

ULTRAMIX “FAQ & A”

Here are some Frequently Asked Questions & Answers our tech support department supplied for you, just in case you needed a few more angles.

Q: Can channels be sub-grouped in UltraMix?

A: UltraMix Pro software has 8 software groups which can be assigned from the computer as well as the UltraPilot. You can assign any number of channels to any group before or after you record channel fades, retaining both sets of data. Unlike console sub-grouping, software groups have no relation to panning, i.e. the channels retain their original pan positioning (therefore each group could be considered a stereo group).

To group a set of channels from the UltraPilot, first select the group by pressing the Group Select/Group Assign button once. With the soft keys on channels 1 through 8, select a group. Next, to assign the specific channels, press the Group Assign button once more (the LED will switch). Once selected, you can use the soft keys on the UltraPilot to determine which channels will be affected and the corresponding channel LEDs will light (1-16 green and 17-23 red).

To assign groups from the software, select the channels to be grouped, then pull down the Group function from the Fader menu, select which group to assign them to and click OK. Version 1.1 software allows you to pull down Group (or the command key equivalent) and hit a number key on the keyboard.

Q: What is Automuting?

Automuting, a powerful function available only in UltraMix, can greatly reduce the amount of time you would spend manually muting noisy tracks. Not every type of sound, with its respective amplitude envelope, is meant to be gated or has to be gated. Often, a few well-placed manual mutes will accomplish the necessary tasks. Nevertheless, automuting is a very handy tool to have in your arsenal of mix tricks.

Automuting is similar to a noise gate, except a noise gate must first receive a signal before it can be activated (try tweaking 32 gating devices' attack times, pass after pass). After a record pass with automuting enabled, UltraMix takes a “picture” of when and where audio drops below the desired threshold, saving you the time and hassle of listening to a song repeatedly, muting individual tracks on each pass. Once the pass has played through, the automute process recalculates the start and ends

times of the audio, un-muting slightly before and muting slightly after, so as not to cut off any events (i.e. your music).

If you ran your mix through various automute passes and couldn't get the global low/medium/high threshold settings (which are set 10dB apart) to properly gate a specific sound, then you might try patching the signal from a “post-fader” direct out into a spare Ultra-34 channel and adjust the signal entering the Ultra-34 using that fader. This gives you total variable control. You could then copy the spare channel's fader over to your original signal fader (automute events and all). Do this early on in your session, before you've recorded any fader moves.

Or you can use a trim that is pre-insert, if the gain cell channel is patched to the mixer insert, but usually a trim adjustment has much less control over volume than a channel fader.

Automutes can be done on any combination of tracks, at any time, within a song. Give it a try! Turn up the treble on a few tracks to emulate tape noise and see how automuting clears up all of that hiss. Voila! No more pesky, noisy channels messing up your mix.

Q: What's the purpose of Delete Time and Insert Blank Time?

A: Tech guy story time... it's 3:00 AM on the morning of your biggest commercial presentation yet. You've been feverishly writing, arranging, recording, and now mixing your opus, “Come Get Yer Chunky Burgers,” for the last two weeks. The phone suddenly rings. It's the ad agency and they've decided your idea is great, but the chorus about “chow down chunky boy” may be offensive and needs to be emasculated. Furthermore, they don't just want it rewritten, they want the whole piece shortened by that length of time. It suddenly hits you... how are you going to rip out 10 seconds of music? You can cut that piece from your sequencer and you can chop out the vocal chorus on the digital editor, but how are you going to fix the mix without starting from scratch? Delete Time to the rescue! Simply select the SMPTE start and end times where you're going to perform the audio surgery. Once selected, delete that section of the mix and you're finished.

You're done, wrapped and already snoozing on the studio couch at 3:15 AM. At 3:30 you're about to enter REM and the phone rings again. It's the ad agency and they've changed their minds, uh, again. They want the “chunky boy” thing to be twice as long. You edit the sequence again and replace the vocal

chorus. What to do about the mix? Simply Insert Blank Time with the appropriate SMPTE start and end times. Now you can copy fader moves from different sections of the mix and paste them over the new choruses. Easy. How did you ever make it before UltraMix?

Q: How does UltraMix sync to other devices?

UltraMix uses MIDI Time Code (MTC) in order to stay in synchronization with tape recorders, hard disk recorders, or any other time based mechanisms. MTC is represented in the industry standard, SMPTE time code format: hours:minutes:seconds:frames. UltraMix is not frame rate biased and will lock to MTC at all frame rates without any switching. If your multitrack tape is striped with SMPTE, simply run the signal into a SMPTE to MTC converter, which is found in many popular multi-port MIDI interfaces. The only selection you will need to make for sync is in the File pulldown Preferences menu (Mac only). Choose MIDI/Sync and the Sync Source box will contain options which are defined in your OMS or FreeMIDI studio setup. (See the Release Notes for more specifics.)

Q: What is the difference between a “selected” fader and a fader in record ready mode?

A: A fader that has been selected will show a green triangle above its number on the UltraMix screen. Selecting a fader allows you to perform editing functions which are typically not accomplished in “real time,” while a fader that is in record ready mode allows you to enter events in real time. Faders can be selected with the left/right arrow keys or by clicking above the channel with the mouse (shift-click for noncontiguous channels).

Some examples of uses for selected faders: Listing the selected faders’ data in the event editor; modifying levels; group/ungroup; cut/copy/paste/clearing faders; fade in/fade out with soft keys or up/down arrows; muting or soloing.

Q: What is the edit fade curves window for and when would I use a fade curve?

A: The *edit fader curves* window allows you to custom design your own fader taper and set the length of time it takes for a particular fader to fade in or out. The same curve can be applied to one or more faders or each fader can have its own custom fade curve. A fader curve is enacted when either the UltraPilot or the software screen soft keys are toggled with “Soft Button Set” to fade in or fade out. Also, the F (fade

in) or G (fade out) keys on the keyboard can be used to “punch in” a fade in or fade out on selected (green triangle’d) channels.

The fade in/fade out function is useful when there is a predetermined location in a song that needs a fade in/out on a particular fader . A good example of such a location is at the beginning or end of a mix when it is necessary to fade in or out the master fader. There are two different ways to accomplish this task. Both methods require the fader to be in record ready mode and the master record ready button enabled. Also, it is helpful to have the fader record mode set to Null, so that your previous fader move does not get recorded over until you “punch in” the fade in/out (try Replace for comparison).

The first method is to use the soft keys in the UltraMix Pro software. Under the soft key pulldown window, choose either Fade In or Fade Out. Now when you wish to fade in/out, simply click on the soft key above the fader you want to adjust, or use the UltraPilot soft keys with soft mode set to Solo.

The second method is to select the faders you want to fade in/out and then use the F (fade in) or G (fade out) key on the keyboard to adjust them. This method is preferred for fading multiple faders because you can fade two or more simultaneously by depressing a single key.

Consider this analogy: Each fader is “motorized” and the soft key is the toggle which starts and stops the motor. Every time you restart the motor, the length and fade curve are reset from that specific point. This means if the length is set for 10 seconds, it will take 10 seconds for a fader to fade out to the bottom or top, from any point at which it starts along the channel axis.

Q: Is it possible to enter events that do not already exist inside of the event editor window?

A: Yes. But only by cutting or copying events and then pasting to a different time. Unlike most sequencing software programs, it is not currently possible to enter events directly into the event editor window that do not already exist in UltraMix. The event editor window in UltraMix displays events that have already been recorded into a session and it is basically intended to allow the user to view and edit various types of existing events.

Some examples of edits which can be made in the event editor window are:

Changing the start or finish level of a fade in or fade out; Toggling mutes and automutes on or off; Extending the length of a fade in or fade out; Changing the time or value of a program change; Cutting and pasting a “B” section to another point in time.

Q: Can I run a sequencing program alongside UltraMix?

A: Yes, although it takes a computer with sufficient processing power. Running two different applications simultaneously and maintaining the timing code between UltraMix and your sequencing program is a difficult process for most computers to handle.

We recommend importing your sequences into UltraMix as Standard MIDI files (SMF) using the UltraMix SMF window.

Q: How can I record more than 16 channels at a time from the UltraPilot?

A: The UltraPilot has 16 faders, 16 soft keys and one bank select switch, as well as the means to select other session windows (if you have more than one Ultra-34). One of the nicest things about the UltraPilot design is that it is compact, lightweight and you can literally step back and mix from various positions outside of just one “sweet spot” in your studio. (Just ask Weasel-Boy.) We also designed UltraMix as a multiple pass-based system, which generally means doing a few changes at a time on certain sections of your mix, then proceeding to work on other sections. If you need to tweak more than 16 individual channels at once, maybe you’re working too hard?

It is possible to record and edit lots of channels simultaneously. But for recording more than 16 channels at one time, be very careful not to overwrite record-engaged channels if you do a bank select or change session windows. Let’s look at a few ways to handle this situation.

NOTE: The UltraPilot moves faders and softkey toggling (Mute/Solo) on the front-most screen only.

Trick 1: If you have to mix a few channels in the 1-16 bank and a few in the 17-32 bank, try this: Use the UltraPilot to control one bank and use the mouse to move faders or enable mutes on the other bank.

Trick 2: Assign any number of channels, from either bank, to the group section, leaving the grouped

channels at Unity Gain until the record passes are completed. Mix using the group section only. When you’ve completed all your passes, leave everything as is, if you don’t need to access the groups for anything else. Or, if you need to free up a group or two, then copy and paste the group fader moves onto each of the grouped channels (the grouped children faders) and finally un-assign the channels from that group. Read this last part twice, at least, for maximum comprehension.

Trick 3A: A variation of this last scenario is to use one fader bank on the UltraPilot and then assign the other bank of faders to the groups, so you can mouse lots of channels with the group masters. Leave the session window front-most and mouse the group section faders, leaving the group master window in the background (or off to the side).

Trick 3B: Or vice-versa, with the mouse and UltraPilot approach, if you had just a few channels to work on in the fader bank and not the group master section (use the UltraPilot to do group moves). This would also work well with multiple Ultra-34s across windows.

Trick 4: You can also use the computer keyboard to do edits on selected channels across windows or banks, using the “M” and “,” (comma) keys to mute and un-mute. Version 1.1 software allows for a destructive solo function, meaning the “S” and “D” keys can record mutes on record enabled channels (the channels not being soloed). As well, the up and down arrow keys affect faders on the front-most session window, but the speed of ascent and descent is somewhat fixed.