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Chapter 2: Basics

MD for iPad Screen Overview

The first time you open MIDI Designer, you will see two sets of three pages on either side of the screen and a “more” button placed directly in the middle. The more button will display a set of other buttons that bring up more advanced pane, and give access to saving and loading presets.

Invalid Link

iPad Screen Layout

Buttons

1. more Button: The more button is the gateway to all MD features. When you are connected and playing your rig, it's small and unobtrusive, but it's the key to all the power of MD.

- 2. Design Button: Enter Design mode from Play Mode.
- 3. Config Button: Bring up the Config Pane for access to layout-wide parameters
- 4. Log Button: Bring up the Log Pane for troubleshooting
- 5. Accelo: Toggle accelerometer response in MD
- 6. [Global Preset Buttons](#)
- 7. [Global Preset Alt and Save Buttons](#)
- 8. Page Tab Selectors
- 9. Page Bank Selector (right)



By convention, the **more** button is rarely mentioned in this manual. However, on iPad, most functionality starts with **more**

MD for iPhone Screen Overview

Bottom Toolbar

Invalid Link

iPhone Screen Layout

- 1. Design Mode ON/OFF icon: Enter Design Mode.
- 2. Presets: Browse different presets
- 3. Config: Bring up the config panel to access layout wide properties.
- 4. MIDI Log: shows the outgoing and incoming MIDI Data.
- 5. Accelerometer: Toggle accelerometer response in MD

- 6. Page Select
- 7. Page Bank Selector
- 8. Hide Button: Hide the bottom toolbar for more real estate
- 9. Page Up and Down gutters.



On certain iPhone models, there is an additional pair of Page Up/Down buttons on the Toolbar.

Basic Concepts



Starting from Scratch: New Layout

Use Config → Actions → New to create a new layout

Control

Controls are the basic building blocks of your layout. In MD, a control can be of two types:

- Dynamic Controls: Respond to touch and can both send and receive MIDI messages. All types:
 - Knob
 - Slider
 - Crossfader (sideways slider)
 - Button
 - XY Pad
- Decorative Controls:
 - Shape
 - Label
 - Panel

Each control has multiple display properties like LED color, name and label properties. In addition, dynamic controls have:

- [MIDI properties](#)
- [Additional display properties](#) that affect messages sent and received
- [Relationships to other controls](#) including supercontrols and subcontrols

Dynamic controls can also be in more than one place in your layout via [Control Copies](#).

MIDI Target

MD, like most MIDI controllers, does not itself produce sound. Instead, it controls one or more MIDI targets. A *MIDI Target* can be any hardware or software you can control via MIDI. Examples include:

- Musical hardware including mixing boards, keyboards, MIDI guitars, electronic drums, and DJ consoles
- Other iOS apps such as synths, DAWs, and effects
- Software on other platforms, e.g., [Ableton Live](#) on OSX or Windows
- Lighting for television and film via a MIDI-enabled console, e.g.: [Ma Lighting](#)

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[Non-Traditional MIDI Controllers](#)
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MIDI Products

MIDI Hardware & Software

MIDI makes a lot of things possible, and there are many types of MIDI product available to help you create, control, or even just listen to music. MIDI products tend to fall into one of two categories:

- MIDI controlling devices (things that send MIDI messages)
- MIDI-controllable sound-generating devices (things that play music via MIDI)

Some MIDI Products -- such as the typical keyboard synthesizer shown on the right -- are both a controller and sound generator.

If you would like to make music with MIDI, we recommend you visit a MIDI specialist to determine the right products for you. Here are just some of the products that you may want to consider.

Keyboards: Practically every musical keyboard sold today has MIDI (or USB-MIDI) connections -- that's everything from the \$100 portables to \$300,000 digital grand pianos! Some have their own sounds, and some are just controllers designed to connect to sound generators (e.g. computers or "sound modules"). Some MIDI keyboards have an extra dimension of expression, such as keys that move in and out, or left and right (see "Non-traditional MIDI Controllers", below).



Sound Modules: To make sound using MIDI messages requires a sound generator, either built-in to a controller, or available as a stand-alone device. Sound Modules come in many sizes, as well as in the form of software that runs on a computer, smart phone, or tablet.

Wind controllers, MIDI guitars & drums etc.: You don't have to be a keyboard (piano) player to benefit from MIDI. There are specially made MIDI wind controllers, MIDI guitars, MIDI drums, even MIDI accordions. Since MIDI was primarily designed for 'keyboard players', these devices are often referred to as 'alternate MIDI controllers.'



Computers, Tablets, and Smartphones: Practically every Mac or Windows computer sold since 1995 has included software to play MIDI files, and just needs a "MIDI Interface" (e.g. USB, or FireWire) to be used as a sound generator and/or to control gear like keyboards, drums, and more.

If you have an iPad or iPhone, you can connect to MIDI products via an iOS MIDI Interface (using the Camera Kit or Lightning Port) or connect to other computers via WiFi. Similar functionality is being developed for Android and Windows phones and tablets.



Non-Traditional Controllers: Another category of "alternate MIDI controllers" are those that don't mirror traditional musical instruments. There are many people who feel that traditional musical instruments are too hard to learn, or limit their expression to "traditional" forms.

MIDI controllers come in a large variety of shapes and formats, and thanks to motion and impact sensors just about anything can be made to send MIDI data.

We've compiled some examples of non-traditional controllers [below](#), and some additional and unusual uses of MIDI [below](#).

Software applications: Professionals and amateurs alike use MIDI on computers, tablets and smartphones to compose, arrange, and record original music, or to learn about music or how to play an instrument. There are hundreds if not thousands of software applications that involve MIDI, either actively or passively. Included are MIDI Sequencers (now commonly combined with audio recording into Digital Audio Workstations or "DAWs"), auto accompaniment applications, notation programs, music teaching software, games, DJ/remix environments, and more.



Control Surfaces: This type of 'alternate MIDI controller' includes unique products designed to trigger or modify notes on a sound-engine, as well as products to remotely control



Software sounds: 'Softsynths' or 'software musical instruments' started to appear in the late 1990s. With the development of plug-in architectures and virtual audio technology (e.g. VST, AU, etc.) there has been an explosion of sound-generating software products in both 'new' and 'vintage' styles.



Games: Computer and video game music, now generally referred to as game audio, began with MIDI and evolved over time to use dozens of digital audio tracks that represent actual orchestral scores like in block-buster movies. Still, MIDI serves a purpose in downloadable and

Layout

Each MIDI Designer layout controls one or more MIDI targets. It consists of Page Banks containing Pages, and Pages containing Controls like knobs and buttons.

Layouts may be saved, loaded, and shared in a variety of ways.

MIDI Designer Reference Manual - <https://mididesigner.com/wiki/>

Examples of layouts are a layout for the Roland JD-990, or a layout that a guitarist uses to get through a two-hour performance using MD.

Page

Controls are organized into Pages

Pages have a name and other decorative properties including background color, background texture, and LED color for all controls on a page.

To switch between pages:

- iPad: Press the Page tabs on the top of the GUI.
- iPhone: Use the right and left arrow keys on the left hand side of the bottom tool bar, alternatively use single tap on the far right and far left side of your interface.
- Across both platforms: Jump Buttons let you use a button to change pages.



iPad Only — MD uses a [Two-Up Page Design](#), meaning that it shows two pages at once: one on the left side and one on the right side. Being able to display any two pages together makes your rig modular and flexible.



iPad Only — For some layouts, you may choose not to use the Two-Up Page Design. You can use the [One Big Page](#) feature to see a single page instead of two separate ones.

Page Bank

Pages of controls can be further organized into Page Banks. Each Page Bank can hold as few as one page, and a maximum of 6 pages.

In Play Mode, two principal methods may be used to change Banks: the Page Bank selectors and [Bank Jump Buttons](#).

Presets

Presets represent all the values in your entire MIDI Designer setup. For example, a knob called “Sweep” might be set to 45° (or an outgoing MIDI value of 32). When you store a preset, that value is saved. When you recall a preset, all controls snap to the value they had at the time the preset was saved.

So your sweep knob would snap to 45° regardless of what position it's in, and that value would be sent

out to all connected MIDI targets.

There are two types of Presets in MD:

- Global Presets
- Presets for Groups of controls

[Chapter on Presets](#)

Design Mode and Play Mode

Design Mode

Design Mode is used to create and modify your layout.

The main functions performed in Design Mode include:

- [Controls](#)
 - Adding, deleting, copying and moving controls
 - Modifying control properties
 - Establishing relationships among controls
- [Pages](#)
 - Adding, deleting, copying and moving pages
 - Modifying page properties
 - Saving, Loading, and Mailing pages

Play Mode

In Play Mode, your layout controls your MIDI target or targets and responds to external MIDI controllers.

Switch between Design and Play Mode on iPad:

- Enter into “Design Mode” by pressing the Design Button (2).
- A blue button will pop up saying “Exit Design Mode” with a lock next to it



- To return to Play Mode, press Exit Design Mode.

To switch between Design and Play Mode on iPhone:

- Enter into “Design Mode” by pressing the Design Button (1).

- The Design Toolbar will come up, and the Design Button will now be blue.



Design Toolbar, iPhone

- Press the Design Button again to exit Design Mode.

Config Pane

The Config button brings up the Config Pane. The Config Pane contains MD-wide and layout-wide configuration options and actions. The Config Pane has the following tabs:



Config Pane

1. Connectivity: all options for connecting MD to MIDI inputs and outputs: hardware, Wi-Fi and virtual
2. MIDI: Options relating to realtime performance in MD, including Global Preset editing
3. Actions: All layout-wide actions, including saving, loading and mailing
4. Options: More layout-wide options for Play and Design Mode
5. Pedalboards: All options related to [Pedalboards in MD](#)
6. About: Version information and credits for MD

Log Pane

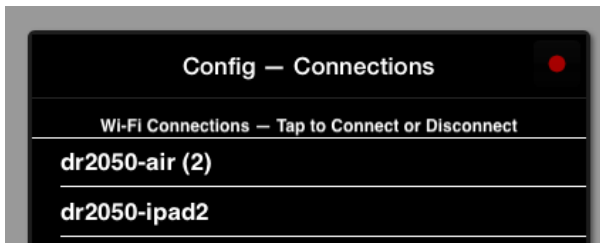
[Log Pane](#)

Sticky Panes on iPad



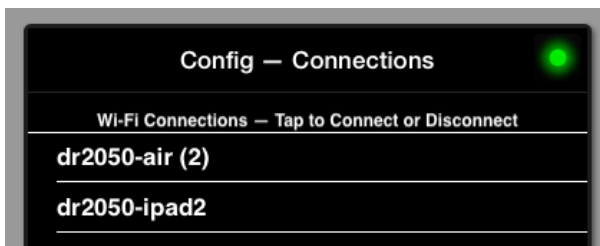
iPad Only — Press the red LED in the top right corner of a Pane to make it “sticky”

Not-Sticky



Pane, Not Sticky

Sticky



Pane, Sticky

Explanation

Panes are the small “dialog boxes” in MD for iPad:

- Design Properties Pane (controls)
- Design Page Properties Pane
- Config Pane
- Log Pane

Normally, when you touch outside of a Pane, it disappears

Press the red LED in the top right corner of a Pane to make it “sticky”

- The green LED in the top right corner of a Pane indicates that it's “sticky”
- You can move the Pane by dragging the title bar
- The Pane will remain focused on whatever you were editing last. This is particularly useful in Design Mode for editing the same parameter for multiple controls.
- Close the pane by pressing the (green) LED again

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