PadForge 5.2 reviewer brief

Choose a workflow and establish the result

What the review should establish

PadForge 5.2.0 is a Windows input-mapping application that combines several physical sources into virtual controllers, keyboard/mouse output, MIDI, and SteamVR hand controls. A driving game's telemetry can be one of those sources, and game mods made for DSX can set the triggers and lights of the PlayStation controllers assigned to its virtual controllers. Its breadth is best reviewed through a few complete workflows rather than a tour of settings.

Begin with an ordinary remap and a receiving application. Then choose motion, feedback, phone/remote input, or a specialist device already available. The PadForge 5.2 reviewer field guide at padforge.org/press supplies two integrated sessions and twenty-five focused procedures, each with its equipment, preconditions, steps, passing observations, limits and reset. The procedures follow the PadForge documentation and public sources. They were not run while these documents were prepared.

The software price is $0. Source is available under the project's declared CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license. Hardware, games and optional third-party software remain separate.

The PadForge film plays from the Watch the film button on padforge.org. Landscape, portrait and square downloads are at padforge.org/press/#film.

Sources: Type buttons / Auto-mapping / PadForge README / PadForge license and notices / padforge.org / The PadForge film / Game Telemetry listener / Game mods and DSX on one port

Choose a useful route

Available setup	Review route	What makes the result useful
One ordinary gamepad	Remap two buttons, compare Xbox and PlayStation identities, then add a profile or layer/menu action	Show the recipient receiving the intended input and a clean release
A complete game setup	Use Session A for one driving profile or Session B for shared input and a phone command deck	Check how assignments, profiles, commands and feedback interact in one task
A gyro or analog-depth source	Calibrate gyro/Flick Stick, or compare direct analog output with Rapid Trigger	Keep physical source values separate from the final output and recipient
DualSense or a force-feedback wheel	Separate manual physical feedback, game-authored effects, and audio/shaker routing	Name the game, preset, physical model and transport for each feedback channel
A driving game or a DSX game mod	Map Game Telemetry readings and start a trigger effect from one, or let a mod's trigger effects reach a DualSense	Name the game, its telemetry or mod setting, the reading or status line, and the physical trigger response

Available setup	Review route	What makes the result useful
A phone or two PCs	Compare web touch, Browser Gamepad, Web Menus, and Remote Link as separate routes	Record the receiving PC, input identity, returning feedback, and release on source loss
A mouse, keyboard or RGB accessory	Light or rumble it from a virtual controller, or pick a keyboard or mouse model on a Keyboard + Mouse slot	Name the device, the vendor software state, and the route line each tab shows
MIDI, retro, tracking, a Novint Falcon, a keyboard screen or other vendor hardware	Use the matching dedicated workflow and its prerequisites	Establish one actual source/recipient path without claiming whole-tool replacement
A screen reader	Drive one review session with NVDA and the keyboard	Record what NVDA speaks for type tiles, toggles and status lines, and which controls the keys reach

Sources: Motion Pitch, Yaw and Roll / Flick Stick / Setup and network / Input and feedback / Routing, voices, and sweep / Mice, keyboards and vendor rows / Screen readers and the keyboard / The Game Telemetry row / Which controller a mod drives / What it needs / The screens

Prepare the setup before judging the result

Load a separate profile and keep the original configuration and game bindings. Exit through the tray before copying PadForge.xml. Closing the window can leave the engine running. Record the app build, Windows/architecture, device/firmware/transport, output preset, recipient build and dependency state.

An enabled slot needs an online assigned source and a running engine to produce the gamepad-style virtual device. An Installed HIDMaestro card means the driver is in Windows' driver store, not that a virtual controller is live. The card reads Not Installed until the first virtual controller puts the driver there, and Settings can uninstall HIDMaestro and BthPS3. After an update from 5.1.0, the first virtual controller installs the HIDMaestro 2.1.0 driver once. A failed HIDMaestro setup runs again when the slot is turned off and on. Composite Sony, Nintendo and Valve presets add usbip-win2's virtual USB host controller on first use, with no prompt and no USB hub restart.

For MIDI, record which path the Windows MIDI Services card in Settings names: the API built into Windows, the runtime PadForge installs, or the legacy MIDI API. Under the legacy API a MIDI slot creates no port and sends to an existing Output Port, such as a loopback driver.

The Razer Chroma, Logitech LIGHTSYNC and Razer Sensa rows that replaced the 5.0.0 Dashboard switches are device assignments, so they belong to the active profile. Startup can restore the named shutdown profile after loading Default as a baseline. Profile switches that change identity, enabled state or topology can remove or recreate output.

Some optional features reach beyond the PC. Community Configs sends Steam the search text, the game, config and creator IDs and the PadForge version, and its anonymous logon adds the OS type, a language and a hashed machine ID. Remote Link discovery broadcasts the PC's name, identity

fingerprint, protocol version and link port on the local network, and its internet path uses public STUN servers, the public BitTorrent DHT and n0's iroh relays. Game Telemetry listens on every network address and adds a Windows Firewall rule for its port the first time it listens, and Download Strike7API.dll fetches Mad Catz's SDK from AIDA64's server only when clicked.

Sources: The command-line form / Profile Loading / HIDMaestro / Extended Controllers Not Working / First-run auto-install / Windows MIDI Services / The old Dashboard switches / Setting one up / Uninstall HIDMaestro / Uninstall BthPS3 / Community Configs / What Remote Link shares / Game Telemetry listener / S.T.R.I.K.E. 7 library download

Keep these distinctions beside the claim

- Physical input and virtual output are different identities. Choosing a DualSense preset does not give an arbitrary source a speaker or adaptive triggers.
- The Nintendo picker offers four presets: Nintendo Switch Pro Controller, Nintendo Switch Pro Controller (USB), Nintendo Switch 2 Pro Controller and Nintendo Switch 2 Pro Controller: Full.
- Sixteen slots span seven output families. XInput has four controller positions, DSU serves slots 1 through 4, and one VR slot supplies both virtual hands.
- Native motion depends on the preset. Plain DS3, plain Switch 2 Pro, and plain Steam Deck have no native motion fields, although their configured motion can reach DSU. Switch 2 Pro: Full carries motion that only Steam and SDL built with libusb read. Full DS3 has its own axis limits.
- A speaker, a single haptic tone, a continuous actuator stream, body rumble, adaptive resistance and wheel torque are distinct outputs. Test the channel that the claim names.
- Game Telemetry readings come from the game's own telemetry output, which has to be on and pointed at the PC. A DSX mod's first controller is the first virtual controller in Dashboard order with a DualSense, DualSense Edge or DualShock 4 online, and a game's own trigger effects come before a mod's.
- Haptics a game plays as audio on a DualSense (PS5): Full virtual controller reach other pads as rumble that follows their loudness, not as the haptic waveform. A DualSense on the slot plays them itself.
- A DualShock 4's audio depends on model and link. Over Bluetooth it gets speaker and headphone routes and the headset microphone. On a cable the second model, and any pad on Sony's adapter, plays through its headphone jack only, and a first-model pad on a cable has no audio.
- Web Menus stays on its host PC. Browser gamepad controls and phone sensors have separate browser and permission conditions. A page that opens does not establish motion or rumble.
- Macros follow their active profile and layer conditions. An executable rule selects a profile and does not automatically prevent its macros when another app has focus.
- The documented totals count entries under different rules. PadForge knows 1,110 devices by USB identity, the 8BitDo Ultimate 2C Wireless (2DC8:301B) among them, and none of these totals is a count of tested retail products.

Sources: Type buttons / Custom DirectInput mappings / Extended slots / PadForge README / Valve personas / Nintendo / Supported Devices / 8BitDo Ultimate 2C Wireless, Other SDL drivers / Which controller a mod drives / DualSense haptics played as audio / DualShock 4 audio links

What counts as evidence

A screenshot proves the visible labels and captured configuration. It does not prove a live input stream, game recognition, a physical effect, latency or reliability. A device row can exist while waiting for data. An Installed label can precede a working virtual device.

For an observed result, record the action and release, the named input, the selected output, and the receiving application. Add the physical response for sound, force, lighting or haptics. For a measurement, give the timing reference, method and repeated observations.

Check the game publisher's own controller requirements. Physical-controller support listed there does not certify a PadForge Full Sony path. A support-thread fix or closure is not a runtime retest.

Sources: Polling rate / OpenXR setup / Windows on ARM / Turning it on / Availability and modes

Report what remains with other software

The migration question is whether the selected behavior was reproduced. PadForge expressions do not establish compatibility with Gremlin or FreePIE scripts. Voice phrases do not provide a VoiceAttack plugin host. Web Menus does not establish Touch Portal application-state or plugin parity.

OpenTrack can stay the pose generator and filter that feeds PadForge. SimHub's telemetry effects, dashboards and hardware integrations remain separate from rumble-to-audio, and Game Telemetry can forward every packet to SimHub on another port. DSX and PadForge cannot both answer game mods on one port. Handheld TDP, GPU, display and firmware controls are separate from learned buttons and Windows-reported motion.

Keep the original configuration until the replacement passes the chosen checks. Publish pass, partial, failed, skipped or unestablished with the affected capability. Preserve dated limits and identify later retests separately.

Sources: Inputs and ranges / Turning it on and learning / Routing, voices, and sweep / Bass Shakers availability / Actions / Forward to Port / Game mods and DSX on one port