

ADVERTISING PROMOTION



TRACKTION 3 SOUND DESIGN TECHNIQUES

Building effect and plug-in chains needn't be hard work thanks to Tracktion 3's Racks and filters. Follow this Workshop with the T3 demo on your DVD.

At first glance, sound design might seem a relatively complicated subject. In reality, though, at its most basic, sound design is simply the processing of a sound to change it in some way. It can also involve a combination of generating, processing and modulating sounds, but as a rule, the simpler you can keep things, the more efficient your workflow will be.

To this end, Tracktion 3 streamlines the process of sound design, putting all the controls at your fingertips within a single-window interface. Designing sound is all about having access to controls, and Tracktion's layout makes the process easy for beginners and experienced users alike.

Getting started

If you set up a new project or open the Workshop project file (in the Start folder) on the coverdisc, you will be presented with a blank canvas. The first step is to load a sound source, such as a synth. This is done by dragging from the New Filter button to the output section of a track, at which point you will be prompted to choose from the available filters. Remember that Tracktion refers to plug-ins and VST instruments as 'filters'. **1**

Once you have dropped the instrument into place, its Control window should open.

Record a few notes or a sequence via MIDI. **2**

Now place a second filter after the VSTi in the track, but this time, make it an effect. For example, try adding the AmpliTube plug-in to add some crunch to the sound being generated by the VSTi. **3**

Rack 'em up

Now try importing an audio loop into the next track – a drum loop, for example. You will see that you can effect audio files just as easily as the output of virtual synths. This time, when you drag a filter onto the track, try dropping it onto the audio event itself and choose something from the Rack Filters menu. **4**

When you double-click the Rack icon on the audio event or click on the Racks button at the

identically left and right using EQs, compressors and volume/pan filters. **5**

These Racks are easily editable, so you can re-wire them to your heart's content. You can also remove filters from a Rack or add new ones. Here, for example, we have dropped a reverb filter into the rack and simply re-routed the left and rights through it so that the drum loop is processed with reverb. **6**

Equally, you could have attached it to only one side, with a phaser on the other, to create weird special effects. Once you have edited a chain you can save it by using the Preset>Save button in the Rack Edit window.

Instead of dropping the filter onto the audio clip, you could have dropped it onto the track's

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top right of the screen, the Rack window opens. Now you can see Tracktion's modular system for routing sound through filters. The wires represent the audio path, and in a simple setup you have stereo and MIDI in on the left and identical outs on the right. In the middle is the area where the left and right channels are processed in any way you like.

If you click on a filter you gain access to an interface from where you can adjust its settings. Each filter has mono or stereo connections plus MIDI, but you can use as few or as many of these as you wish.

In the example of the Dynamics and EQ Rack in this Workshop, the signal is split and processed almost

output section as before. The major difference is that when you apply filters to a track, they affect every event on the track. When you drop filters onto an audio event, however, they affect only that event. It's possible, therefore, to have different effects applied to multiple events on the same track, which is great for creating a varied, interesting and organic sound. In fact, you can use both methods at once for even more flexible processing.

Wrap it up

Returning to the original track with the VSTi inserted, you can continue adding filters until you have achieved a suitably processed sound. Tracktion will see any third-party plug-ins on

ON YOUR DVD-ROM
Tracktion 3 demo and all the supporting files you'll need to follow this tutorial.

POWER TIPS

GOING OUT
Although Racks are stereo by default, you can add input and output channels to them for more

flexible routing and processing. VSTis that have multiple outputs will be assigned to multiple tracks. One interesting

technique – especially with drum samplers that use separate outs for each channel – is to process those channels separately through different effects.

IN CONTRAST
By clicking the Show Two Racks button you can drag and drop filters between two separate Racks as well as build two in parallel, so you

can try different things and A/B between the two sets of filters. The Rack display helps to give you a better understanding of the routing between the filters.



Drag and drop multiple filters onto tracks in Traktion to create plug-in chains. Save and edit these graphically in the form of Racks. Use filter Racks to quickly process several channels using the same settings.

your system as well as the comprehensive set that it ships with. If you have built a chain that you particularly like and want to keep, multiple-select the filters by [Shift]+clicking them, then right-click on the group. From the menu, choose 'Wrap these filters in a new rack filter'. **7**

The filter chain is stored as a preset that you can easily rename and recall at any time.

Using this method, it's easy to build up a collection of unique and powerful plug-in chains.

On the Rack
The Rack interface provides an easy way to flexibly route sound within Traktion and achieve rich and complex effects by creatively processing signals from audio tracks or VST instruments. The instruments and many filter

parameters can also be easily automated in minute detail, so it's possible to modify the sounds being generated and processed in real time to further add to the movement and variation of the signal.

It's worth noting that filters and Racks can also be dragged onto the master output section for the purposes of processing the whole mix. The Mackie T3 plug-ins are particularly useful

for this, adding a professional sheen and valuable gain and stereo enhancements to the finished masters. Most importantly, this is all achieved without the need for multiple floating windows. Adding filters to tracks and Racks is as simple as drag-and-drop, and the intuitive left-to-right signal path concept used by Traktion makes it easy to understand what you're doing. **MTM**