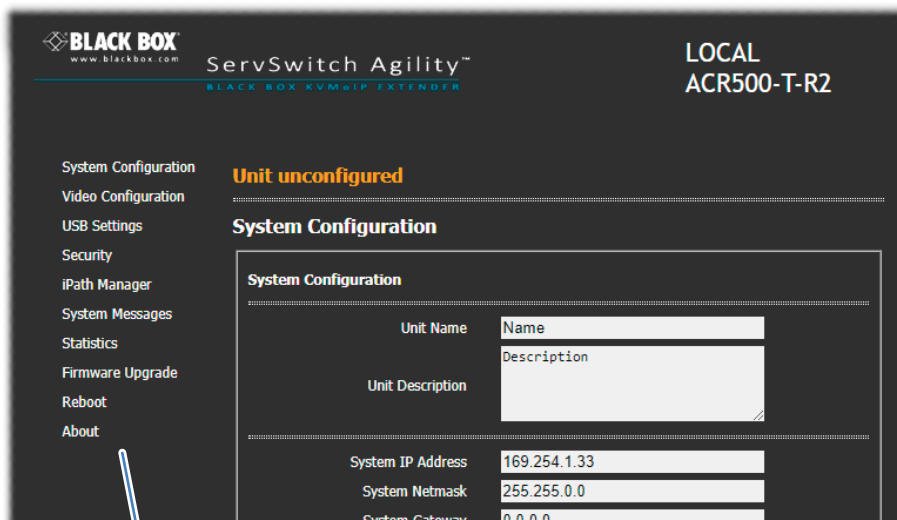
**169.254.1.33**

*Note: If the IP address of Agility Zero U unit has been changed and is not known, providing it is appropriate to do so, perform a [manual factory reset](#) to restore the default address.*

The opening page of the Agility configuration utility should be displayed:

You can find further information about the configuration pages later in this guide:

- [Appendix B - Configuration pages](#)



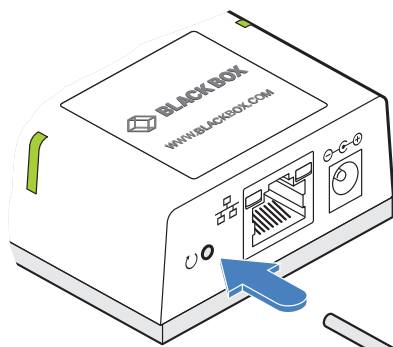
Use the menu options to choose the required configuration page

## RESTORING A BACKUP FIRMWARE IMAGE

The Agility Zero U unit retains a backup image of the previous firmware version in order to provide a fallback in case of any issues with the primary image. The backup image has no video or USB functionality; once invoked, you will need to load an upgrade file using the web interface or via an iPATH Agility Controller to load a new primary image - see Performing an upgrade (shown right).

### TO RESTORE THE BACKUP FIRMWARE IMAGE

- 1 Power on the Agility Zero U unit.
- 2 Use a narrow implement (e.g. a straightened-out paper clip) to press-and-hold the recessed reset button for roughly ten seconds until the indicators flash **green/red**.



Use a straightened-out paper clip to press the reset button for roughly 10 seconds

- 3 Release the reset switch.

The Agility Zero U unit will switch to the backup firmware image. Once complete, Agility Zero U unit will then continually flash **green/red**.

- 4 Perform an upgrade to reinstate a fresh primary firmware image - see next page.

## PERFORMING AN UPGRADE

Agility Zero U units are flash upgradeable using the method outlined here. However, for larger installations we recommend that you use the iPATH Agility Controller to upgrade multiple Agility units. When using the method below, the Agility Zero U unit will be upgraded in sequence.

**IMPORTANT: Upgrades should be performed equally on transmitters and receivers at the same time. Mixed firmware operation may cause issues.**

**WARNING: During the upgrade process, ensure that power is not interrupted as this may leave Agility Zero U unit in an inoperable state.**

If the upgrade process is interrupted and fails, it may be necessary to switch to the backup firmware image in order to regain operation. See previous page for details.

### TO FIND THE LATEST UPGRADE FILES

Firmware files for the Agility Zero U units are available from the Black Box Support department.

*Note: It is possible to downgrade the firmware. After installing the older firmware, perform a factory reset on each Agility unit in order to clear the configuration file.*

### TO UPGRADE A SINGLE AGILITY ZERO U UNIT VIA THE NETWORK LINK

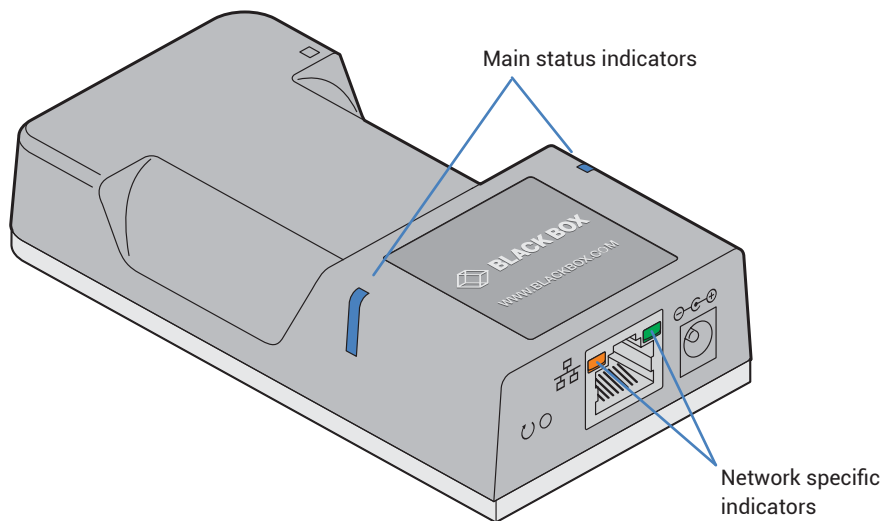
- 1 Download the latest upgrade file from Black Box.
- 2 Temporarily connect the Agility Zero U unit and a computer via a network (see [Browser-based configuration utility](#) section for details).
- 3 Run a web browser on your computer and enter the IP address of the Agility Zero U unit to be upgraded.
- 4 Click the Firmware Upgrade link. Within the Firmware Upgrade page, click the Choose File button. In the subsequent file dialog, locate the downloaded upgrade file - check that the file is correct for Agility Zero U unit being upgraded. The file contains a single image.
- 5 Click the Upgrade Now button. A progress bar will be displayed (however, if your screen is connected to Agility Zero U unit being upgraded then video may be interrupted) and the status indicators on Agility Zero U unit will flash while the upgrade is in progress.
- 6 The indicators should stop flashing after roughly two minutes, after which Agility Zero U unit will automatically reboot itself. The upgrade process is complete.

## CHAPTER 5: OPERATION

In operation, many Agility installations require no intervention once configured. The TX and RX units take care of all connection control behind the scenes so that you can continue to work unhindered.

### STATUS INDICATORS

The two top panel indicators on the Agility Zero U unit provide a useful guide to operation:



#### MAIN STATUS INDICATORS

- Off No power
- Green Operating - Video, USB and network link all present
- Orange Operating - But video, USB and/or network link missing.
- Red (momentarily) Unit is booting up, or (consistently) Unit has failed, try rebooting.
- Red/green flashing Unit is in backup mode.
- Blue Factory reset has been activated.
- Red/blue flashing Unit is in upgrade mode.
- Fast green flash Unit is in identify mode (see page 20).

#### NETWORK SPECIFIC INDICATORS

- Orange Off: No link On: Link established
- Green Off: No link Flashing: Network activity On: Quiescent link



## RESETTING

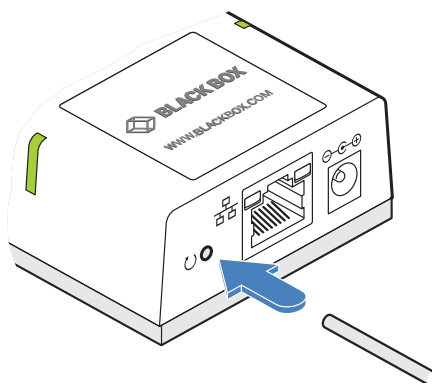
The recessed reset button provides a way to take control of the Agility Zero U if normal operation is affected. You will need a thin implement, such as a straightened out paper clip to press and hold the button. Depending on when you release the button, one of three functions will occur:

Required function	Release time	Indicators
To reboot to the primary firmware version	less than 10s	red
To boot to the backup firmware version*	10 to 14s	green/red flash
To restore factory settings and reboot	more than 15s	blue

\* The backup firmware version has no video or USB functionality. Once invoked, you will need to load an upgrade file to restore normal operation - see page 14.

### TO RESET THE AGILITY ZERO U

- 1 Power on the Agility Zero U unit.
- 2 Use a narrow implement (e.g. a straightened-out paper clip) to press-and-hold the recessed reset button. The status indicators will immediately turn **red**:



Use a straightened-out paper clip to press the reset button for roughly 10 seconds

- 3 Release the reset switch at the appropriate time (see the table above).

**NOTE: If you are performing a factory reset and intend to disconnect the power immediately after the reset, you must wait at least 30 seconds after you have released the reset button for it to complete the process.**

## CHAPTER 6: FURTHER INFORMATION

### APPENDIX A - Supported video modes

The following video modes are supported and can be automatically configured by the Agility Zero U. If a recognized video mode cannot be found, contact Technical Support for help.

cvt reduced 640 x 480 @ 60Hz	cvt reduced 1360 x 768 @ 60Hz
vesa 640 x 480 @ 60Hz	vesa 1360 x 768 @ 60Hz
vesa 640 x 480 @ 72Hz	vesa 1366 x 768 @ 60Hz
vesa 640 x 480 @ 75Hz	vesa reduced 1366 x 768 @ 60Hz
ibm 640 x 480 @ 75Hz	vesa 1400 x 1050 @ 60Hz
vesa 720 x 480 @ 60Hz	vesa reduced 1400 x 1050 @ 60Hz
vesa 768 x 576 @ 60Hz	vesa 1440 x 900 @ 60Hz
vesa 800 x 400 @ 60Hz	vesa 1440 x 960 @ 60Hz
cvt reduced 800 x 600 @ 60Hz	cvt reduced 1600 x 900 @ 60Hz
vesa 800 x 600 @ 56Hz	vesa reduced 1600 x 900 @ 60Hz
vesa 800 x 600 @ 60Hz	cvt reduced 1600 x 1200 @ 60Hz
vesa 800 x 600 @ 72Hz	vesa 1600 x 1200 @ 60Hz
vesa 800 x 600 @ 75Hz	vesa 1680 x 1050 @ 60Hz
cvt 1024 x 600 @ 60Hz	vesa reduced 1680 x 1050 @ 60Hz
cvt reduced 1024 x 600 @ 60Hz	vesa 1920 x 540 @ 60Hz
cvt reduced 1024 x 768 @ 60Hz	cvt reduced 1920 x 1080 @ 50Hz
vesa 1024 x 768 @ 60Hz	cvt 1920 x 1080 @ 50Hz
vesa 1024 x 768 @ 70Hz	vesa 1920 x 1080 @ 60Hz
ibm 1024 x 768 @ 70Hz	vesa reduced 1920 x 1200 @ 60Hz
vesa 1024 x 768 @ 75Hz	vesa 1920 x 1440 @ 60Hz
ibm 1024 x 768 @ 75Hz	vesa 2048 x 768 @ 60Hz
vesa 1152 x 768 @ 60Hz	vesa 2048 x 1080 @ 60Hz
cvt reduced 1152 x 864 @ 60Hz	vesa 2048 x 1152 @ 60Hz
vesa 1152 x 864 @ 70Hz	vesa 2048 x 1536 @ 60Hz
vesa 1152 x 864 @ 75Hz	vesa 2048 x 2048 @ 60Hz
cvt 1280 x 720 @ 60Hz	vesa 2560 x 1080 @ 60Hz
vesa 1280 x 720 @ 60Hz	vesa 2560 x 1080 @ 60Hz
vesa 1280 x 768 @ 60Hz	vesa 2560 x 1440 @ 60Hz
vesa reduced 1280 x 786 @ 60Hz	vesa 2560 x 1600 @ 60Hz
vesa 1280 x 786 @ 75Hz	vesa 2560 x 2048 @ 50Hz
vesa 1280 x 786 @ 85Hz	vesa 3440 x 1440 @ 50Hz
vesa 1280 x 800 @ 60Hz	sun 1024 x 768 @ 77Hz
cvt reduced 1280 x 960 @ 60Hz	sun 1152 x 900 @ 66Hz
vesa 1280 x 960 @ 60Hz	sun 1152 x 900 @ 76Hz
cvt reduced 1280 x 1024 @ 60Hz	sun 1024 x 1024 @ 61Hz
vesa 1280 x 1024 @ 60Hz	sun 1280 x 1024 @ 67Hz
ibm 1280 x 1024 @ 67Hz	sun 1280 x 1024 @ 76Hz
vesa 1280 x 1024 @ 75Hz	

*Note: Other video modes may also be supported.*



## APPENDIX B - Configuration pages

This section covers the browser-based configuration utility for the Agility Zero U unit. The pages are titled as follows:

- [System Configuration](#)
- [System Messages](#)
- [Video Configuration](#)
- [Statistics](#)
- [USB Settings](#)
- [Firmware Upgrade](#)
- [Security](#)
- [Reboot](#)
- [IPATH Manager](#)
- [About](#)



## SYSTEM CONFIGURATION

**BLACK BOX**  
www.blackbox.com

ServSwitch Agility™  
BLACK BOX KVM&IP EXTENDER

LOCAL  
ACR500-T-R2

System Configuration  
Video Configuration  
USB Settings  
Security  
iPath Manager  
System Messages  
Statistics  
Firmware Upgrade  
Reboot  
About

**Unit unconfigured**

### System Configuration

**System Configuration**

Unit Name	Name
	Description

System IP Address: 169.254.1.33  
System Netmask: 255.255.0.0  
System Gateway: 0.0.0.0

Force Multicast:

Enable Video:   
Enable Audio-1:   
Enable Audio-2:   
Enable USB:

note: disabling USB will also disable Audio-1 (USB audio)

Identify Unit (short)  
Identify Unit (long)

Update Now

### Target Multicast Configuration

Multicast IP for Video	239.16.0.1
Multicast IP for Audio-1	239.32.0.1
Multicast IP for Audio-2	239.32.0.1

Update Now

### Thumbnail

Image last updated : Thu May 13 2021 16:36:57 GMT+0100 (British Summer Time) (Browser time)

Refresh Thumbnail

### To get here

- 1 [Connect your computer to the network port](#) on the front panel.
- 2 Run a web browser and enter the IP address of the unit. If the address is unknown, perform a [manual factory reset](#) to <http://169.254.1.33>
- 3 If necessary, click the **System Configuration** link.

### Unit Name

Name details that you can alter to distinguish this unit from all others. The name entered here will be read by IPATH units (if used) for administration purposes.

### Unit Description

Allows you to optionally add a description of the unit, such as its location. Useful when many Agility units are being used.

### System port

This section determines the IP Address, Netmask and Gateway details for the Gigabit Ethernet port located on the front panel. The default IP address is 169.254.1.33 which is the zero config IP address that allows Agility Zero U unit to work immediately in point-to-point mode. You are recommended to change this to an appropriate address in the private IP range 192.168.xxx.xxx

The default netmask is 255.255.0.0. If you change the IP address to the private range, you are recommended to change this to 255.255.255.0 The default gateway address is 0.0.0.0

### Force Multicast

By default, the Agility Zero U unit will use unicast transmission when only a single RX is connected. This would then be upgraded to multicast when one or more other RX units are added. By ticking this option, the Agility Zero U unit will always use multicast. This option should be ticked for most installations as it provides the most efficient way to deliver video and audio to multiple destinations.

### Enable options

These checkboxes allow you to determine which peripheral options will be used: Video, digital audio and USB.

- When the *Enable Audio-1* option is checked, the Agility Zero U arranges a bi-directional audio stream with the host computer via the USB connection.
- When the *Enable Audio-2* option is checked, the EDID definition of the DisplayPort or HDMI connection will be altered to permit a uni-directional audio stream via the video output. This allows the use of embedded audio, even when the video display itself does not support audio.

*Note: It is possible for both options to be enabled at the same time without issue.*

### Identify unit

When clicked, these buttons cause the top indicators to flash to assist with identifying the Agility Zero U unit within a rack.

- The Identify Unit (short) button flashes the indicators for five seconds.
- The Identify Unit (long) button flashes the indicators for one hour but can be overridden by clicking the Identify Unit (short) button.

### Target Multicast Configuration

This option allows you to configure an IP address to which this transmitter can send multicast video and audio data, and from which multiple receivers can tap into it.

*Note: The multicast addresses for each service endpoint **must** be unique across the whole Agility installation.*

### Update Now

Click to save and implement your changes.

### Thumbnail

The Thumbnail shows snap shots of the video feeds that are connected and reports the video resolutions/color depths that have been detected.

Click the Refresh Thumbnail button to update. *Note: For security reasons the thumbnail image is not displayed when the Agility Zero U unit is under IPATH control.*

## VIDEO CONFIGURATION

The screenshot displays the Black Box ServSwitch Agility web interface. At the top left is the Black Box logo and website URL. The top right shows the unit name 'LOCAL ACR500-T-R2'. A sidebar on the left lists navigation options: System Configuration, Video Configuration, USB Settings, Security, iPath Manager, System Messages, Statistics, Firmware Upgrade, Reboot, and About. The main content area is titled 'Unit unconfigured' and 'Video Configuration'. It features two sections: 'Bandwidth Control' with a 'Peak bandwidth limiter percentage' slider set to 95, and 'Video Control' with various settings: Background Refresh (every 32 frames), Enable Magic Eye (checked), Use Default DDC (unchecked), Choose Default DDC (GENERIC 4:3), Enable Hot Plug Detect on change of display (checked), Period of Hot Plug Detect signal (Default - 100ms), Frame skipping percentage (0), and Compression (Pixel Perfect). An 'Update Now' button is located at the bottom right of the configuration area.

### To get here

- 1 [Connect your computer to the network port](#) on the front panel.
- 2 Run a web browser and enter the IP address of the unit. If the address is unknown, perform a [manual factory reset](#) to <http://169.254.1.33>
- 3 Click the Video Configuration link.

**Peak bandwidth limiter percentage**

The Agility Zero U unit will employ a 'best effort' strategy in sending video and other data over the IP network. This means it will use as much of the available network bandwidth as necessary to achieve optimal data quality, although typically the Agility Zero U unit will use considerably less than the maximum available. In order to prevent the Agility Zero U unit from 'hogging' too much of the network capacity, you can reduce this setting to place a tighter limit on the maximum bandwidth permissible to the Agility Zero U unit. Range: 0 to 95%.

**Background Refresh**

The Agility Zero U unit sends portions of the video image only when they change. In order to give the best user experience, the Agility Zero U unit also sends the whole video image, at a lower frame rate, in the background. The Background Refresh parameter controls the rate at which this background image is sent. The default value is 'every 32 frames', meaning that a full frame is sent in the background every 32 frames. Reducing this to 'every 64 frames' or more will reduce the amount of bandwidth that the Agility Zero U unit consumes. On a high-traffic network this parameter should be reduced in this way to improve overall system performance. Options: every 32 frames, every 64 frames, every 128 frames, every 256 frames or disabled.

**Enable Magic Eye**

This feature, enabled as standard, aims to reduce the effect of dithering - a technique used by some graphics cards to improve the perceived quality and color depth of images by diffusing or altering the color of pixels between video frames. The Magic Eye feature increases the frame rate and eliminates unnecessary network traffic by ignoring the color dithering where it occurs. If the video source is not noisy or dithered then you can switch off Magic Eye to enable full color accuracy. Magic Eye mode can remain enabled without penalty for video that does not have dither or noise.

**Use Default DDC and Choose Default DDC**

When the *Use Default DDC* option is unticked, Agility will use the EDID that is reported by the monitor connected to the receiver unit. However, if you tick the *Use Default DDC* option, you can then select from a range of preset video resolutions from the *Choose Default DDC* drop down box. Once selected, Agility Zero U unit will report itself to prefer this video mode.

**Enable Hot Plug Detect on change of display**

When this option is ticked, every time the monitor is changed at the receiver unit, hot plug state changes are sent to the graphics card of the PC attached to the Agility Zero U unit as if a screen has just been attached.

**Period of Hot Plug Detect signal**

This is the length of time that the hot-plug detect signal is de-asserted. The default of 100ms is sufficient for the majority of HDMI/DP++ graphics cards, however, a small minority may need to be given a longer a period.

**Frame skipping percentage**

Frame Skipping involves 'missing out' video frames between those captured by the Agility Zero U unit. For video sources that update only infrequently or for those that update very frequently but where high fidelity is not required, frame skipping is a good strategy for reducing the overall bandwidth consumed by the system. Range: 0 to 100%.

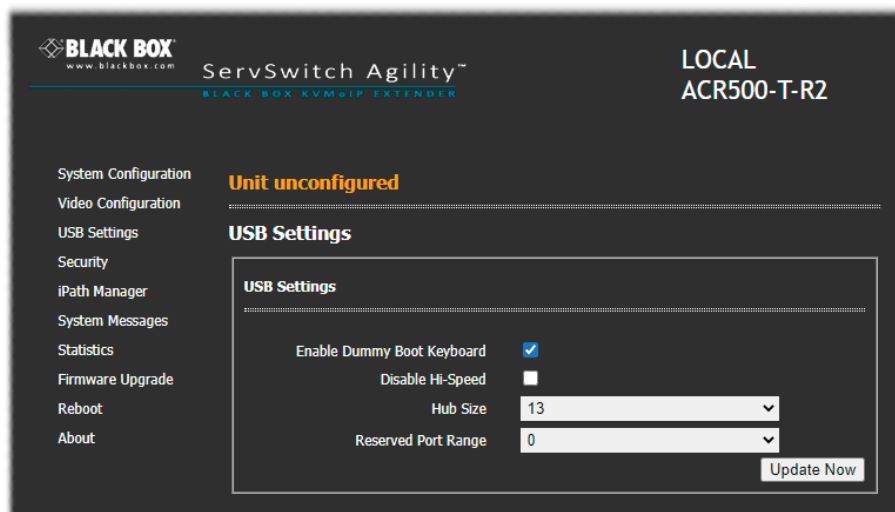
**Compression**

Determines the (AFZ and AFZ+) compression method used for video transmission. Choices are:

- 'Pixel perfect' - only uses pixel perfect AFZ,
- 'Adaptive' - guarantees frame rate, builds to pixel perfect,
- 'Smoothest video' - forces the maximum compression, or
- 'Advanced' - allows you to choose a fixed compression mode:

- 'AFZ only (pixel perfect),
- 'AFZ+ Minimum compression',
- 'AFZ+ Middle compression', or
- 'AFZ+ Maximum compression'.

## USB SETTINGS



### To get here

- 1 [Connect your computer to the network port](#) on the front panel.
- 2 Run a web browser and enter the IP address of the unit. If the address is unknown, perform a [manual factory reset](#) to <http://169.254.1.33>
- 3 Click either the USB Settings link.

### Enable Dummy Boot Keyboard

When ticked, Agility Zero U unit will report a virtual dummy boot keyboard to the attached PC to ensure that a keyboard is always reported when the PC boots up. The dummy boot keyboard uses one of the 13 USB endpoints, therefore if all 13 endpoints are required elsewhere for USB devices (or a KVM switch only supports two HID devices) then it can be disabled by deselecting this option. See also *Reserved Port Range* below.

### Disable Hi-Speed

This option allows you to force the system to run at the low/full USB speed of 12Mb/s, thus forcing USB 2.0 Hi-Speed devices to adapt to the lower rate.

### Hub Size

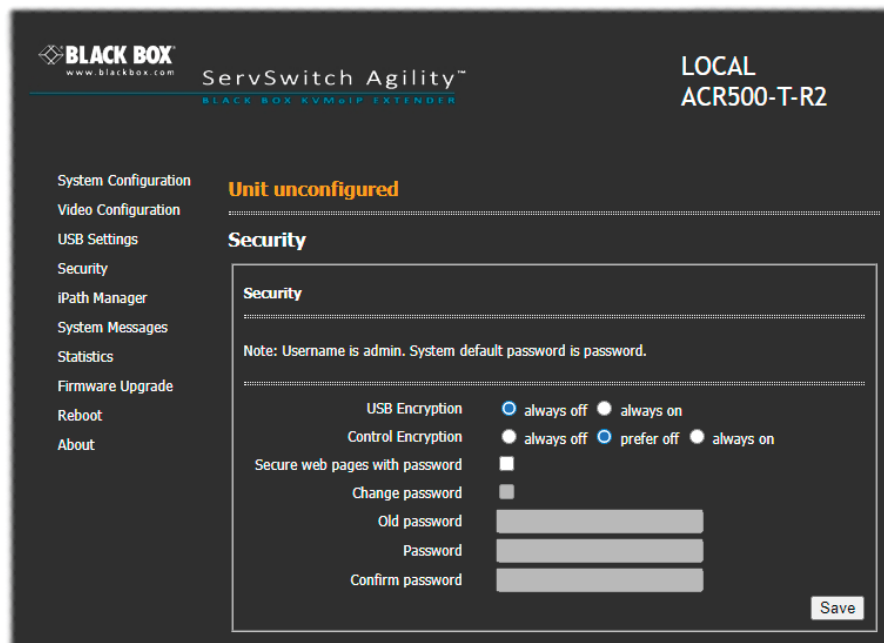
Using this option you can select whether Agility Zero U unit should report itself as a 13 or a 7 port USB hub. Some USB hosts are only able to support 7 port USB hubs. If this option is set to 7, then only 7 USB devices are supported by the PC.

### Reserved Port Range

For some devices, e.g. touch screens, you may wish to ensure that they are always reported to the same USB port number so that the USB driver will always find the device. This option allows you reserve up to 8 ports for certain devices. At the RX unit, the devices are assigned to the reserved ports. If a port reservation is to be applied, then the dummy boot keyboard should be disabled. The default value for this option is '0', i.e. *disabled*.



## SECURITY



### To get here

- 1 [Connect your computer to the network port](#) on the front panel.
- 2 Run a web browser and enter the IP address of the unit. If the address is unknown, perform a [manual factory reset](#) to <http://169.254.1.33>
- 3 Click either the Security link.

### USB Encryption

This setting determines whether encryption should be applied to the USB data passed across the link. Note that video data is never encrypted.

### Control Encryption

This setting determines whether encryption should be applied to the control data passed across the link. The "Prefer off" setting means that control encryption is enabled if the receiver at the other end of the link has "always on" selected, otherwise it is disabled. *Note: video data is never encrypted.*

### Secure web pages with password

When ticked, this option enables https security so that the configuration pages are only accessible to the admin user with a password.

### Change/confirm password

These options allow you to change the admin password for the system.

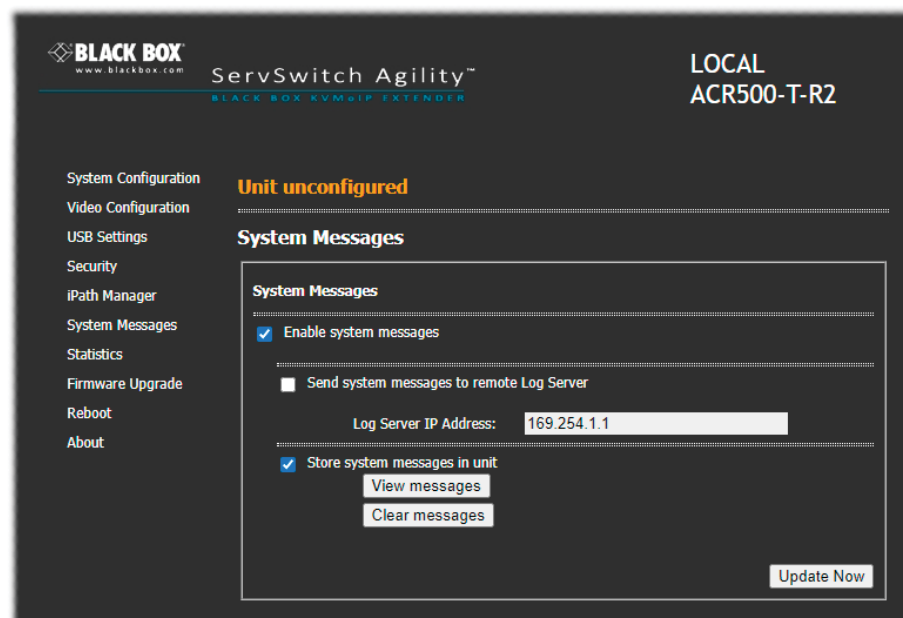
## IPATH MANAGER



### Enable IPATH Control

Click this button to allow an iPATH Agility Controller to take control of this TX. When the button is clicked, the Agility Zero U unit will be rebooted to allow the IPATH box to discover and control it.

## SYSTEM MESSAGES



### Enable system messages

Tick to allow the creation of status and error messages by Agility Zero U unit.

### Send system messages to remote Log Server

Choose this option to send the system messages to a remote server via the network. Provide the IP address of a suitable server here also.

*Note: iPATH Agility Controllers use the User Datagram Protocol (UDP) for all Syslog traffic.*

### Store system messages in unit

When ticked, this option will store system messages within the memory of Agility Zero U unit. Click the *View messages* button to view the list or the *Clear messages* button to delete the list.

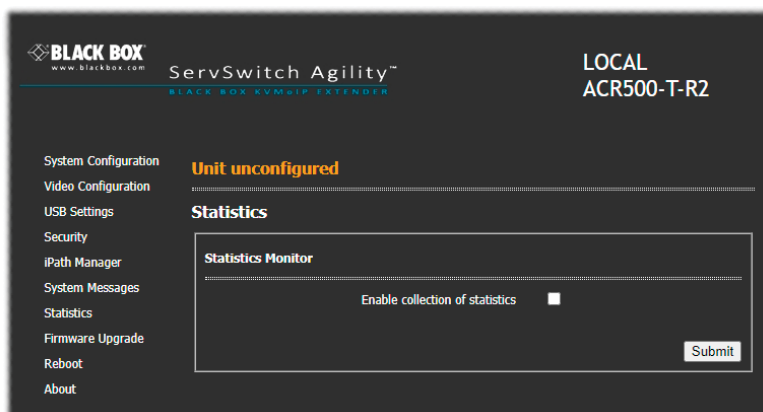
### Update Now

Click to save and implement any changes that you make.

### To get here

- 1 [Connect your computer to the network port](#) on the front panel.
- 2 Run a web browser and enter the IP address of the unit. If the address is unknown, perform a [manual factory reset](#) to <http://169.254.1.33>
- 3 Click either the IPATH Controller or System Messages links, as appropriate.

## STATISTICS



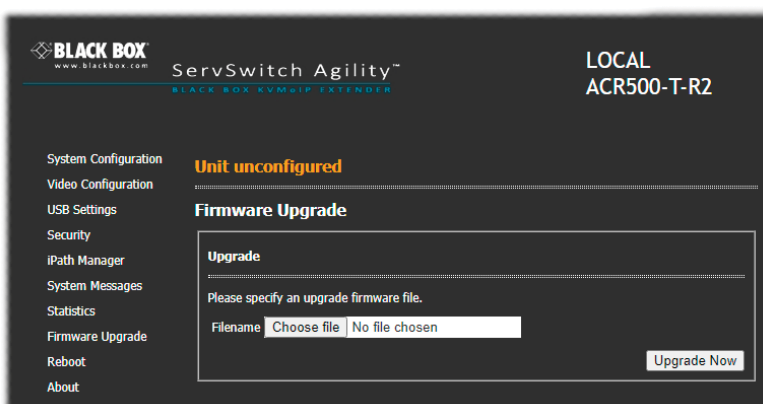
### Enable collection of bandwidth statistics

Agility units can record data transfer statistics from the System port and plot them on a graph for troubleshooting and optimization purposes. When you enable this option, you will first be presented with a pop up from which you can choose which aspects you would like to graph: Data throughput, various packet rates and/or frame rates.

### Submit

Click this button after ticking the above checkbox to plot the chosen statistics on a pop up graph.

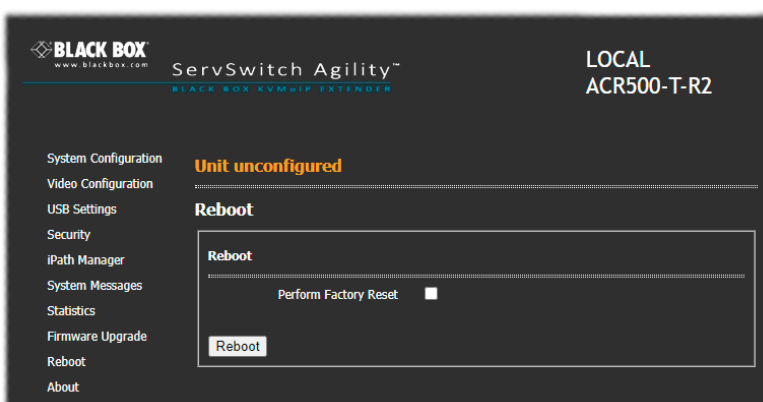
## FIRMWARE UPGRADE



### Upgrade

Use this page to upgrade the main or backup firmware image on Agility Zero U unit. Please see the section [Performing an upgrade](#) for details.

## REBOOT



### Reboot

Use this page to perform a reboot or a factory reset. Please see the section [Manual factory reset](#) for details.

### To get here

- 1 [Connect your computer to the network port](#) on the front panel.
- 2 Run a web browser and enter the IP address of the unit. If the address is unknown, perform a [manual factory reset](#) to <http://169.254.1.33>
- 3 Click either the Statistics , Firmware Upgrade or Reboot links, as appropriate.

## ABOUT

**BLACK BOX**  
www.blackbox.com

ServSwitch Agility™  
BLACK BOX KVM&IP EXTENDER

LOCAL  
ACR500-T-R2

System Configuration  
Video Configuration  
USB Settings  
Security  
iPath Manager  
System Messages  
Statistics  
Firmware Upgrade  
Reboot  
About

**Unit unconfigured**

**About**

Identify Unit (short)

Identify Unit (long)

System	Firmware Version
Main	4.9.40000
Backup	4.9.40000
Boot	4.8.40074

Interface	MAC Address	IP Address
System Port	00:0F:58:02:E9:20	169.254.1.33

NTP	
Enabled	No
Server IP	169.254.1.1

Syslog	
Enabled	Yes
Server IP	169.254.1.1
Local Logging	Yes
Remote Logging	No

iPath	
Enabled	Yes
Server IP	169.254.1.2

DHCP	
Enabled	Yes

### About

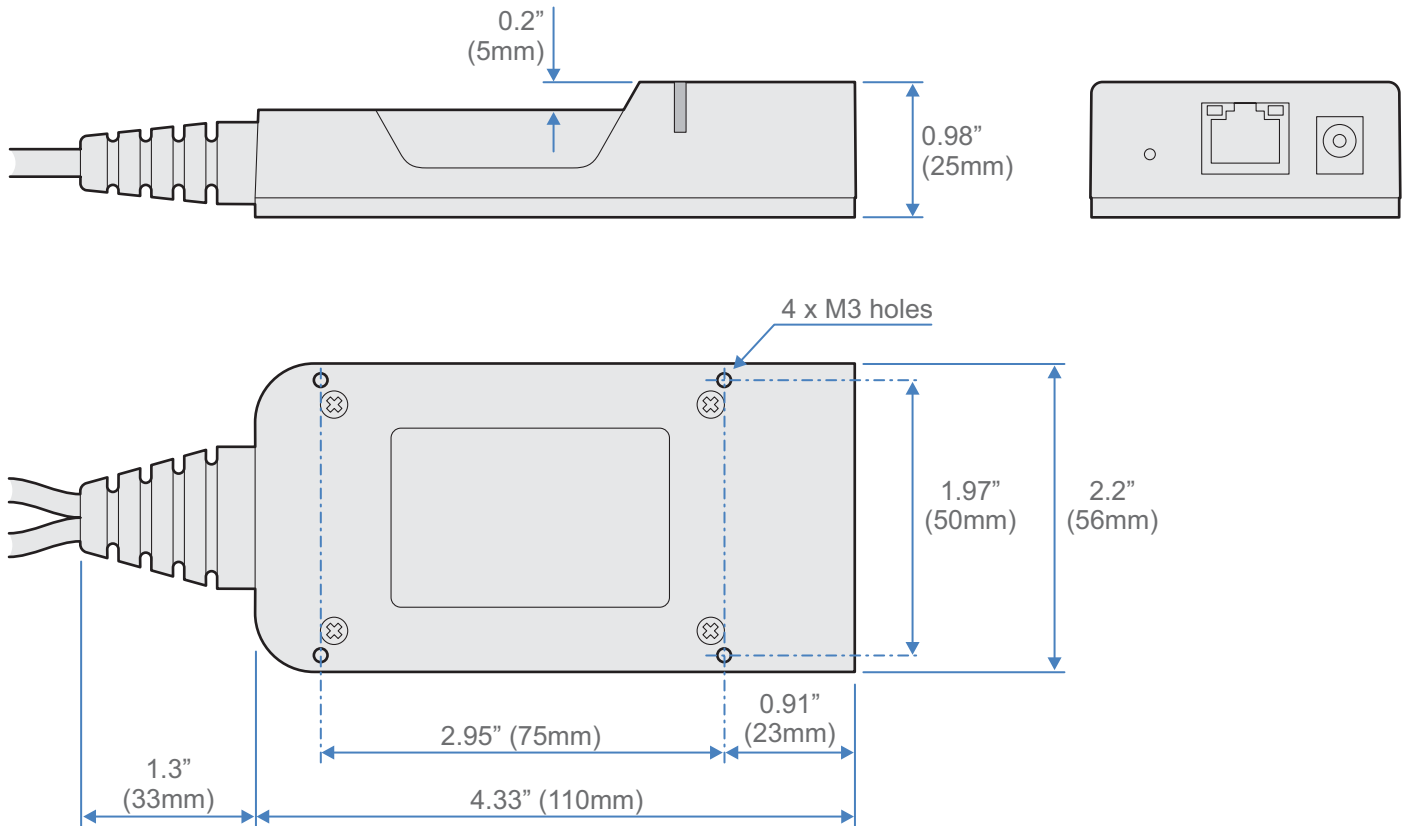
This page displays key information about the Agility Zero U unit that may be requested by Technical Support.

### To get here

- 1 [Connect your computer to the network port](#) on the front panel.
- 2 Run a web browser and enter the IP address of the unit. If the address is unknown, perform a [manual factory reset](#) to http://169.254.1.33
- 3 Click the About link.



## APPENDIX C - Dimensions



## APPENDIX D - Tips for success when networking Agility units

Agility units use multiple strategies to minimize the amount of data that they send across networks. However, data overheads can be quite high, particularly when very high resolution video is being transferred, so it is important to take steps to maximize network efficiency and help minimize data output. The tips given in this section have been proven to produce very beneficial results.

### SUMMARY OF STEPS

- Choose the right kind of switch.
- Create an efficient network layout.
- Configure the switches and devices correctly.

### CHOOSING THE RIGHT SWITCH

[Layer 2](#) switches are what bind all of the hosts together in the subnet. However, they are all not created equally, so choose carefully. In particular look for the following:

- Gigabit (1000Mbps) or faster Ethernet ports,
- Support for [IGMP v2](#) (or v3) snooping,
- Support for [Jumbo frames](#) up to 9216-byte size,
- High bandwidth connections between switches, preferably Fiber Channel.
- Look for switches that perform their most onerous tasks (e.g. [IGMP snooping](#)) using multiple dedicated processors (ASICs).
- Ensure the maximum number of concurrent 'snoopable groups' the switch can handle meets or exceeds the number of Agility transmitters that will be used to create multicast groups.
- Check the throughput of the switch: Full duplex, 1Gbps up- and down- stream speeds per port.
- Use the same switch make and model throughout a single subnet.
- You also need a [Layer 3](#) switch. Ensure that it can operate efficiently as an [IGMP Querier](#).

### CREATING AN EFFICIENT NETWORK LAYOUT

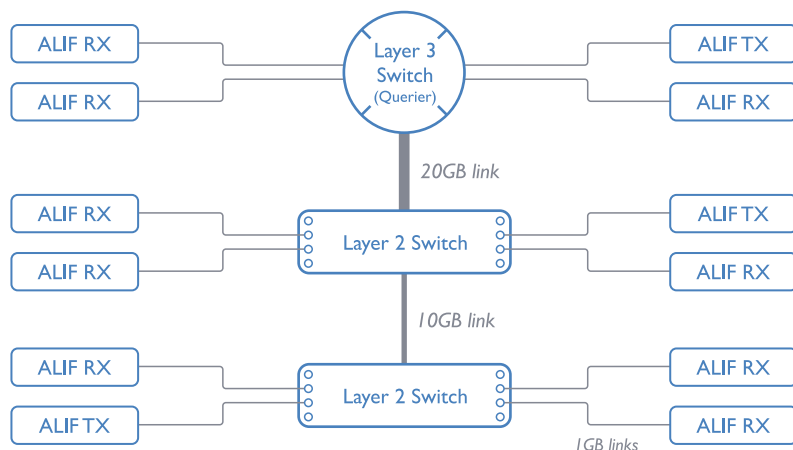
Network layout is vital. The use of [IGMP snooping](#) also introduces certain constraints, so take heed:

- Keep it flat. Use a basic line-cascade structure rather than a pyramid or tree arrangement.
- Keep the distances between the switches as short as possible.
- Ensure sufficient bandwidth between switches to eliminate bottlenecks.
- Where the IPATH Agility Controller is used to administer multiple Agility transceivers, ensure the IPATH Agility Controller and all Agility units reside in the same subnet.
- Do not use VGA converters, instead replace VGA video cards in older systems with suitable DisplayPort or HDMI replacements. Converters cause Agility TX units to massively increase data output.
- Wherever possible, create a private network.



## THE RECOMMENDED LAYOUT

The layout shown below has been found to provide the most efficient network layout for rapid throughput when using IGMP snooping:



*Note: From firmware version 3.1, tree and hierarchical structures of network switches are also supported. The Transmitter now joins its own multicast group so there is always a route from the querier to the transmitter which was previously missing in earlier firmware versions.*

- Use no more than two cascade levels.
- Ensure high bandwidth between the two L2 switches and very high bandwidth between the top L2 and the L3. Typically 10GB and 20GB, respectively for 48 port L2 switches.

## CONFIGURING THE SWITCHES AND DEVICES

The layout is vital but so too is the configuration:

- Enable [IGMP Snooping](#) on all L2 switches.
- Ensure that [IGMP Fast-Leave](#) is enabled on all switches with Agility units connected directly to them.
- Enable the L3 switch as an [IGMP Querier](#).
- Enable [Spanning Tree Protocol \(STP\)](#) on all switches and importantly also enable portfast (only) on all switch ports that have Agility units connected.
- If any hosts will use any video resolutions using 2048 horizontal pixels (e.g. 2048 x 1152), ensure that [Jumbo Frames](#) are enabled on all switches.
- Choose an appropriate forwarding mode on all switches. Use [Cut-through](#) if available, otherwise [Store and forward](#).
- Optimize the settings on the Agility transmitters:
  - If moving video images are being shown frequently, then leave Frame Skipping at a low percentage and instead reduce the Peak bandwidth limiter.
  - Where screens are quite static, try increasing the Background Refresh interval and/or increasing the Frame skipping percentage setting.

Make changes to the Agility transmitters one at a time, in small steps, and view typical video images so that you can attribute positive or negative results to the appropriate control.

- Ensure that all Agility units are fully updated to the latest firmware version (at least v2.1).

## APPENDIX E - Troubleshooting

PROBLEM: THE VIDEO IMAGE OF THE AGILITY RECEIVER SHOWS HORIZONTAL LINES ACROSS THE SCREEN.

This issue is known as *Blinding* because the resulting video image looks as though you're viewing it through a venetian blind. When video is transmitted by Agility units, the various lines of each screen are divided up and transmitted as separate data packets. If the reception of those packets is disturbed, then blinding is caused. The lines are displayed in place of the missing video data packets.

There are several possible causes for the loss of data packets:

- Incorrect switch configuration. The problem could be caused by multicast flooding, which causes unnecessary network traffic. This is what IGMP snooping is designed to combat, however, there can be numerous causes of the flooding.
- Speed/memory bandwidth issues within one or more switches. The speed and capabilities of different switch models varies greatly. If a switch cannot maintain pace with the quantity of data being sent through it, then it will inevitably start dropping packets.
- One or more Agility units may be outputting Jumbo frames due to the video resolution (2048 horizontal pixels) being used. If jumbo frames are output by an Agility unit, but the network switches have not been configured to use jumbo frames, the switches will attempt to break the large packets down into standard packets. This process introduces a certain latency and could be a cause for dropped packets.
- One or more Agility units may be using an old firmware version. Firmware versions prior to v2.1 exhibited an issue with the timing of IGMP join and leave commands that caused multicast flooding in certain configurations.

REMEDIES:

- Ensure that [IGMP snooping](#) is enabled on all switches within the subnet.
- Where each Agility unit is connected as the sole device on a port connection to a switch, enable [IGMP Fast-Leave \(aka Immediate Leave\)](#) to reduce unnecessary processing on each switch.
- Check the video resolution(s) being fed into the Agility transmitters. If resolutions using 2048 horizontal pixels are unavoidable then ensure that [Jumbo frames](#) are enabled on all switches.
- Check the [forwarding mode](#) on the switches. If *Store and forward* is being used, try selecting *Cut-through* as this mode causes reduced latency on lesser switch designs.
- Ensure that one device within the subnet is correctly configured as an [IGMP Querier](#), usually a layer 3 switch or multicast router.
- Ensure that the firmware in every Agility unit is version 2.1 or greater.
- Try adjusting the transmitter settings on each Agility to make the output data stream as efficient as possible.





**PROBLEM: THE MOUSE POINTER OF THE AGILITY RECEIVER IS SLOW OR SLUGGISH WHEN MOVED ACROSS THE SCREEN.**

This issue is often related to either using dithering on the video output of one or more transmitting computers or using video converters.

Dithering is used to improve the perceived quality and color depth of images by diffusing or altering the color of pixels between video frames. This practice is commonly used on Apple Mac computers using ATI or Nvidia graphics cards. VGA converters unwittingly produce a similar issue by creating high levels of pixel background noise.

Agility units attempt to considerably reduce network traffic by transmitting only the pixels that change between successive video frames. When dithering is enabled and/or VGA converters are used, this can have the effect of changing almost every pixel between each frame, thus forcing the Agility transmitter to send the whole of every frame: resulting in greatly increased network traffic and what's perceived as sluggish performance.

**REMEDIES:**

- Linux PCs  
Check the video settings on the PC. If the Dither video box option is enabled, disable it.
- Apple Mac with ATI graphics  
Enable the Magic Eye dither removal feature.
- Windows PCs  
If you suspect these issues with PC's, contact technical support for assistance.
- Replace old VGA adapters on host computers with DisplayPort or HDMI video cards.

**PROBLEM: THE AUDIO OUTPUT OF THE AGILITY RECEIVER SOUNDS LIKE A SCRATCHED RECORD.**

This issue is called Audio crackle and is a symptom of the same problem that produces blinding (see previous page). The issue is related to missing data packets.

**REMEDIES:**

As per blinding discussed previously.

**PROBLEM: IPATH CANNOT LOCATE WORKING AGILITY UNITS.**

There are a few possible causes:

- The Agility units must be reset back to their zero config IP addresses for IPATH discovery. If you have a working network of Agility's without IPATH and then add IPATH to the network IPATH will not discover the Agility units until they are reset to the zero config IP addresses.
- This could be caused by Layer 2 Cisco switches that have [Spanning Tree Protocol \(STP\)](#) enabled but do not also have *portfast* enabled on the ports to which Agility units are connected. Without portfast enabled, Agility units will all be assigned the same zero config IP address at reboot and IPATH will only acquire them one at a time on a random basis.

You can easily tell whether portfast is enabled on a switch that is running STP: When you plug the link cable from a working Agility unit into the switch port, check how long it takes for the port indicator to change from orange to green. If it takes roughly one second, portfast is on; if it takes roughly thirty seconds then portfast is disabled.

**REMEDIES:**

- Ensure that the Agility units and the IPATH Agility Controller are located within the same subnet because iPATH cannot cross subnet boundaries.
- [Manually reset](#) the Agility units to their zero config IP addresses.
- Enable portfast on all switch ports that have Agility units attached to them or try temporarily disabling STP on the switches while IPATH is attempting to locate Agility units.

## APPENDIX F - Glossary

### INTERNET GROUP MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

Where an Agility transmitter is required to stream video to two or more receivers, multicasting is the method used.

Multicasting involves the delivery of identical data to multiple receivers simultaneously without the need to maintain individual links. When multicast data packets enter a subnet, the natural reaction of the switches that bind all the hosts together within the subnet, is to spread the multicast data to all of their ports. This is referred to as Multicast flooding and means that the hosts (or at least their network interfaces) are required to process plenty of data that they didn't request. IGMP offers a partial solution.

The Internet Group Management Protocol (IGMP) is designed to prevent multicast flooding by allowing [Layer 3](#) switches to check whether host computers within their care are interested in receiving particular multicast transmissions. They can then direct multicast data only to those points that require it and can shut off a multicast stream if the subnet has no recipients.

There are currently three IGMP versions: 1, 2 and 3, with each version building upon the capabilities of the previous one:

- IGMPv1 allows host computers to opt into a multicast transmission using a Join Group message, it is then incumbent on the router to discover when they no longer wish to receive; this is achieved by polling them (see IGMP Querier below) until they no longer respond.
- IGMPv2 includes the means for hosts to opt out as well as in, using a Leave Group message.
- IGMPv3 encompasses the abilities of versions 1 and 2 but also adds the ability for hosts to specify particular sources of multicast data.

Agility units make use of IGMPv2 when performing multicasts to ensure that no unnecessary congestion is caused.

### IGMP SNOOPING

The IGMP messages are effective but only operate at [layer 2](#) - intended for routers to determine whether multicast data should enter a subnet. A relatively recent development has taken place within the switches that glue together all of the hosts within each subnet: IGMP Snooping. IGMP snooping means these layer 2 devices now have the ability to take a peek at the IGMP messages. As a result, the switches can then determine exactly which of their own hosts have requested to receive a multicast – and only pass on multicast data to those hosts.

### IGMP QUERIER

When IGMP is used, each subnet requires one [Layer 3](#) switch to act as a Querier. In this lead role, the switch periodically sends out IGMP Query messages and in response all hosts report which multicast streams they wish to receive. The Querier device and all snooping Layer 2 switches, then update their lists accordingly (the lists are also updated when Join Group and Leave Group (IGMPv2) messages are received).

### IGMP FAST-LEAVE (AKA IMMEDIATE LEAVE)

When a device/host no longer wishes to receive a multicast transmission, it can issue an IGMP Leave Group message as mentioned above. This causes the switch to issue an IGMP Group-Specific Query message on the port (that the Leave Group was received on) to check no other receivers exist on that connection that wish to remain a part of the multicast. This process has a cost in terms of switch processor activity and time.

Where Agility units are connected directly to the switch (with no other devices on the same port) then enabling IGMP Fast-Leave mode means that switches can immediately remove receivers without going through a full checking procedure. Where multiple units are regularly joining and leaving multicasts, this can speed up performance considerably.

## JUMBO FRAMES (JUMBO PACKETS)

Since its commercial introduction in 1980, the Ethernet standard has been successfully extended and adapted to keep pace with the ever improving capabilities of computer systems. The achievable data rates, for instance, have risen in ten-fold leaps from the original 10Mbit/s to a current maximum of 100Gbit/s.

While data speeds have increased massively, the standard defining the number of bytes (known as the Payload) placed into each data packet has remained resolutely stuck at its original level of 1500 bytes. This standard was set during the original speed era (10Mbits/s) and offered the best compromise at that speed between the time taken to process each packet and the time required to resend faulty packets due to transmission errors.

But now networks are much faster and files/data streams are much larger; so time for a change? Unfortunately, a wholesale change to the packet size is not straightforward as it is a fundamental standard and changing it would mean a loss of backward compatibility with older systems.

Larger payload options have been around for a while, however, they have often been vendor specific and at present they remain outside the official standard. There is, however, increased consensus on an optional 'Jumbo' payload size of 9000 bytes and this is fully supported by the Agility units.

Jumbo frames (or Jumbo packets) offer advantages for Agility units when transmitting certain high resolution video signals across a network. This is because the increased data in each packet reduces the number of packets that need to be transferred and dealt with - thus reducing latency times.

The main problem is that for jumbo frames to be possible on a network, all of the devices on the network must support them.

## SPANNING TREE PROTOCOL (STP)

In order to build a robust network, it is necessary to include certain levels of redundancy within the interconnections between switches. This will help to ensure that a failure of one link does not lead to a complete failure of the whole network.

The danger of multiple links is that data packets, especially multicast packets, become involved in continual loops as neighbouring switches use the duplicated links to send and resend them to each other.

To prevent such bridging loops from occurring, the Spanning Tree Protocol (STP), operating at [layer 2](#), is used within each switch. STP encourages all switches to communicate and learn about each other. It prevents bridging loops by blocking newly discovered links until it can discover the nature of the link: is it a new host or a new switch?

The problem with this is that the discovery process can take up to 50 seconds before the block is lifted, causing problematic timeouts.

The answer to this issue is to enable the portfast variable for all host links on a switch. This will cause any new connection to go immediately into forwarding mode. However, take particular care not to enable portfast on any switch to switch connections as this will result in bridging loops.

## FORWARDING MODES

In essence, the job of a layer 2 switch is to transfer as fast as possible, data packets arriving at one port out to another port as determined by the destination address. This is known as data forwarding and most switches offer a choice of methods to achieve this. Choosing the most appropriate forwarding method can often have a sizeable impact on the overall speed of switching:

- **Store and forward** is the original method and requires the switch to save each entire data packet to buffer memory, run an error check and then forward if no error is found (or otherwise discard it).
- **Cut-through** was developed to address the latency issues suffered by some store and forward switches. The switch begins interpreting each data packet as it arrives. Once the initial addressing information has been read, the switch immediately begins forwarding the data packet while the remainder is still arriving. Once all of the packet has been received, an error check is performed and, if necessary, the packet is tagged as being in error. This checking 'on-the-fly' means that cut-through switches cannot discard faulty packets themselves. However, on receipt of the marked packet, a host will carry out the discard process.
- **Fragment-free** is a hybrid of the above two methods. It waits until the first 64 bits have been received before beginning to forward each data packet. This way the switch is more likely to locate and discard faulty packets that are fragmented due to collisions with other data packets.
- **Adaptive** switches automatically choose between the above methods. Usually they start out as a cut-through switches and change to store and forward or fragment-free methods if large number of errors or collisions are detected.

So which one to choose? The *Cut-through* method has the least latency so is usually the best to use with Agility units. However, if the network components and/or cabling generate a lot of errors, the *Store and forward* method should probably be used. On higher end store and forward switches, latency is rarely an issue.

## LAYER 2 AND LAYER 3: THE OSI MODEL

When discussing network switches, the terms Layer 2 and Layer 3 are very often used. These refer to parts of the Open System Interconnection (OSI) model, a standardized way to categorize the necessary functions of any standard network.

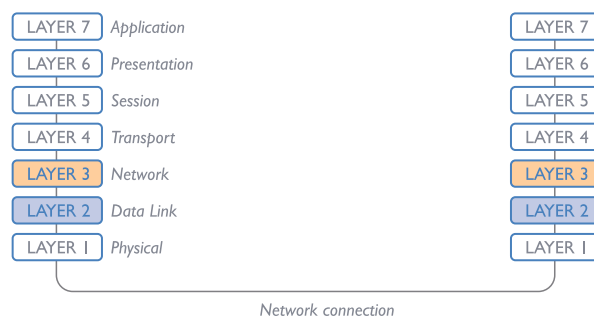
There are seven layers in the OSI model and these define the steps needed to get the data created by you (imagine that you are Layer 8) reliably down onto the transmission medium (the cable, optical fiber, radio wave, etc.) that carries the data to another user; to complete the picture, consider the transmission medium is Layer 0. In general, think of the functions carried out by the layers at the top as being complex, becoming less complex as you go lower down.

As your data travel down from you towards the transmission medium (the cable), they are successively encapsulated at each layer within a new wrapper (along with a few instructions), ready for transport. Once transmission has been made to the intended destination, the reverse occurs: Each wrapper is stripped away and the instructions examined until finally only the original data are left.

So why are Layer 2 and Layer 3 of particular importance when discussing Agility? Because the successful transmission of data relies upon fast and reliable passage through network switches – and most of these operate at either Layer 2 or Layer 3.

The job of any network switch is to receive each incoming network packet, strip away only the first few wrappers to discover the intended destination then rewrap the packet and send it in the correct direction.

In simplified terms, the wrapper that is added at Layer 2 (by the sending system) includes the physical address of the intended recipient system, i.e. the unique MAC address (for example, 09:f8:33:d7:66:12) that is assigned to every networking device at manufacture. Deciphering recipients at this level is more straightforward than at Layer 3, where the address of the recipient is represented by a logical IP address (e.g. 192.168.0.10) and requires greater knowledge of the surrounding network structure. Due to their more complex circuitry, Layer 3 switches are more expensive than Layer 2 switches of a similar build quality and are used more sparingly within installations.



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  47. [51]Nick Sayer <mrapple@quack.kfu.com> SunOS streams modules
  48. [52]Jack Sasportas <jack@innovativeinternet.com> Saved a Lot of space on the stuff in the html/pic/ subdirectory
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  51. [55]Jeff Steinman <jss@pebbles.jpl.nasa.gov> Datum PTS clock driver
  52. [56]Harlan Stenn <harlan@pfcs.com> GNU automake/autoconfigure makeover, various other bits (see the ChangeLog)
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  58. [62]Paul A Vixie <vixie@vix.com> TrueTime GPS driver, generic TrueTime clock driver
  59. [63]Ulrich Windl <Ulrich.Windl@rz.uni-regensburg.de> corrected and validated HTML documents according to the HTML DTD
- 



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## **SAFETY INFORMATION**

- For use in dry, oil free indoor environments only.
- Do not use to link between buildings.
- Ensure that the twisted pair interconnect cable is installed in compliance with all applicable wiring regulations.
- Do not connect the CATx link interface (RJ45 style connector) to any other equipment, particularly network or telecommunications equipment.
- Warning – the power adapter contains live parts.
- No user serviceable parts are contained within the power adapter - do not dismantle.
- Plug the power adapter into a grounded socket outlet close to the unit that it is powering.
- Replace the power adapter with a manufacturer approved type only.
- Do not use the power adapter if the power adapter case becomes damaged, cracked or broken or if you suspect that it is not operating properly.
- If you use a power extension cord with the units, make sure the total ampere rating of the devices plugged into the extension cord do not exceed the cord's ampere rating. Also, make sure that the total ampere rating of all the devices plugged into the wall outlet does not exceed the wall outlet's ampere rating.
- Do not attempt to service the units yourself.
- The units and power supplies can get warm in operation – do not situate them in an enclosed space without any ventilation.
- The units do not provide ground isolation and should not be used for any applications that require ground isolation or galvanic isolation.



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