FLEET
COMMANDER

Product Manual

COMREX

FLEET COMMANDER

ABOUT COMREX

Comrex has been building reliable, high quality broadcast equipment since 1961. Our products are used daily in every part of the world by networks, stations and program producers.

Every product we manufacture has been carefully designed to function flawlessly, under the harshest conditions, over many years of use. Each unit we ship has been individually and thoroughly tested.

Comrex stands behind its products. We promise that if you call us for technical assistance, you will talk directly with someone who knows about the equipment and will do everything possible to help you.

You can contact Comrex by phone at 978-784-1776. Our toll free number in North America is 800-237-1776. Product information along with engineering notes and user reports are available on our website at www.comrex.com. Our email address is info@comrex.com.

I. PREFACE

ABOUT FLEET COMMANDER

Fleet Commander is a Microsoft Windows™ application designed to manage a fleet of Comrex audio codecs. Fleet Commander can provide near-universal control of any Comrex BRIC-Link, BRIC-Link II, ACCESS Portable, ACCESS 2USB, or ACCESS Rack codec, from a single control interface. Fleet Commander is compatible with codec firmware 3.x only.

Using Fleet Commander, the user can:

- Make connections from Comrex codecs to others
- Create, edit, send, and delete profiles
- Monitor levels across all hardware
- Monitor delay and frame loss on each device

Fleet Commander can not adjust or enable any network devices or settings. Network setup must take place on the codec's direct control interface, or via the Comrex **Device Manager** application.

Normal codec control involves logging into the Web-based Interface on each hardware codec. By using Fleet Commander, it's no longer necessary to open multiple browser windows to control multiple codecs.
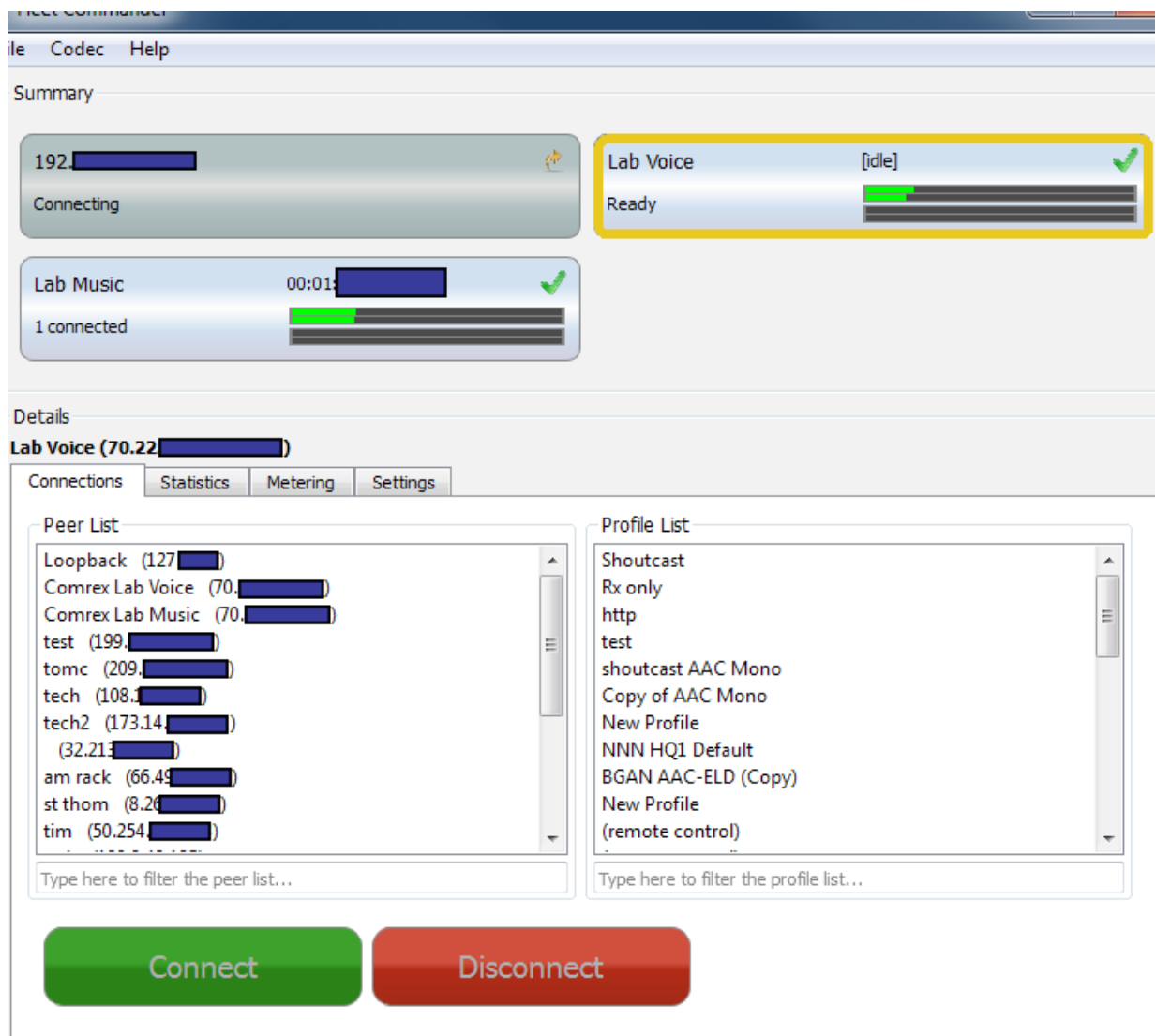
FIGURE 1 FLEET COMMANDER

Figure 1 shows Fleet Commander with three units added. 'Lab Voice' is selected, in an idle state, and the **Connections** tab below is selected. 'Lab Music' is connected to one unit with metering enabled. The top left unit is in process of connecting to Fleet Commander.

ii. GETTING STARTED

INSTALLATION

Fleet Commander is installed via a Windows executable file that is downloaded from the Comrex website. It has been tested to work properly under Windows 7, 8 and 10. On launching the executable, Windows may provide a warning that the publisher is unknown. You must agree to install Fleet Commander, and agree to the End User License Agreement when it is presented. You will be prompted for an install directory (default is **C:\Program Files (x86)\Comrex\Fleet Commander**) and asked whether you want to add the program to the Start menu. Once installed, find Fleet Commander in your Start menu or in the install directory and run it.

FIRST TIME LAUNCH

The first time you open Fleet Commander you will be greeted with an activation window. This window has a welcoming message, and a computer-specific node ID to license the software, send the node ID to Comrex support in order to obtain a license key. Paste your license key from Comrex into the message box and press "**Enter Activation.**" If you would like to start the software in demo-mode, then you may press "**Proceed with Demo**" button.

After this, you will continue to the main window. The summary pane will be empty and the detail pane will read "**Please select an active instance to use this pane.**"

NOTE: Demo Mode
Fleet Commander comes with a demo mode in which you can try the program with one device. In demo mode, you cannot save or load configurations and will therefore have to enter your device every time you launch Fleet Commander.

INSTANCES

A connection from Fleet Commander to a codec is called an instance. There is no limit in Fleet Commander (once licensed) to the number of instances that can be created simultaneously. The limit is dependent on CPU and network factors on the host computer.

TILES AND DEVICES

Once an instance is created in Fleet Commander, a "tile" appears in the top section as shown in **Figure 2.** As more instances are added, these tiles will pile up into a two-column grid. Each tile shows a representation of the audio meters on the product, along with the unit name and the current status (idle, online etc). Units that aren't fully connected will have a slightly darker gray background.
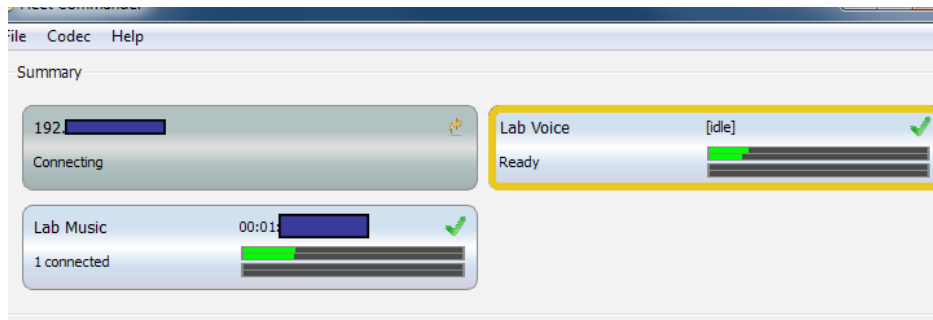
ACTIVE DEVICE

Fleet Commander controls one device at a time. To select a device to control, click the device tile. The active device will be outlined in orange. The **Details** pane will be populated with the active device's peers, profiles, settings, metering and stats. If the device is not available or not in the ready state, the **Details** pane will be disabled until a codec in the "**Ready**" state is selected.

ADDING DEVICES TO FLEET COMMANDER

From here, right click in the empty summary pane and click "**Add Instance...**"

A popup with two fields will appear. Enter your device's IP into the IP box, its port number into the port box, and click **OK**. If the device is reachable, has remote control enabled, and the unit password is still the default password, the device will show up in the **Summary** tab. The device tile will show a green checkmark in its upper right corner.

If the unit has an alternate password, then the connection will fail, the unit tile will display "**Devic Login Failed**," and a pop-up asking for the correct password will appear.
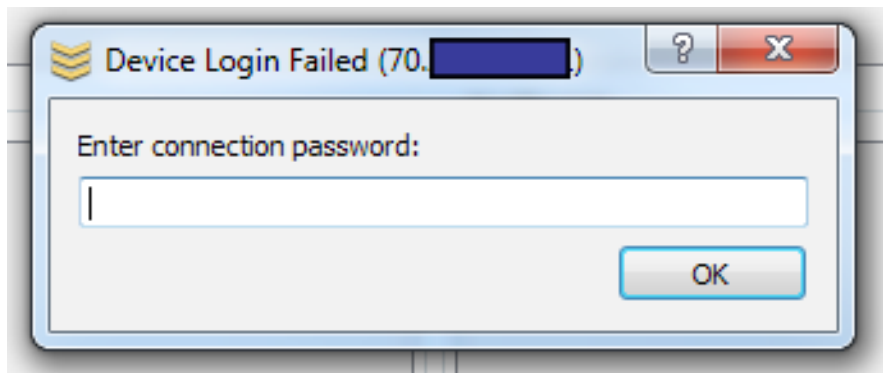

FIGURE 3 **WRONG PASSWORD DIALOG**

If you close the password prompt, you can re-open it by right clicking the appropriate tile and selecting Input Password.
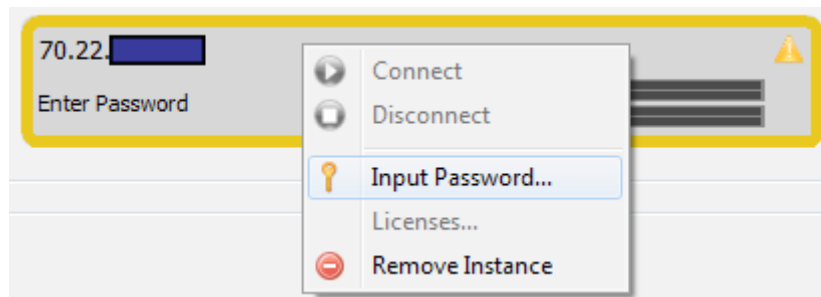

FIGURE 4 **INPUT PASSWORD**

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CONTROLLING AND MANAGING YOUR CODECS

ADDING PEERS (REMOTES)

To add a peer to the device's peer list, select the device in the summary pane, and select the **Connections** tab in the details pane. Right click the peer list and select "**Add Peer...**" fill out the form that appears, and click **OK**. The peer will be added to the device.
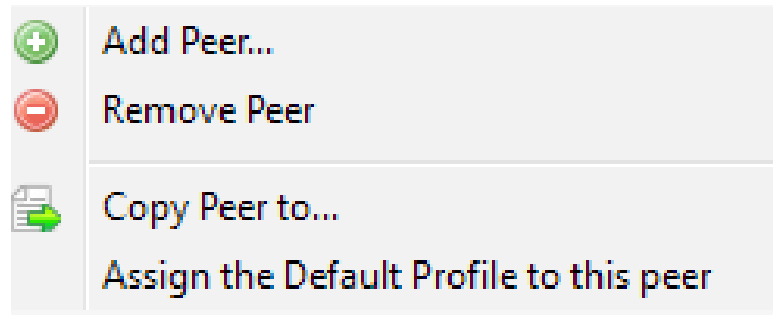
FIGURE 5 PEER DROP-DOWN MENU

ADDING PROFILES

To add a profile to the active device's profile list, you must make a copy of an existing profile. First, select a profile that roughly matches the one you would like to create. Next, right click that profile and select "**Duplicate Profile**" from the drop-down menu. The profile will be copied. Right click the new profile (same name with the text "**(Copy)**" added to the end) and select **Edit**. Use the editor to set your profile options.

FIGURE 6 PROFILE DROP-DOWN MENU

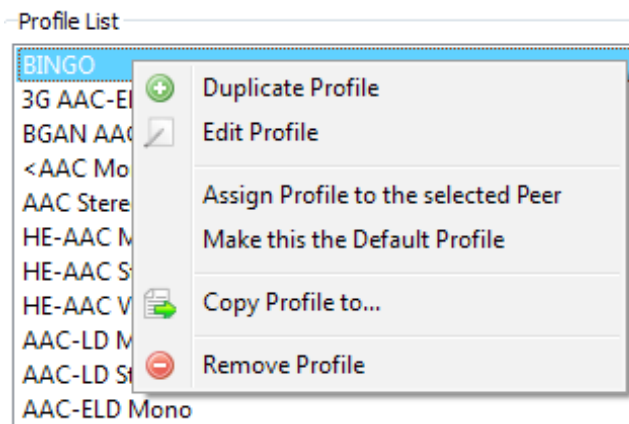## EDITING PROFILES

Right click the profile you wish to edit and select "**Edit Profile**" from the drop-down menu. A profile editor will pop up. Use the profile editor to make your desired changes, and click "**Save**" to save your changes.

NOTE: You cannot edit factory profiles, but you can duplicate a factory peer and edit the duplicated profile.

REMOVING PEERS/PROFILES

Right click the peer/profile you wish to remove and select "**Remove Peer**" or "**Remove Profile**" from the drop-down menu.

COPYING PEERS AND PROFILES TO OTHER DEVICES

Fleet Commander allows you to copy peers and profiles from one device to other devices in your fleet. Select the device you want to copy peers/profiles from. Next, right click the peer or profile and select "**Copy Peer to…**" or "**Copy Profile to…**" respectively. A popup containing a list of all other devices under Fleet Commander will appear. Check all peers you want to send the peer/profile to, and click "**OK**."

ADDING LICENSES

Fleet Commander allows you to add licensed features to Comrex hardware. License keys are provided by Comrex support for specific features like Switchboard and specific encoders (If not included by default). To add licenses to a device under Fleet Commander, right click the desired device tile and select "**Licenses…**" from the drop-down menu.
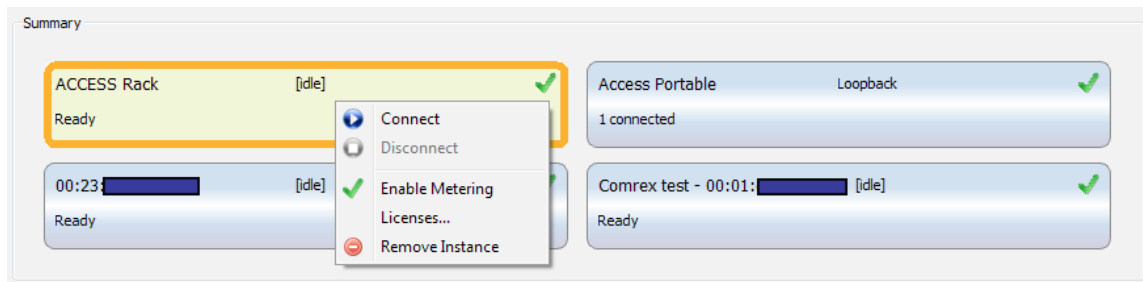

FIGURE 7 DEVICE TILE RIGHT CLICK MENU

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The next window popup is where you can view and apply licenses to the units.
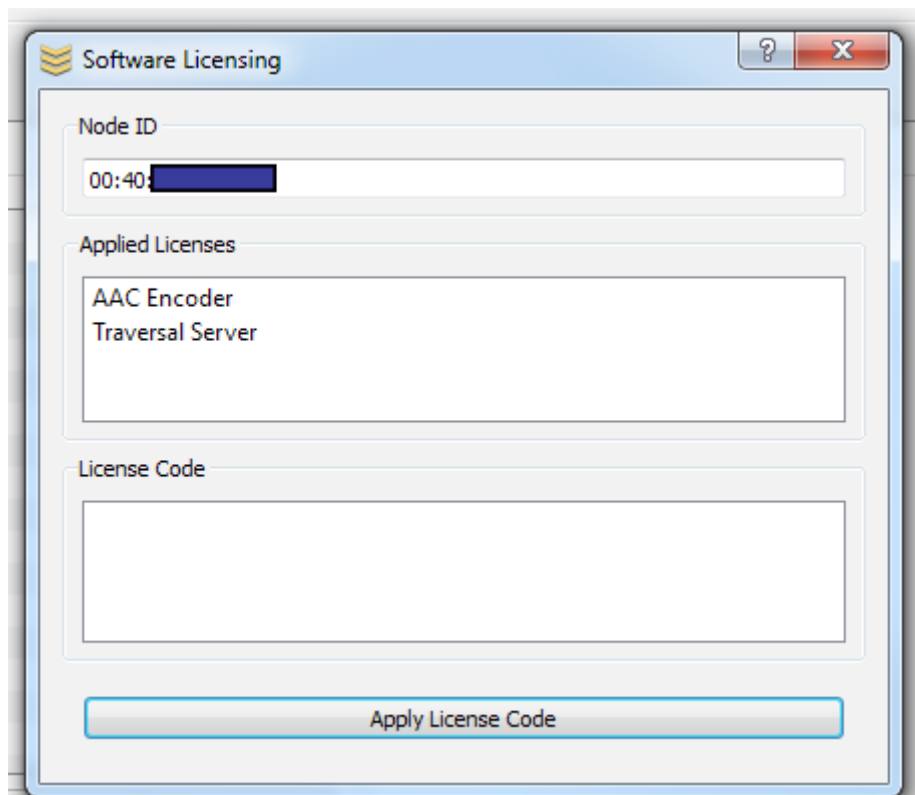
METERING

Each device under Fleet Commander will be metered. This feature can consume a fair amount of bandwidth, and requires a well performing network to work correctly. Metering can be disabled, and is done so on a per-device basis. By default, metering is turned on for each device added to Fleet Commander. If you notice metering is not working for a few devices, or if you want to save data on a connection, we recommend you disable metering.

To disable metering, right click the device and select "**Disable Metering**."

To re-enable it, right click the device and select "**Enable Metering**."

STATISTICS

Fleet Commander offers connection statistics similar to the ones provided by the ACCESS and BRIC-Link web interfaces. To view these stats, select a device and click on the tab labeled "**Statistics**." This tab displays a list of connected devices and two graphs that represent the quality of the incoming connection.
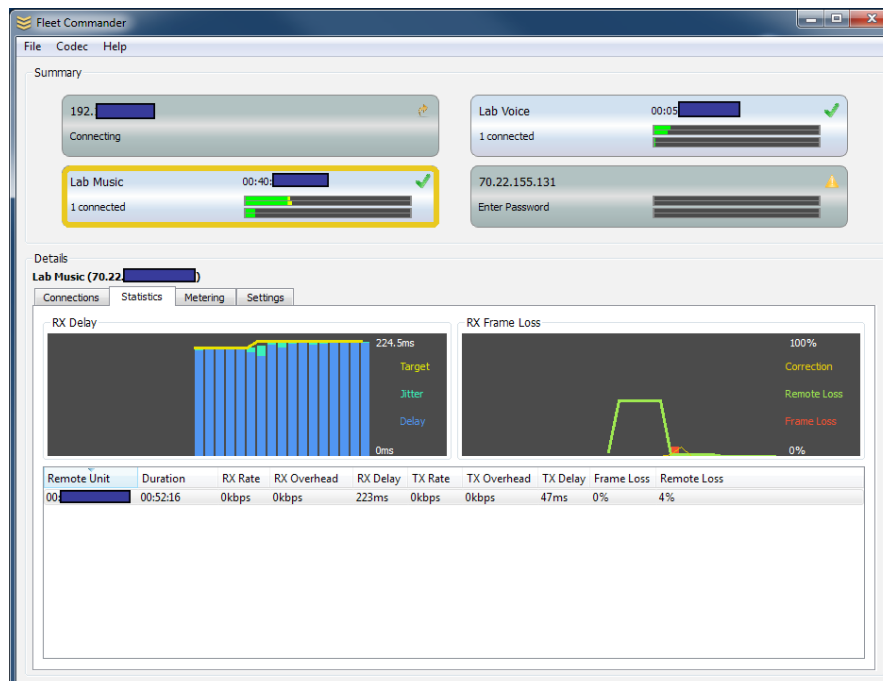
FIGURE 9 THE STATISTICS TAB

All connected devices under fleet command retain a thirty second history until they disconnect. The graphs convey information for one connected peer at a time. Since some Comrex devices support multiple connections at a time, (e.g. Multi-streaming) you can choose among the connections in the "**Remote Unit**" list to see stats for that particular connection.

TIP: You can disconnect peers using this pane; right click the peer and click "Disconnect This Peer" from the drop-down menu.

SETTINGS

Fleet Commander allows you to change your device settings. These settings are the same available via the unit's Web-based Interface or Touchscreen Interface, and are described in the user manual for the codec. To modify device settings, select your device, and click the **Settings** tab, located in the **Details** pane. Choose a setting on the left panel, and edit it on the right panel. When you're finished changing your settings, click the **Save** button. If you wish to discard your changes, either select a different device, or press the **Reset** button.
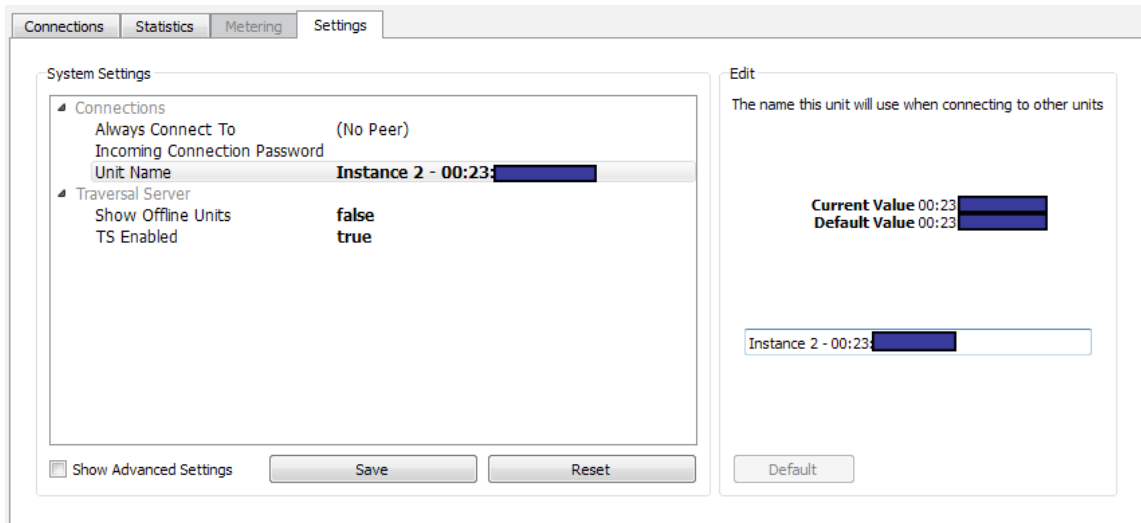
FIGURE 10   SETTINGS TAB

TIP: If you are editing the settings of a device, and someone saves edits to the same device, your edits will be overwritten. It is best to only control a device with one app at a time.

WARNING: The Settings editor, (under "Security"), allows you to change a setting titled "Remote Control." Exercise caution when setting this to "false." If you do, this will disable the mechanism by which every interface, including Fleet Commander, can operate this device. The only way to re-enable this feature is to re-enable it on the device's console GUI which requires you have physical access to the device.
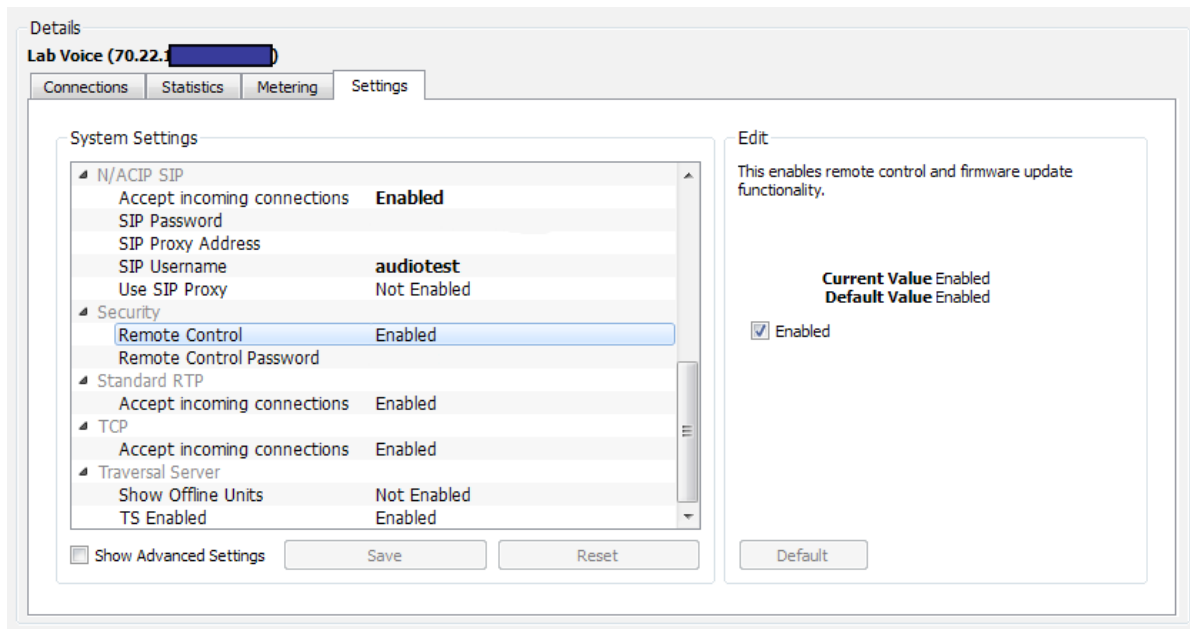
FIGURE 11   **REMOTE CONTROL SETTING**

CONNECTING

Select a device and open the **Connections** tab. Next, choose a peer from the list. Choose "**Connect.**" Note that each outgoing peer needs to have a profile assigned to it (otherwise the "default" profile is chosen). If a profile has been pre-assigned to the outgoing peer, it will be highlighted in the profile list on the right side. You can change the selected profile by choosing another option on the right.

DISCONNECTING

Select the peer you'd like to disconnect from. The **Disconnect** button should light up. Press the **Disconnect** button to disconnect from that peer.

USING AND SETTING THE DEFAULT PROFILE

Each device also has a "**Default Profile**." You may assign the default profile to a peer by right clicking the peer and choosing "**Assign the Default Profile to this peer**." You may change the device's default profile by right clicking the desired profile and choosing "**Make this the Default Profile**."

SWITCHBOARD PEERS

Switchboard is an optional feature. It employs a cloud-based server that synchronizes with a codec fleet, displays presence information, and aids in connection.

Fleet Commander handles Switchboard functionality. On configured and licensed units, Switchboard peers appear in the **Connections** peer list. Switchboard peers have colored asterisk icons next to their name in the peer list. A gray icon indicates the remote peer cannot reach the Switchboard server. A red icon indicates the remote peer is online, but a network path to the peer is not available via Switchboard.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

PEER/PROFILE FILTERING

You can filter the peer and profile lists on the **Connections** tab by typing in the boxes underneath each list. This makes it easier to find what you're looking for on systems with many peers and profiles. Filters that yield no results cause the background to turn red. When a filter is active, the filter box background becomes bright yellow. To remove the filter, simply remove all text from the appropriate filter box.
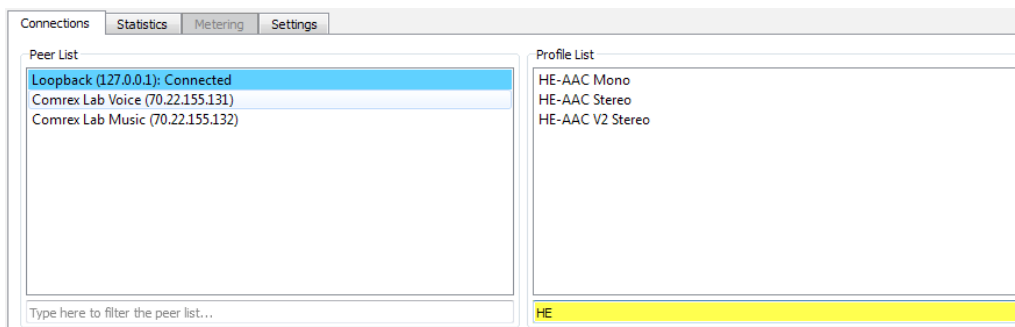
FIGURE 12   **THE PROFILE FILTER IS ACTIVE WITH A FILTER OF "HE-." THE PEER FILTER IS OFF.**

RESIZING THE PANES

The height of the summary and details panes can be modified by finding the spot between these two windows where the mouse cursor changes from a regular arrow to a vertical resize icon, and click and drag to adjust the interface. Either pane can be hidden by resizing it all the way to zero. To unhide a hidden pane, simply find the resize spot and drag it to open the hidden pane.

RECOMMENDED SYSTEM

Fleet Commander currently runs on Windows 7, 8 and 10. We recommend using a system with a strong network connection, at least 2GB RAM. We strongly recommend using a monitor with a resolution of at least 1024px by 768px.

FAQ

What is fleet commander?
Fleet commander is an application that lets you manage and operate multiple ACCESS-based Comrex products from one application.

Does it run on Windows?
Yes.

Does it run on OS X?
Not yet, but we are working on a port that will run on intel-based Mac computers.

Does it run on Linux?
We aren't planning on it, but it isn't impossible.

What does Fleet Commander control?
Fleet Commander will manage all ACCESS Rackmount and Portable running firmware versions 3.x and BRIC-Link and BRIC-Link II running firmware versions 3.x.

Can I change device settings in Fleet Commander?
Yes.

Can I monitor audio meters in Fleet Commander?
Yes! You will be able to monitor levels across your whole fleet. Note however, that big fleets require that you have a high-performing network.

Is there a free version?
There is a demo mode that allows you to try out Fleet Commander with one device. There is also **BRIC Remote Control**, which is free. That program allows you to to manage connections between devices, but is less feature-complete than Fleet Commander.

v. LICENSES

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