

What does XLR stand for?

X - The original connector used was a "Cannon X" from the ITT-Cannon corporation "X Series" offered as a 3 pin (contact) connector to be used for balanced line audio.

L - In development, they added a *L*atch to the Cannon X. They took the letter L from latch to create a title for their new "XL" cable.

R - Finally, they combined a *R*ubber compound to the contacts, and took the letter R from rubber to create the XLR.

More on Phantom Power

Phantom power is a means of distributing a DC current through audio cables to provide power for microphones and other equipment.

The supplied voltage is usually 48 Volts (sometimes 12 Volts), with 48V being the most common. Individual microphones draw as much current from this voltage as they need.

A balanced audio signal connected to a 3 pin XLR has the audio signal traveling on the two wires – usually connected to pin 2 (+v) and pin 3 (-v). Pin 1 is connected to the shield, which is earthed. The audio signal is an AC (alternating current), whereas phantom power is DC (direct current).

The DC phantom power is transmitted simultaneously on both pin 2 and 3, with the shield (pin 1) being the ground. Since the DC voltage on the 'hot' and 'cold' pins (2 & 3) is identical, it is seen by equipment as "common mode" noise and rejected, or ignored, by the equipment, hence this is why it is called "phantom" power.

If you put a volt meter on pins 1 & 2, or pins 1 & 3, you will see the 48v DC phantom power, but if you meter pins 2 & 3 (the audio carrying wires) you will see no voltage.