

MSC-ifier

This is a simple program used in conjunction with ABEdit when it is desired to use additional SoundMan-Server commands in the show that are not supported by ABEdit and Soundman-Assistant. Perhaps the most likely use would be to set crosspoint delays.

ABEdit will allow arbitrary commands in a show, but only if you encode them as hex bytes. This is unacceptably clumsy for entering long text commands, but is the only available method. MSC-ifier is a hack program to get around this limitation, and let you enter commands naturally in text.

MSC-ifier displays a small dialog window with an upper text entry portion and a lower hex display portion, and a Convert button.

Enter the desired SoundMan-Server command into the upper portion of the window and click the Convert button. The text to paste into ABEdit appears in the lower window. Drag the mouse across ALL of the text shown in the hex window to select it, right-click, and from the dropdown menu select Copy.

Now in ABEdit, in the Show Editor create a new cue if necessary, or select an existing cue, in the usual manner. In the sequence list for the cue, select New, and from the popup menu select <hex editor>. The arbitrary hex editor will appear. Right-click in the lower window and select Paste. The hex text from MSC-ifier will be pasted in as a new message. MSC-ifier has included all of the necessary framing and routing bytes to insure that this message is directed to SoundMan-Assistant, where it will be passed directly to SoundMan-Server. Now save the new sequence, after adding a reasonable description.

If ABEdit refuses to save the sequence, it most probably indicates that you did not manage to get the entire hex sequence selected, and there are one or more missing bytes. Delete the text from the hex editor window, go back to MSC-ifier, and double-check that you have managed to get all of the text selected. The hex text may be larger than can appear in the window all at once, and you may have to scroll the text to see (and select) all of it.

While any SoundMan-Server SET command can be entered by this method, it would be a very bad idea to use any commands that have normal controls in ABEdit or SoundMan-Assistant.

SoundMan-Assistant keeps detailed track of all normal "AudioBox" commands issued from ABEdit or any other source. As commands change or modify previous commands this is noted and accounted for. As the state of the playback changes (for instance, the current gain values, whether tracks are loaded or playing, etc), this is all noted. Various commands will only be valid in the right state, so it is critical that SoundMan-Assistant always know the state of the entire box.

SoundMan-Assistant does not recognize direct commands to SoundMan-Server; it merely passes them through. So if one of these commands changes the state of SoundMan-Server so that it does not match the state in SoundMan-Assistant, one can fully expect that Bad Things will start to happen. There will probably be no way to correct such a situation short of shutting down ABEdit, SoundMan-Assistant, and SoundMan-Server, and then restarting, this time not issuing the problematic command.

It IS safe to pass commands to SoundMan-Server for features that do not exist in SoundMan-Assistant. Since SoundMan-Assistant doesn't know about these features, changing them will not cause a synchronization loss with SoundMan-Server.

Features you could reasonably change include crosspoint delay and eq, the signal generator, timecode readers and generators, and grouping several playback channels and locking them to timecode. (But you still need to load the tracks and issue the Play commands normally for the individual channels. You should issue a Play command for the group in the same cue you issue the Play command for the channels.)