

Optimizing the acquisition process

The latest version of Radio-Assist gives users even more options for automating complicated or repetitive data acquisition and production tasks. Its new functions and other improvements are designed to enhance users' experience of digital technologies. Whatever your job is – journalist, presenter, technician or system administrator – you will find in Radio-Assist 7.1 a fully consistent set of the tools you need for optimizing your creativity and production levels.

Record

The **“Record”** tool simplifies the process of sound acquisition from an external peripheral. There is a new set of commands to control any peripheral with the Sony RS422 protocol. These commands cover the “play, stop, fast rewind, fast forward” functions and the audio time code for finding an exact position on the support. There is also a command synchronization function to run the start of a recording and the start of play on the peripheral at the same time (it also works for pause and stop).

To save a considerable amount of time, a new button sends the item being recorded directly to the “Snippets” tool to start editing it immediately.

Every recording can be inserted in local or remote databases via the “remote database function” in the Browser.

The **“Finalize”** button is used to manage “blanks” by automatic adding or withdrawal. Automatic withdrawal deletes blanks at the beginning and/or end of a file on the basis of a level expressed in dB. Automatic adding, expressed in milliseconds, is used to insert a blank at the beginning and/or end of a recording. “Finalize” also applies automatic audio normalization on the basis of a headroom level defined in dB. All these parameters are set in the “Radio-Assist Setup” program.

Import

The **“Import”** tool has now added the Sony MDS-E12 MiniDisk to the list of devices which can be interfaced (Sony MDS B5 & E11, Denon 1050R & 991R).

The “Hard-Disk” tab in “Import” allows you to play back and import MP3 files of any rate, including VBR (variable bit rate), with any model of PCX card. The new ergonomics enables you to enter the UNC (Universal Naming Convention) address of a local or network disk directly with the keyboard. A column sorting function makes it easier to view the file list.

The “Nagra” tab is used to import files recorded with NAGRA portable digital player-recorders and stored on PCMCIA memory cards like Flash, Strata-Flash and ATA, and accepts SCSI card readers. It can integrate “EDL” edit files produced by Nagra units and you can play back an EDL file before you import it, just like a sound file.

The “CD” tab is used to import further information on text CDs.

Multi-CD

The Radio-Assist **“Multi-CD”** tool can import large numbers of files from a rack of CD-ROM players or a Jukebox in a fully automatic way. You can provide a music CD with its sleeve (a scanner must be connected to the workstation). “Multi-CD” retrieves the ISRC number and queries the CDDDB database (an internet connection is required) to automatically attribute to each track information such as performer, title and album name.

Feed-In & Feed-Plan

The two automatic recording schedule tools "**Feed-In and Feed-Plan**" have several new features of which the most important is a special settings interface in the "Radio-Assist Setup" program (selection of the switch grid, address for error messages, operating modes, etc.).

A new function called "Full Channel Recording" allows the technician to define recording times (1h, 1:30h, 2h, etc.) for a given period (a week, a month, a year, etc.). Markers can be set on a recording in progress, which is very handy for locating a particular event (e.g.: a 24/24 logging).

Phone-In

The "**Phone-In**" tool is a local server for recording phone calls. The keys of the phone (land-line or mobile) are used to activate the relevant functions (start recording, stop recording, play, etc.). The Vocal Phone-In Server operates by decoding DTMF (Dual Tone Multiple Frequency) acoustic signals generated when the phone keys are pressed to identify the digits or signs '0' to '9', '*', '#'). When the recordings have been validated by the caller, they are directly integrated into the database. Data such as the time of the recording, its duration and the caller's name are also automatically saved in the database. These messages are immediately available for use by the entire set of tools (editing, production, even when recording is in progress) and can be broadcast almost instantaneously in the same way as any other sound item in the database.

Autofill

"**Autofill**" is a program to process sound files in groups. It is the perfect tool for importing sound files of different formats and and/or origins into the database. Autofill has an automatic mode to sequence operations continuously without any need for human intervention. It processes files in three ways: multi-format conversion, sound level adjustment if needed and automatic inclusion of the metadata, such as those from Tags ID3of an MP3 file, in the Radio-Assist database.

Sound files are cleaned to prevent any problems arising from corrupted files. A normalization device ensures the consistency of all files. This device requires a sound resource which can be a Digigram PCX or compatible Sound Blaster card.

Several Autofills can operate on a single machine, each with its own options. The file input formats available are: PCM (Wave or AIFF), G711, MPEG1/2 Layers 1/2/3 (Raw, Wave or BWF) and other special formats, including retrieval of any metadata. Output formats are: PCM (Wave, AIFF or BWF), MPEG1/2 (Raw, Wave or BWF).

Autofill is integrated into the Radio-Assist security process: double server and double database, DBShare and Media Management.