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Technical Note TN17

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Trouble-shooting 861, G68, G61R, G61 and C61R

Systems including Meridian surround controllers (861, G68, G61R, G61, and C61R) offer so much flexibility in their set-up options and operating parameters that it is sometimes difficult to ascertain whether an apparent fault is due to malfunctioning hardware, inappropriate settings or just plain “finger trouble”.

This document explains the fault-finding process which can be carried out prior to contacting Meridian Customer Support in order to report a faulty product. At best, it may provide a cure to the problem without the need for contacting Meridian. At the least it will provide a more accurate fault description which will lead to the best course of action for all concerned.

Step one - Power-cycle the product

This may be all that's needed to rectify the “fault”.

This takes the product back to a known state. It may correct a problem due to inappropriate user operation or a “crash” caused by an undesirable power interruption incident; a mains “brown out” for example. It also allows the product to display certain error messages. Here are examples of error messages which may be displayed at power-up:

“Bad Code Combination” - This indicates that the product is loaded with an inappropriate mix of firmware files. This is likely to have been achieved through an incomplete or unsuccessful attempt at a firmware update. **Do not attempt to load firmware to a Meridian product unless specifically advised to do so by a member of the Meridian Customer Support Team.** If this message is seen, contact Customer Support for further help.

“Bad Eeprom” or **“Bad Eeprom Contents”** - This indicates that the settings file stored is inappropriate for the firmware version running on the product. For example, current firmware loaded with settings created using the Legacy Meridian set-up program. Often, such a mismatch can be confirmed by setting the product to a Factory Type and power-cycling once again. If the message is cleared by this action, a settings file should be created using the appropriate program and this should be Stored to product.

A power-cycle can be carried out using the mains switch on the back panel of the product or at the wall socket - either method is acceptable. Bear in mind that when the power is restored the product should revert to the Standby state. The product will not automatically get back in synchronisation with any other Meridian products connected by comms until the unit is brought out of Standby. If there are other Meridian products present, the volume numbers displayed across the system will not necessarily match until the volume is subsequently adjusted up or down.

If the problem persists...

Step two - Check the product using the Calibration procedure.

Calibration uses test tones generated within the product, so its use can check the output side of the system independently of the input side. It is a great tool for identifying the severity of the problem.

If no sound is generated in Calibration mode, the problem lies with the surround controller itself or the output side of the system, i.e. products connected “downstream” from the surround controller. These can be tested using the standard technique of connecting amps and speakers directly to a source and playing some suitably quiet audio material. Remember, with no “pre-amp” in the system, the sound could be extremely loud. Approach with caution!

If sound is produced in Calibration mode, the problem lies with the surround controller itself or the input side of the system. Again, sources can be tested by direct connection to other equipment. Again, care should be taken to avoid very loud playback.



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If the previous tests prove that the problem lies with the surround controller, then...

Step three - Check the product by running factory default settings

If the problem is found to exist when running a Factory Type, the product hardware can be suspected and Meridian Customer Support should be contacted.

One of the great benefits of Meridian surround controllers is the ability to build a bespoke settings file using a PC. This file is stored in the product as a "User-Type". However, the downside of PC set-up is that there are many variables which can affect the successful application of this settings file. These include variations in the behaviour of computers, the differing versions of product firmware available and the differing versions of set-up program which may have been used throughout the product's life.

In order to eliminate problems with the settings file, it is necessary to run the product without the file loaded. To do this, the product should be set to one of the Factory Types built into the product. Select a Type which most closely resembles the system in question. Full details are available in the appropriate user manuals. However, these three Types should cover most systems. They are generic for the current range of surround controllers:

- Type 1 - All analogue speakers
- Type 3 - All DSP speakers
- Type 4 - DSP left, right and centre with analogue surrounds

Although these default settings will not include the correct calibration levels, speaker layout or other parameters, their use takes the User-Type out of the equation.

With the product set to the Factory Type, the Calibration procedure can be used to test the output side of the surround controller.

All Factory Types revert the allocation of Source connections to the default settings. On G and C series surround controllers, these are as labeled on the back-panel. These defaults enable the input side of the surround processor to be tested using suitable sources. On 861, this may require source connections to be moved to the relevant sockets on the surround controller.

The C and G series products feature a front-panel set-up wizard which can be used to configure sources as appropriate. It is essential that the PC is not used to do this.

Here are a few defaults which could prove useful...

On G and C series surround controllers:

- CD - D7
- DVD - D1, D2 and D3 (combined to form the MD1 multi-channel input)
- Tape - A4

On 861:

- CD - D1 on the IE42 card
- DVD - D4, D5 and D6 on IE42 (combined to form the MD2 multi-channel input)
- Radio - A1 on the IA00 card

If these tests show the problem to lie with the PC settings file, a new file should be created from scratch. Do not attempt to modify a file which exists on the PC or is already stored within the product. Start the process on the PC right from the beginning with a new file.

Step four - Contacting Meridian Customer Support

Please be prepared to provide the model, serial number and the colour of the product in question. Models within the Meridian range are identified by a product code known as the "SP code". This is in the form "SPnnnnXX", where "n" represents a digit and "X" indicates a letter. It is always printed on the original packaging and it is sometimes, but not always, present on the product itself. If it cannot be ascertained, please be prepared to describe which sockets are available on the product. This will aid identification of the unit.