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## Pro Tools can be \"un\"pro :(

Posted by smibbity - 2008/08/02 05:19

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So a friend just went with an HD3 system to be compatible with all the studios in town. Used to make all his music in Digital Performer. Thought it would be a step up since it's "Pro" Tools.

We've run into workflow and technical issues that have us scratching our heads. These issues throw the whole "Pro" thing into the realm of being a cruel joke. If anyone has workarounds or answers for these issues, we're dying to hear them.

First, some editing issues. These functions are very important for creative editors who do a lot of shaping after tracks are cut.

1. Pro Tools won't allow you to drag(trim) multiple region edges or fades on the same track at the same time. You can "select" them using the Object Grabber, but you can do nothing except move them somewhere. You can have fades generated automatically on all the regions, but you are not allowed to specify different start and end fade times. Pro Tools is the ONLY DAW THAT CAN'T DO THIS. HUH?!?!?!?
2. Region layering is somewhat mysterious. Sometimes there are layers, sometimes there aren't. And you can't see what you uncovering as you drag an edge.
2. Pro Tools only displays one automation parameter at a time. You have to go to a menu to select a different type. You also have to insert a plug-in parameter before automating it.
3. In DP you can see the grid "thru" the audio. Not in Pro Tools. There is also no time "wiper" for easy lining up of things on multiple tracks.
4. You have to dig into a menu to turn auto scrolling on and off. ?????
5. The lack of undos for so many basic functions in Pro Tools is staggering. And scary.
6. No user assignable key commands?

Okay, that's a small list of editing stuff. We also have some technical issues.

1. In Pro Tools LE, there is no latency for Virtual Instruments no matter what your HW buffer is set to. In HD you have to turn the buffers way way down to get rid of it. Um....
2. Why is Pro Tools so slow at reflecting changes in an audio track during playback? If you have a loop playing and make an edit or mute something, it takes FOREVER for Pro Tools to reflect that change. Usually you have to let the loop play 2 to 3 times for the change to happen (5-10 seconds).
3. Why is there no faster than realtime bouncing?!?!?!?!?

Now I will say this....we LOVE the sound coming out of HD. Such a big step over other systems. We LOVE how fast you can move between sessions. We LOVE "Import Session Data". But we hate the 199x style interface issues. Does Digidesign give much of a crap what its users think could be better about the interface? It is seriously about 10 years behind every other DAW out there.

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## Re:Pro Tools can be \"un\"pro :(

Posted by Brent\_Sydney - 2008/08/09 08:31

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Hey Smibbity - sorry to hear about your negative experience.

Have you had any Pro Tools training? Such as the Digi courses, 101, 110 or 201? They are only a few days and can really help getting up to speed on a system you don't normally use.

Regarding your issues:

1. I'm not sure why you would want to do this? It's not a frequent feature request over here. Can you explain a bit more or post a video of what you are trying to achieve?
2. Region layers are a bit odd at times - they are however well explained in the reference guide - simply search for "layer"

in the pdf (help menu link) and you should find plenty of info

2b. Very handy shortcut for this, particularly with plug in automation, hold Ctrl+Cmd+click on the parameter you wish to see and your track view jumps straight there, no need to use the lengthy menu

3. I haven't used DP, but you're describing features that are definately on the list "To do" when resources and time permits. Being able to see both the waveform of the region under and the one you are moving will be very nice when we get there. Until then, "Sync points" and your grabber modifier keys are the fastest way to position things quickly

4. Yup - known issue and a feature request I've heard a few times. "N" key when in keyboard focus mode changes playback position from where you left your cursor to where you stopped playback, helpful tip that's partially related. Also the arrow keys move your window view to the start or end of your selection, also handy

5. Can't say Ive ever been frightened by it myself - different workstations have different architectures that in turn beget different strengths and weakness. I think the strengths of PT outnumber the weaknesses given how many people get their jobs done on time (and well eg academy award style) using our platform.

6. Is a debatable topic definately! I was the Pyramix product specialist over here for awhile and they have very customisable keyboard layouts, but to be honest I never got into them. The company line from Digi on not turning on anything like that is that one of our key strengths is that every PT system drives the same and it creates a type of community for folks to share shortcuts - just like this one.

Next section - no latency in LE? Sorry? I'm not sure what you are specifically referring to here, but Ive definately had LE systems with massive delays from note engage to note playback without tweaking the playback engine settings, just like on HD or any other native system

2. Priority is given to playback, not editing, during playback. Its a safety/architectural thing to my understanding. I can say that Ive rarely ever seen a PT session randomly dropping fades or edits like other platforms.

Also - the current playback is going through a buffer, so that buffer has to clear and refresh before you hear changes. If you have a smaller playback buffer it will clear faster - I havent struck the sort of delays you are describing though. Id suggest contacting tech support about that one.

[www.digidesign.com/tsr](http://www.digidesign.com/tsr)

3. Ah yes, that old chestnut. Basically TDM is based on a DSP hard driven mix engine and timing/clocking. If you want to bounce, all the math has to be put through those chips in real time to keep the clocking consistent. There's an argument that why couldnt you bounce in even number multiples, but I don't have an answer to that. Either way, its definately a want, but would involve an awful lot of change within the system, which I don't think is likely to happen soon.

Anyways, I hope some of that info is at least partially of use in understanding why you hit what you did. If you're keen to learn more about how to get the most from HD, you may be interested in some of my blog posts: [www.brentheber.com](http://www.brentheber.com)

Later,  
BH

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## Re:Pro Tools can be

Posted by noiseboy55 - 2008/08/12 06:07

Just to add to some of what Brent said:

first section.....

1. Try holding down the shift key when dragging the end of the region (insuring you are using the ] tool).
2. You can also cycle through the automation paremeters globally by holding down ctrl-apple-alt and using the left-right arrows to switch between the different automation modes.
3. Try using 'spot' mode.
6. Try using keyboard focus mode (select the abc at the top of the edit window). Handy keys in this mode are 'b' to cut region, 'c' to copy region, 'v' to paste region, 'x' to cut region. A full list of all keyboard shortcuts are available here:

[http://akmedia.digidesign.com/support/docs/Pro\\_Tools\\_74\\_Mac\\_Shortcuts\\_41782.pdf](http://akmedia.digidesign.com/support/docs/Pro_Tools_74_Mac_Shortcuts_41782.pdf)

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[http://akmedia.digidesign.com/support/docs/Pro\\_Tools\\_74\\_Windows\\_Shortcuts\\_41783.pdf](http://akmedia.digidesign.com/support/docs/Pro_Tools_74_Windows_Shortcuts_41783.pdf)

I recommend everytime you want to do something, look it up in the menu then remember the keyboard shortcut for it (it lists it next to the menu command). Thats how I learnt them, didn't take long.

Second section.....

1. i did a thread on plug-in delay compensation a while back, read it here:

[http://www.protoolsusers.org/option,com\\_fireboard/Itemid,71/func,view/id,5439/catid,2/](http://www.protoolsusers.org/option,com_fireboard/Itemid,71/func,view/id,5439/catid,2/)

3. Whenever I bounce, i bus my audio to a fresh audio track and record it there - that way when I bounce down, if i notice anything wrong i can just punch in a change. If you want to hear the audio before you start recording, just select auto input monitoring (the i key button the track). When your bounced, consolidate any changes to a single file by highlighting your audio and hitting alt-shift and 3 on the number pad. Then highlight again and hit apple-shift k to export your regions to the format you want. Not quicker than real time, but a hell of a lot faster if you've got to make a change halfway through your playout.

good luck with it! :woohoo:

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Re:Pro Tools can be \"un\"pro :(

Posted by bennychico11 - 2008/08/12 11:07

3. Ah yes, that old chestnut. Basically TDM is based on a DSP hard driven mix engine and timing/clocking. If you want to bounce, all the math has to be put through those chips in real time to keep the clocking consistent. There's an argument that why couldnt you bounce in even number multiples, but I don't have an answer to that. Either way, its definately a want, but would involve an awful lot of change within the system, which I don't think is likely to happen soon.

at least it's good to hear an explanation of this. Most Digi people don't seem to watnt to explain why it is they haven't tried to change this old problem. So basically Digi has written themselves into a corner years ago that is too hard for them to get out of?

I can understand it being hard but can't imagine why no one is working on it. I know we've had a recent discussion on this and some people here see it differently than me, but it really is the biggest thing separating Pro Tools from a lot of other competitors out there. Especially in the post world where a lot of us LOVE using Pro Tools except when it comes down to bouncing. I'm the last one to preach software coding ideas since I don't have an answer...but I find it hard to believe that in between the creation of LE and all the other features, plugins, etc. out there that no one has tried to tackle this problem. It's kind of like realizing the plumbing and foundation of your house is totally messed up and then just buying more TVs, furniture, etc. to fill the house up instead of using the money to fix more important things. Then wondering why people are more interested in buying your neighbors house.

Okay, my \$.02 ;)

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