Frequently Asked Questions

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Stopsets for Network Feeds With Local Breaks

Introduction:

The following information details how to implement network programming with locally played spots into your Simian schedule. Setting up a network feed with local spots involves various hardware and software settings, and log programming explained below. The network audio is passed through your audio card so Simian can control its volume. Using the contact closures from your satellite receiver, Simian can react to local breaks, optional breaks, mandatory breaks etc. To accomplish all this you will need to:

- Set up a mixer in Simian to control the volume of the network audio
- Create a Trigger Set for your network programming
- Program your breaks in your program log using the techniques described in this document.

NOTE: If you are using a **Broadcast Tools ACS 8.2** (or other switcher model) to switch between multiple satellite sources, these instructions assume that you have wired the inputs and outputs of your switcher using *configuration 1* as referenced in the FAQ document: Broadcast Tools ACS 8.2 Plus Audio Switcher Configuration (click here).

Configuring the Mixer:

You will need to set up a mixer to control the satellite audio play through volume. From the **Mixer** view in Simian, click the **caption button** below the fader (See Figure 1) to enter the **Mixer Setup**.
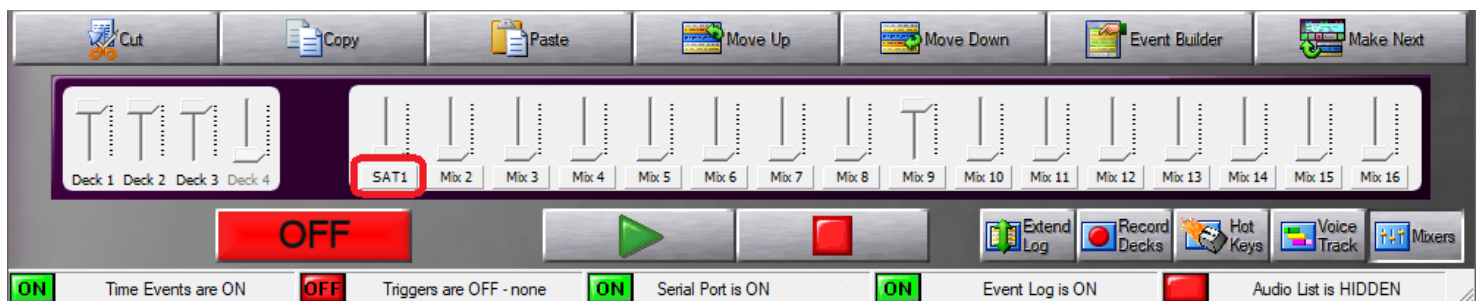

Figure 1: The mixer caption button is shown above

In the **Mixer Setup Window** (See Figure 2) you can add a friendly name (instead of "Mix1") and select the appropriate options for your Soundcard. Choose the appropriate **Mixer**, **Line**, and **Fader** selections for your audio card (Figure 2 shows the most common selections. Your audio card model may be different, but the settings will be equivalent in most situations), then click on the "+" button to the left of the first **Selected Controls** boxes to save the configuration to the mixer. Figure 2 shows a typical setup for AudioScience audio cards (an AudioScience 6012 is used in this example) to play the Network from Line In 1 through Line Out 1. The mixer has also been set up to AutoMute the channel while Simian is playing Audio files. This option automatically takes care of muting and un-muting the audio feed and helps t insure that your Network does not play over the top of your spots.
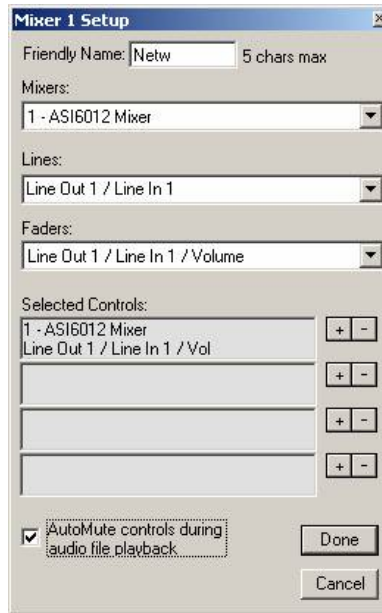
Figure 2: Mixer control setup

NOTE: If you are using an Audio Science audio card and you only see items in the **Mixers** drop down that reference "WDM" drivers, make sure you have installed the "Combo" version of the Audio Science audio card driver and enabled the option for "**Install Legacy 32-bit WAVE Driver**" during installation.

Configuring Triggers:

NOTE: This section assumes that you have already set up and confirmed operation of your trigger device as specified by the hardware vendor. The next step in the process is to set up a **Trigger Set** so Simian will react to incoming triggers from the satellite receiver's contact closures.

To create a Trigger Set, open the **Trigger Set Editor** by going to the **Async** menu and choosing **Triggers** then **Edit Sets**. You will need to drag and drop events into the Trigger Set under the appropriate trigger numbers using Simian's **Event Builder**. To start a local break from the network, a STARTNEXT macro is used which will start an event in Simian's Program Log. The Example in Figure 3 shows the STARTNEXT macro configured to run when trigger number 2 is fired.

Once you have completed your Trigger Set, save the set by going to the File menu and choosing **Save As**. Once the Trigger Set is saved, enable the Trigger Set for use by selecting it from the **Startup Triggers** and **Current Triggers** dropdown boxes.
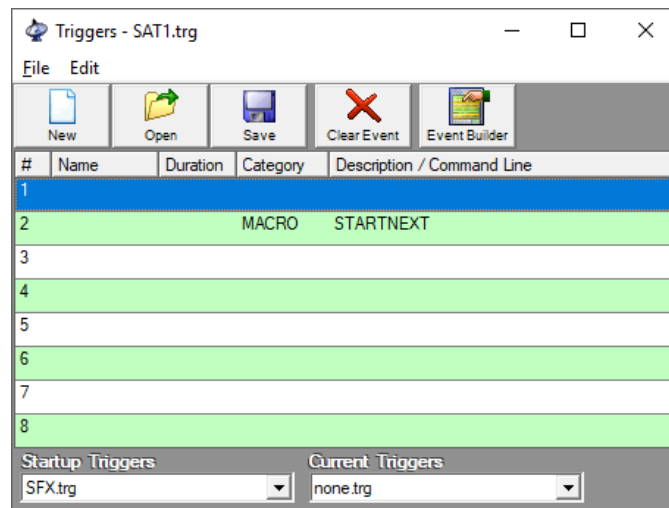When you are ready to use your Network Triggers you will need to ensure that Triggers are turned ON in Simian.

\igure 3: A Trigger Set with a STARTNEXT macro added to trigger 2

Building the Log:

Once your Triggers are setup you will simply need to set up your Program Log to take the satellite audio feed live, anticipate the breaks as specified by your network programming "clock", and return to local audio at the end of the satellite audio feed. Logs can be scheduled in your **Traffic Scheduler**, or manually in Simian. Either way, the concept is the same.

To take the satellite audio feed live at the right time, Simian will need to ensure your **audio switcher** is set to the correct input (if you are employing a switcher), load the trigger set for the satellite show, and bring up the mixer that is controlling the **satellite audio feed**. To perform these tasks, the example program log shown in Figure 5 uses a cart. This cart, titled "SAT_ON" contains the macro commands that perform the above tasks, as shown in Figure 4. By putting these commands in a cart, and scheduling the cart in the program log (rather than the macro commands themselves), it is easier to modify the commands, should the need arise, without having to modify the structure of your program log later down the road.
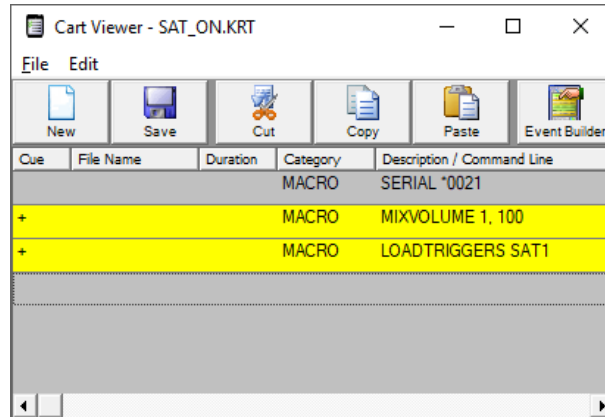

Figure 4: SAT_ON cart used to take satellite audio feed live

The example shown in Figure 5 shows the SAT_ON cart will auto-start after the station ID, which is played as a **Time Immediate (@)** event, ensuring that the satellite feed starts on time at the top of the hour.

Now that the commands are in place in the program log to take the satellite feed live to air, each break needs to be accounted for. As shown in Figure 5, each break is accounted for in what is referred to as a **stop set**, which contains all of the events to handle the muting and unmuting of the satellite audio feed and play your advertisements.

The first item in each stop set will need to be an event with a **Manual Start ( )** cue. Simian will stop and wait at a Manual Start event, and the STARTNEXT macro in our trigger set will start playback of that Manual Start item when the network triggers it. This means that even if you don't have any spots for a particular break, you still need this in your program log to catch the STARTNEXT command, so that your program log will stay in sync with your network programming (see line 152 in Figure 5 for an example of a break with no spots scheduled).

Note that since the AutoMute option for the Simian Mixer configured earlier in this document was enabled, Simian will automatically mute the satellite feed as the audio files in the stop set are played. As soon as all the audio files within the stop set have played, the mixer will automatically turn the satellite audio feed back up while Simian waits for the next break (or the end of the show). There is no need to add macro commands to the beginning and end of each stop set to manipulate the satellite feed volume while a stop set is played, since the AutoMute function takes care of it for you.

In each **Stop Set**, the first item to insert is a **Manual Start ( )** event followed by each spot for the intended break, each having an Auto-Start cue. In the stop sets in Figure 5, the first event in each stop set are **Comment** events, which means they won't actually play any audio, but they will catch the trigger for the break. They could have just as easily been an audio file or a cart. The main feature is that they are Manual Start events.

After the stop set's first **Manual Start ( )** event, you can insert the needed spots, jingles, liners, or any event you desire. These should have a **total length equal to your Network break time**. Each event after the first line in the Stop Set needs to have an **AutoStart (+)** cue so playback will progress through all items consecutively in the break.

#	Status	Cue	Scheduled	Actual	File Name	Duration	Category	Description
145		+	07:58:57		561-09	00:53	AUDIO	Otis Redding - (Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay
146		@	07:59:50		STATION_ID	00:10	AUDIO	Randomized Station IDs
147		+	08:00:00		SAT_ON	00:01	NEWS	SATELLITE FEED ON
148			08:12:00				COMMENT	12:00 BREAK
149		+	08:12:00		SPOT3	01:00	AUDIO	SPOT 3
150		+	08:13:00		SPOT2	01:00	AUDIO	SPOT 2
151		+	08:14:00		SPOT3	01:00	AUDIO	SPOT 3
152			08:20:00				COMMENT	20:00 OPTIONAL BREAK
153			08:30:00				COMMENT	30:00 BREAK
154		+	08:30:00		SPOT4	01:00	AUDIO	SPOT 4
155		+	08:31:00		SPOT5	01:00	AUDIO	SPOT 5
156		+	08:32:00		SPOT6	01:00	AUDIO	SPOT 6
157			08:46:00				COMMENT	46:00 BREAK
158		+	08:46:00		SPOT7	01:00	AUDIO	SPOT 7
159		+	08:47:00		SPOT8	01:00	AUDIO	SPOT 8
160		+	08:48:00		SPOT9	01:00	AUDIO	SPOT 9
161			08:56:50				COMMENT	56:50 BREAK
162		+	08:56:50		SAT_OFF	00:01	SAT	SATELLITE FEED OFF
163		+	08:56:50		SPOT3	01:00	AUDIO	SPOT 3
164		+	08:57:50		SPOT5	01:00	AUDIO	SPOT 5
165		+	08:58:50		SPOT7	01:00	AUDIO	SPOT 7
166		#	08:59:50		STATION_ID	00:10	AUDIO	Randomized Station IDs
167		+	09:07:28		009S-08	03:37	AUDIO	Euge Groove - XXL
168		+	09:11:06		009S-09	03:45	AUDIO	Martin, Phillip - Look To The Sky

Figure 5: This program log contains several Stop Sets

TIP: To ensure your log uses the proper Stop Set at the proper time, a Comment with a **Time Immediate (@)** cue can be inserted several minutes before each network break is expected so that Simian will move the Program Log's focus to the proper Stop Set throughout your network programming.

At the end of the satellite show, the satellite audio needs to be muted and the triggers need to be disabled. The example shown in Figure 5 uses a cart to accomplish these functions, as shown in Figure 6. This cart is executed as part of the final Stop Set of the satellite program in the example shown in Figure 5.
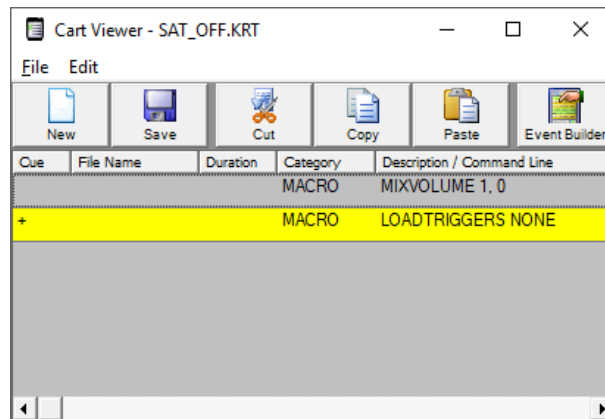

Figure 6: SAT_OFF cart used to mute the satellite audio feed

If your satellite show does not have a final triggered Stop Set, you can add this cart as a **Time Immediate (@)** event so that the final command executes as a "hard-timed" event at the end of the satellite show.

The example shown in Figure 5 is a single-hour satellite program, but if you have a program that is multiple hours long, simply repeat the Stop Set process for every hour. Just be sure to add Stop Sets for all of the breaks in the entirety of the network feed.

Now that you have taken your network audio feed live, accounted for each break in the feed, and closed the network feed at the end of the network feed, you are free to continue your log with local audio using **Auto Start (+)** cued events, or repeat the above process to go to another satellite program.

Help Topics:

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