



Extended Support for the
Latest NCE DCC Systems
+ On-Screen Control of
Your Layout Turnouts

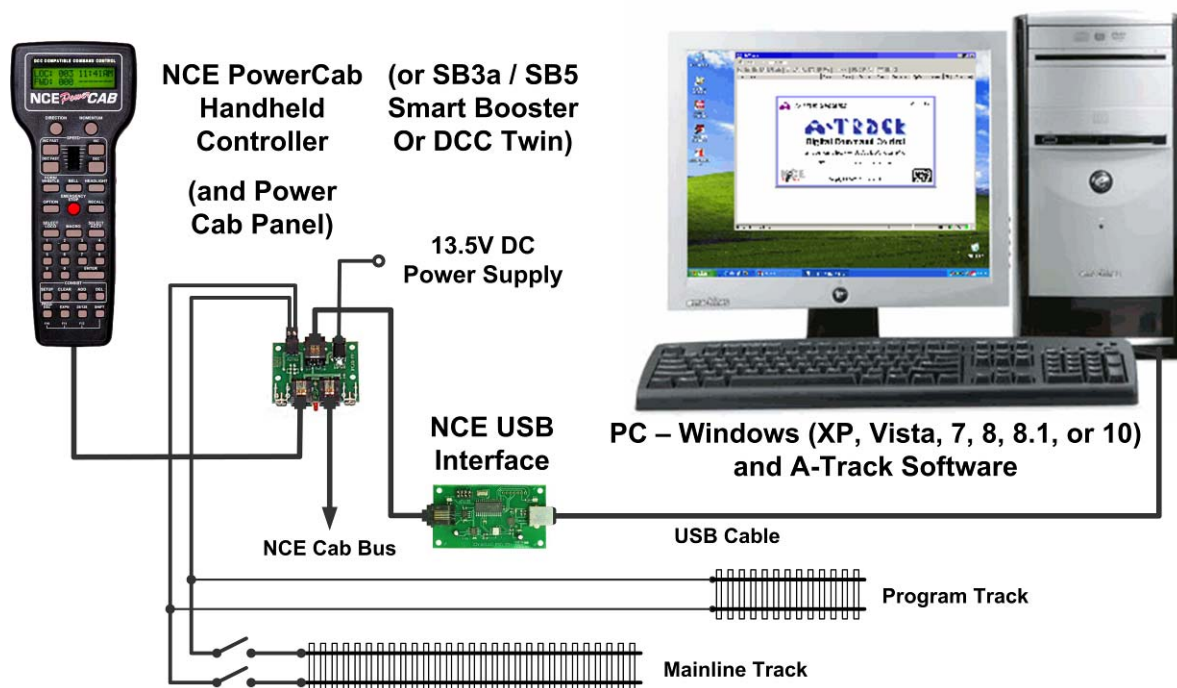
A-Track for Windows (A-Track) is a powerful **FREE** extension to complement the facilities of your NCE Corporation Power Cab or Power Pro Digital Command Control system and to assist you in running your roster of locomotives on your model railroad.

A-Track allows you to store full details of all of your locomotives and accessory (turnout) decoders, with all of their DCC configuration parameters, in a readily-accessible format on a personal computer – but without requiring you to be any kind of computer expert.

A-Track's back-up copy of all of the data held within each DCC decoder fitted in the locomotives which make up your roster, safeguards all the hours of effort put in by you (or your Club's DCC expert) in programming and configuration.

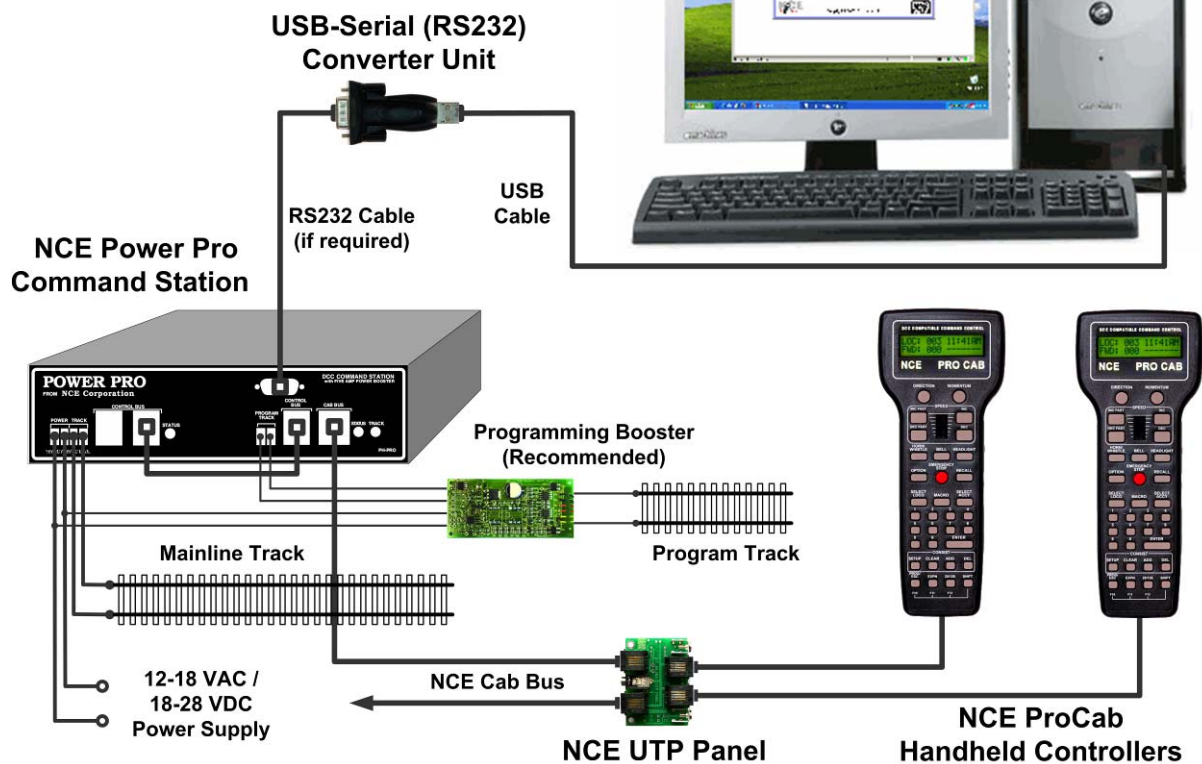
When linked to your NCE system, A-Track does not alter the way in which the NCE Command Station and Handheld Cabs operate, or are connected to the track and to each other, in any respect, so that you can continue to use them exactly as before – but with A-Track available to lend a powerful helping hand in the background.

A-Track is a software application which runs, under Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8 (including 8.1), or Windows 10 on a standard Personal Computer (PC). When using an NCE Power Cab system (including systems based around an NCE SB3a or SB5 Smart Booster unit, or the entry-level DCC Twin), A-Track is connected to your system via an NCE USB Interface unit, as shown in the example set-up below for a Power Cab system –



Alternatively, if you have an NCE Power Pro Command Station, you can simply connect A-Track to it via a standard Serial Port, if you have an older PC which is fitted with one, or via a USB Port and any readily-available USB-to-Serial (RS232) converter unit, as shown below –

**PC – Windows (XP, Vista, 7, 8, 8.1, or 10)
and A-Track Software**



When used with either an NCE Power Pro, a Power Cab or Smart Booster Version 1.65 system, or a DCC Twin (all except the Power Pro with a Version 7 USB Interface), as well as looking after the contents of your DCC decoders, A-Track will also let you monitor, set up, save, and restore the complete status and operational parameters of the NCE Command Station and all attached Cabs from your PC. This frees you from the task of having to set everything up from scratch at the start of a session, and leaves you with more time to enjoy your model railroading. If you are using a DCC Twin, A-Track lets you perform these functions without requiring to you to purchase an NCE ProCab for this purpose.

Note, however, that these set-up facilities are not available when A-Track is used with the earlier Version 1.28 of the NCE Power Cab and Smart Booster systems, or with a Version 6 USB Interface.

Safeguard Your DCC Decoder Configurations

Using A-Track, you can read and save the status and parameters of each new locomotive decoder as delivered by the manufacturer. You will then be able to see the complete configuration details of the locomotive at a glance, on the PC screen, rather than only being able to check one parameter at a time by using a standard handheld Cab. A-Track can handle all types of decoders, including sound decoders, from all manufacturers who comply with National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) DCC standards. Currently, the system has been successfully tested with Bachmann, Broadway Limited (Paragon 2), DCC Concepts, Digitrax, ESU (LokSound), Hornby, Lenz, NCE, Model Rectifier, MTH, QSI (Quantum), SoundTraxx, Tam Valley Depot, Train Control Systems (TCS), Zimo, and ZTC decoders.

A-Track gives you total control over decoder programming and locomotive tuning. You can make changes to the decoder parameters directly, without having to compute or type in complicated numerical values, then immediately try out the effects, and decide whether to keep the alterations or go back to the original values.

Being able to keep back-up copies of each decoder's settings is especially valuable if you make an error in programming one or more parameters, and completely upset your careful tailoring of a locomotive's performance and characteristics. A-Track will allow you to retrieve the previous decoder set-up and restore the locomotive to the state it was in before your inadvertent mistake (as long as you remembered to save the earlier version before making the changes !).

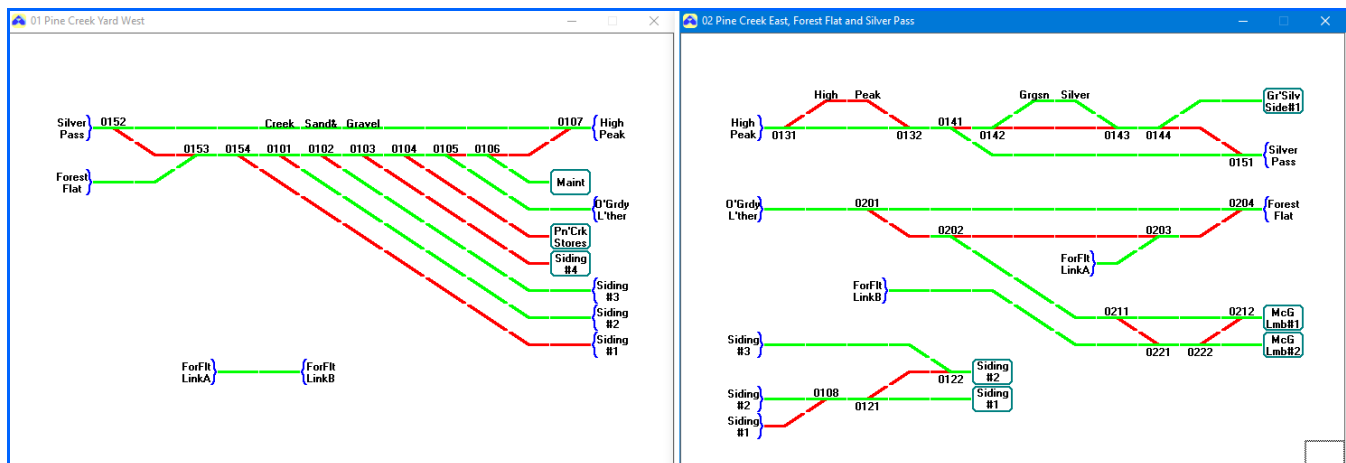
Because A-Track lets you look at the decoder set-ups for several locomotives at the same time, and see the differences between them, it is relatively simple to tune the speed (and function) characteristics of these locomotives to run together in a consist. You can then run the locomotives individually, or together in the consist, on the track directly from the PC screen in order to check out the results, returning to the programming function if necessary to complete any fine tuning.

Whenever you purchase a new locomotive which is similar to one already in your roster, you can save a lot of programming time and effort by using A-Track to copy the decoder parameters from the configured locomotive to the new one – after making a back-up copy of the original settings in the new locomotive, of course (just in case !). Programming of the new locomotive is then reduced to giving it an appropriate description and a unique DCC address, together with any minor extra enhancements that you might want to make.

Gain Centralised Control of Your Layout

As well as handling locomotive decoders, A-Track also allows you to program and operate accessory (or stationary) decoders which are used primarily for the control of turnouts on your layout.

To make operation as simple as possible, A-Track gives you the facility to construct an on-screen graphical view of all your layout turnouts, such as that shown in the two example panels below –



From these panels you can control the setting of any turnout via the click of a mouse, with the commanded position shown immediately on the screen display.

Additionally, if you have either an NCE Power Pro or a Version 1.65 Power Cab system, and wire up your turnouts to one or more NCE Auxiliary Input Units (AIUs) attached to your NCE system's Cab Bus, A-Track will be able to sense the actual position of each turnout and so verify that the intended route is set correctly before you run a locomotive into that section of the layout.

Rather than set each turnout individually for a specific route, A-Track gives you the choice of selecting the start and end points of a required route (plus an optional mid-point) and will then figure out the necessary intermediate turnout settings automatically. All turnouts can then be switched with a single click. The turnout settings for the found route can also be saved as a Macro – a set of turnout operating commands – for future use.

Both NCE Power Pro and all versions of Power Cab systems support the definition and use of Macros, and A-Track gives you the capability to expand the rather limited Macro facilities of the Power Cab systems to equal those of Power Pro systems.

Protect Your Decoders, Command Station and Handheld Cab Setups

With NCE Power Pro and Version 1.65 Power Cab systems, A-Track gives you full access to the Command Station, and hence the ability to display all of the key parameters stored in its internal memory on the PC screen. This allows you to perform Command Station and Handheld Cab setup directly from the computer, changing parameters to suit your immediate requirements, and to define and manipulate the composition of Consists and any stored Macros.

All parameters stored in the Command Station memory (System, Macros, Consists, and Cab Status) can be selectively saved (backed-up) to files on the PC's hard disk, or on CD-R / DVD-R or a USB flash drive (memory stick), and then recalled at any future time to restore the Command Station and its attached Cabs to a state corresponding to a previously-recorded operating session.

Similarly, A-Track allows all or part of the equipment roster to be saved to files, on any of the media listed above, simply for safe-keeping or for loading into another A-Track / NCE system elsewhere. Sets of CV values can be copied from one decoder to another, which can significantly reduce the time to program and set up a new locomotive added to your roster.

Given the current size of hard disks and the amount of RAM fitted in a modern personal computer, there is no practical limit to the number of different Command Station or Cab setups which can be saved to, or restored from, the computer's permanent or removable storage, and A-Track can handle equipment roster lists stretching to hundreds (or even thousands) of equipment items. However, such large lists tend to be unwieldy to view and manipulate, so it is usually easier to compile shorter rosters – corresponding, for example, to an operating session – using the facilities available in A-Track.

Additional Facilities

As well as its primary purpose of storing and manipulating the contents of DCC decoders, A-Track also allows you to control any selected locomotive or set of turnouts on the Main Track directly from the PC, using the mouse and a 'soft' on-screen controller, by issuing DCC commands directly to the NCE Command Station. Although this control function is really intended as a test facility, to check the results of programming a locomotive decoder, for example, you can call up and operate as many as eight 'soft' controllers on the screen simultaneously - if you think you possess the capability and dexterity to run eight locomotives simultaneously on the layout by yourself !

Obtaining Your Copy of A-Track

A-Track may be downloaded from the A-Train Systems website (<https://www.a-train-systems.co.uk/getatrack.htm>) completely free of charge for your personal or club use. You can choose to download A-Track either as a simple executable Setup File, which has the complete Reference Manual embedded as Help pages, or as a complete Installation Package including a User Guide, Installation Notes, and a copy of Adobe Reader.

Once installed, you have the option of registering your copy of A-Track, also without any charge, in order to have priority with regard to support and assistance in rectifying any problems which you may come across.

If, after using A-Track, you think that it is of benefit to your model railroading activities, and would like to support future A-Track development and enhancements, then you are welcome to make a voluntary donation - but you will not be 'nagged' or pressured to do so. Donations can be made safely and securely via PayPal, using any credit or debit card, even if you do not have a PayPal account of your own

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