Subject: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by kerryg on Sat, 13 Feb 2010 19:38:37 GMT
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Hi all. This one's another skinning advance.

We've had some great breakthroughs in skinning lately. We've had a resolution of an old problem in altering some of PARIS's most ancient BMPs - a problem that induced crashes in the Paris app (workaround: if you're going to mess with MIXER.bmp, use Resource Tuner rather than the long-recommended XN Resource Editor - XN seems to mangle 8-bit BMPs). Jim Drago's also created a new method of skinning that's cut the time he needs to generate a new skin to 1/10th of the previous, and as you've seen he's produced some gorgeous new skins that you can now download from the Wiki.

One issue remained: the app has always had large chunks of the user interface that *aren't* bitmaps, and as such couldn't be edited using the traditional methods. This includes most of the editor window - meaning the lanes and audio objects and waveforms and text labels for them. They'd always remain at the default, no matter what you did to the bitmaps.

We stumbled on the solution for this by accident while trying to solve other graphics issues. For all I know the term might actually be "re-stumbled" - the solution is actually ridiculously simple so someone's probably noticed this before.

In your PARIS root folder there's a file called Paris.dat. You may remember this file from the days of the "Paris PC Downgrade" - it contains the text strings that PARIS displays as dialogues, which were edited in the "PARIS PC Downgrade" to give humourous alternatives. That's the first section of Paris.dat.

The second section of Paris.dat appears to control the locations and sizes of various "rectangles" which represent elements of PARIS' user interface - for example, where (and what size) to display the bitmaps for the SUSHI bar at the top of the Editor Window (we'll start investigating this part later).

[Be aware that although I've not noticed any stability issues at all (it seems PARIS doesn't really care what colors it draws), this next part is, as always, "use at your own risk". Back up your Paris.dat before editing it just in case you accidentally erase or overwrite something!]

The third and final section of Paris.dat is the jackpot for skinning - it's a description of the colours used in pretty much everything in PARIS which isn't a bitmap. This would include the colours of:

- all fonts, menus, scrollbars and rulers
- lanes, audio segments, waveforms and text in the Editor Window
- the top half of the Project Window
- plus many other interface elements.

Paris.dat can be opened in WordPad, edited as a text file and re-saved (make sure the file extension is changed back to .dat). The colours are stored as RGB values (ie 255,255,255). I'll be creating an index over time to show which entry does what (some are already commented in the

original .dat and I've discovered what a lot more of them do as well).

I've already started a RADAR-style graphic look for the Editor window with grey lanes, blue segments and black waveforms. It's pretty easy on the eyes, and it'll be familiar to those who have used RADAR before. I'll post a screenshot when it's more mature, and a modified Paris.dat you can drop in your PARIS folder (after backing up your own, of course!) as well as the raw text of the modifications that you can paste in your own Paris.dat (if you've already altered your own and don't want to lose your modifications).

The net result of all these advances means we finally have the overwhelming majority of the PARIS app available to us for skinning and re-colorizing, which is eventually going to result in some pretty cool new looks for the old girl. They're easily exchanged, too, either via copies of the Paris.dat or pasted text.

Have fun

Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by Jim Drago[2] on Sun, 14 Feb 2010 09:32:44 GMT
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Just a public KOODOS Kerry, excellent find. Thanks for all the work you do and the help you give...Jim

---

Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by kerryg on Sun, 14 Feb 2010 09:56:47 GMT
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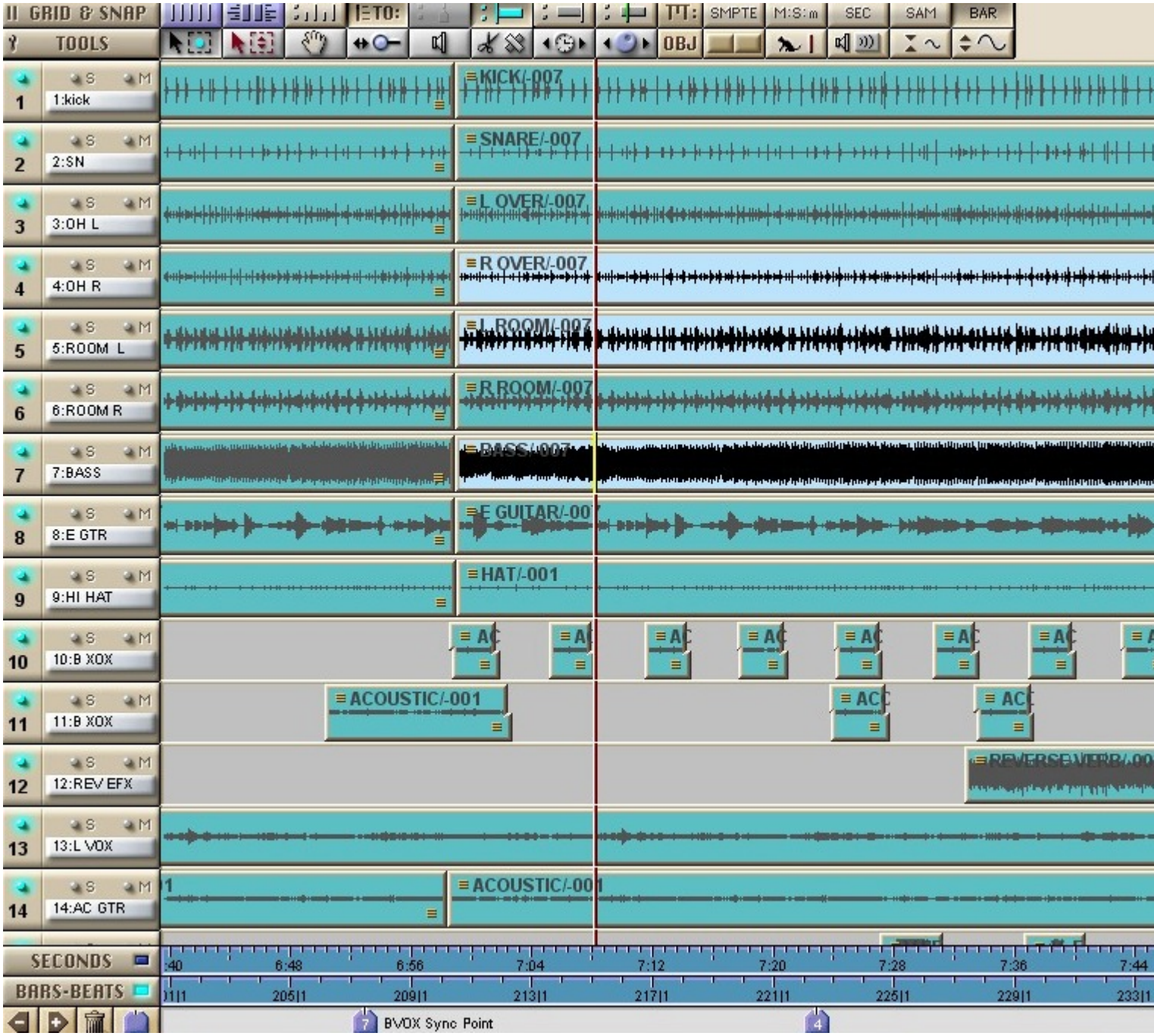
Thanks, Jim - we never would have gone looking for it if it weren't for your ongoing interest in skinning. Here's what Crop Circles looks like in my current editor scheme - this is early days yet folks, so forgive the unfinished state, but I'm sure in the hands of folks with a better graphic "eye" we'll see some pretty cool results.

File Attachments

1) Editor Recoloured.jpg, downloaded 849 times



Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by dnafe on Sun, 14 Feb 2010 13:25:25 GMT
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Excuse my ignorance but what are crop circles?

Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat

Posted by Ted Gerber on Sun, 14 Feb 2010 16:25:07 GMT
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crop circles is the sample tune, with tracks, supplied with Paris 3.0, mxed by Brian T

T

Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by Ted Gerber on Sun, 14 Feb 2010 16:36:16 GMT
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Hey Kerry -

This is quite cool. I know nothing about programming, or even how to ask the question, but since Paris currently has the facility to show the tracks in the Editor window in all different colours (each track its own colour) by pushing the colour option button, would it be possible to edit the .dat file so that you can assign which colours attach to which tracks? In Logic etc I group the tracks by colour, all the drums blue, the guitars red, vocals gold and so on. Makes it easier to work with for me...

Ted

Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by kerryg on Sun, 14 Feb 2010 18:28:18 GMT
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We can't get at the innards of the program to make colours "stick" to segments. We can work within the following constraints: audio segments have two generic colours (selected and unselected, ie tan and red, which we can edit), waveforms have two generic default colours (selected and unselected, also editable) and sixteen "coloured" values (editable) determined by their track number (or alternately their instrument assignment in Free Form).

They can still be made to be more useful than they currently are. For example, they don't have to be sixteen discrete waveform colours, there might be better options. We might be stuck with colours-per-track instead of colour-per-segment, but we can certainly make that work better for us. Instead of this hodgepodge...

Track 1 Colour A
Track 2 Colour B
Track 3 Colour C
Track 4 Colour D
Track 5 Colour E

Track 6 Colour F
Track 7 Colour G
etc.

...the colours could be re-assigned to help pick out stereo pairs like this...

Track 1 Colour A
Track 2 Colour B
Track 3 Colour A
Track 4 Colour B
Track 5 Colour A
Track 6 Colour B

.. and then the "coloured waveform" button serves as a toggle between the default colours or a scheme which helps visually distinguish the L/R sides of each pair.

Another take on "stereo pairs":

Track 1 Colour A
Track 2 Colour A
Track 3 Colour B
Track 4 Colour B
Track 5 Colour C
Track 6 Colour C
Track 7 Colour D

Another way to approach it would be to choose two colors, one for Track 1 and one for Track 16, generate a "colour gradient" between them with 16 increments and assign them to tracks. This could be particularly striking with bright colours and black audio objects - for example if Jim tackles the Editor Window bitmaps on his Flame skin I'd create a matching DAT with "yellow" as Track 1 and "orange-red" as Track 16 and do a gradient between them.

Even the "3D" look of the audio segments in the Editor Window isn't hand-drawn at all - it's actually a clever optical illusion done with different colored lines. Every audio segment in the Editor Window is actually "written" on the screen like this:

Upper Bevel Bottom
Upper Bevel Mid
Upper Bevel High
SEGMENT COLOUR
SEGMENT COLOUR
a picture of the overview (waveform)

taken from the .ovw file is then
drawn here in the chosen waveform colour
SEGMENT COLOUR
SEGMENT COLOUR
Lower Bevel High
Lower Bevel Mid
Lower Bevel Bottom

To minimize the "3D" look to get a more Ableton-Live-style "flat" interface, you just tell PARIS to draw more of the lines the same colour...

Upper Bevel Bottom
Upper Bevel Mid
Upper Bevel High
SEGMENT COLOUR
SEGMENT COLOUR
a picture of the overview (waveform)
taken from the .ovw file is then
drawn here in the chosen waveform colour
SEGMENT COLOUR
SEGMENT COLOUR
Lower Bevel High
Lower Bevel Mid
Lower Bevel Bottom

Hope you can at least get the idea of the potential there from these crude drawings.

Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by Ted Gerber on Sun, 14 Feb 2010 18:33:43 GMT
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OK Thanks

Ted

Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by kerryg on Sun, 14 Feb 2010 18:45:05 GMT
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dnafe wrote on Sun, 14 February 2010 05:25Excuse my ignorance but what are crop circles?

yep, it's one of the two original demo songs included with different versions of PARIS (the other was "See It My Way"), they're up on the Wiki if you're interested. Makes a good reference point visually, folks can see the before and after.

Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by kerryg on Sun, 14 Feb 2010 19:12:19 GMT
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This sort of thing will make this insight take on far more practical use (note, these are NOT the actual numbers of the elements in Paris.dat, just sample values). I've already made a start on it and the final version would, I hope, look far better than this crude ten-minute concept sketch.

[attachment deleted - see proper index below]

Documentation of the elements is tedious - basically you change a color, save the DAT, boot PARIS, note where the colour change shows up and move on to the next one.

It'd be a fair bit of friggin' work, but the work can be divided into sections and shared. And it would only have to be done once, and then it'd be a permanent part of the infrastructure of "What Is Known About PARIS For Sure".

Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by kerryg on Sun, 14 Feb 2010 21:41:32 GMT
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Ted Gerber wrote on Sun, 14 February 2010 08:36Hey Kerry -

This is quite cool. I know nothing about programming, or even how to ask the question, but since Paris currently has the facility to show the tracks in the Editor window in all different colours (each track its own colour) by pushing the colour option button, would it be possible to edit the .dat file so that you can assign which colours attach to which tracks? In Logic etc I group the tracks by colour, all the drums blue, the guitars red, vocals gold and so on. Makes it easier to work with for me...

Ted

Hmmm. Maybe I misunderstood this question. Now that I read it more closely, the real answer is "it depends" or "yes, but...".

Yes, with limitations. What's your normal submix usage? Concentrated on Submix 1, more spread out? The same colour scheme will apply to all submixes, ie track 1 will be the same colour in all submixes. Since you have seventeen colours to work with (sixteen plus the default) you'd colorize the submix you put most focus on while mixing/editing and leave Track Colors "off" on the others.

To pull this off you'd:

1) make note of what tracks you wanted coloured and quit PARIS
2) open PARIS.DAT, change the colours for the relevant tracks and save it (maybe not quite so tedious as it sounds; leave a shortcut to PARIS.DAT on your desktop; if one has "clip and paste" color schemes ready to go you could do a "copy/paste", and we'll be putting a good index together eventually to speed the process, although finding the track colours is a no-brainer using the existing file comments).
3) reboot PARIS

This sort of thing wouldn't work for my workflow at all - it would be much more practical for those who tend to work systematically, with similar submix and track usage between projects. If you tend to find yourself working fairly predictably - say tracking drums as kik/snrtop/snrbottom etc from channels 1-9 in Submix 1 - then by all means you could edit those channels to be the same colour (or from the same group of colours). The other submixes you'd just turn off "Track Colors". You can always use the process above to quickly open the DAT to change a track colour to reflect that "one more percussion track" that got added.

Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by kerryg on Mon, 15 Feb 2010 05:21:58 GMT
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dnafe wrote on Sun, 14 February 2010 05:25Excuse my ignorance but what are crop circles?

Erm, it suddenly just occurred to me that rather than asking what "Crop Circles" is, you might actually have been asking what "crop circles" are

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Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by dnafe on Mon, 15 Feb 2010 15:23:03 GMT
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I have a good handle on those ones...it was Paris' Crop Circles I was asking about

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Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by kerryg on Mon, 15 Feb 2010 23:54:02 GMT
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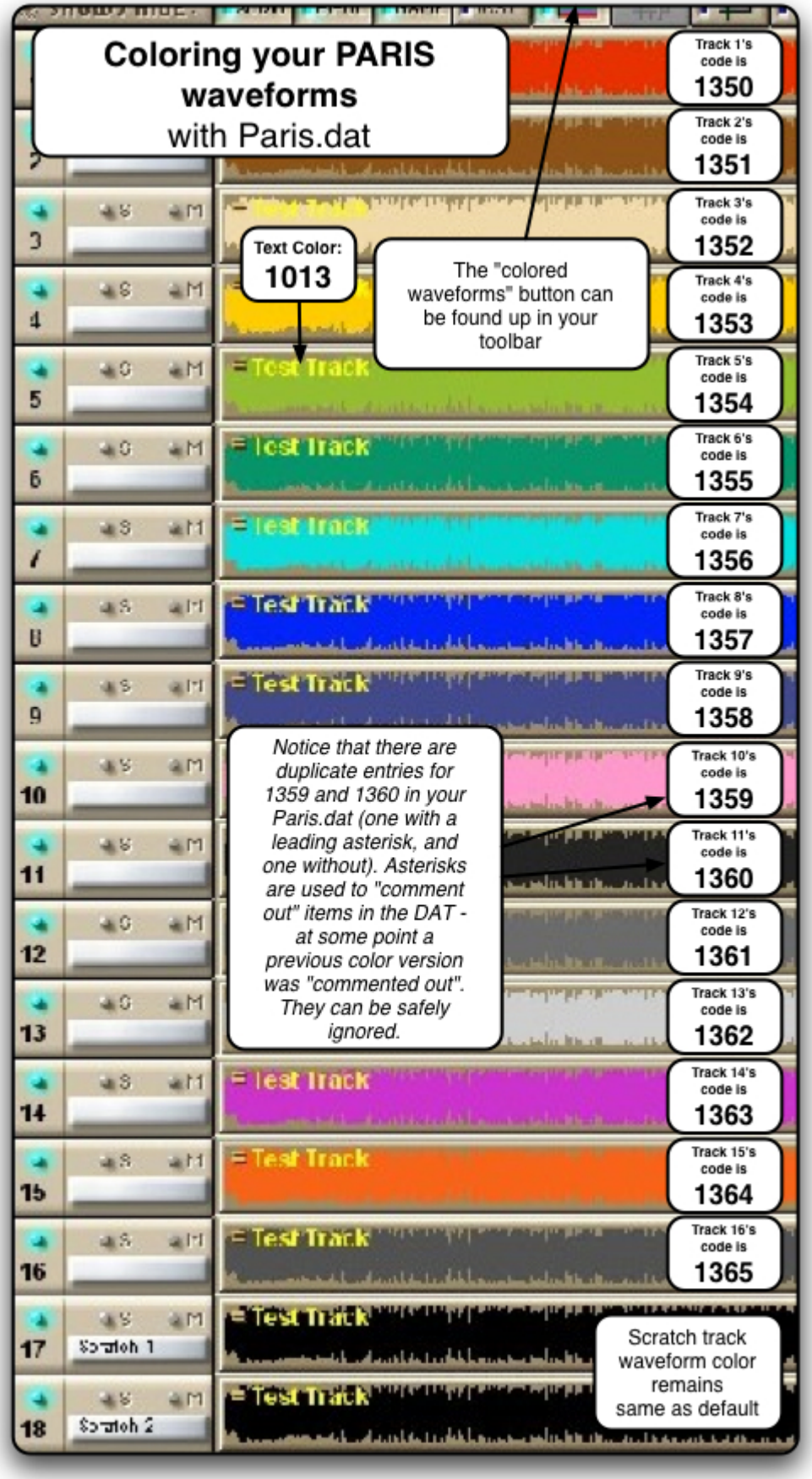
OK, got a start made on a graphical index.

File Attachments

1) INDEX1.jpg, downloaded 682 times


Coloring your PARIS waveforms
with Paris.dat
Text Color:
1013
The "colored waveforms" button can be found up in your toolbar
Track 1's code is 1350
Track 2's code is 1351
Track 3's code is 1352
Track 4's code is 1353
Track 5's code is 1354
Track 6's code is 1355
Track 7's code is 1356
Track 8's code is 1357
Track 9's code is 1358
Track 10's code is 1359
Track 11's code is 1360
Track 12's code is 1361
Track 13's code is 1362
Track 14's code is 1363
Track 15's code is 1364
Track 16's code is 1365
Notice that there are duplicate entries for 1359 and 1360 in your Paris.dat (one with a leading asterisk, and one without). Asterisks are used to "comment out" items in the DAT - at some point a previous color version was "commented out". They can be safely ignored.
Scratch track waveform color remains same as default

Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by kerryg on Tue, 16 Feb 2010 01:28:01 GMT
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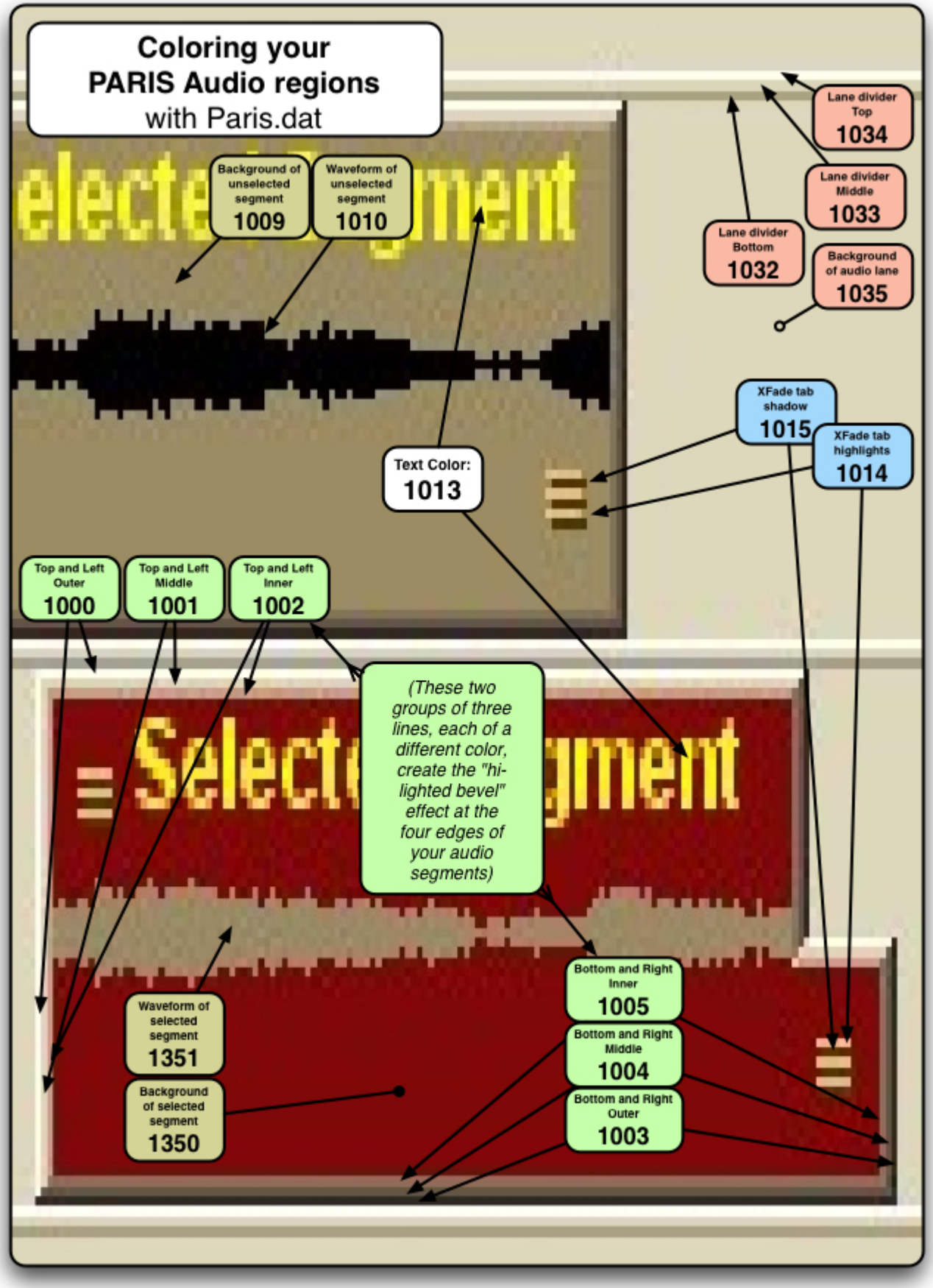
Another part...

File Attachments

1) INDEX2.jpg, downloaded 667 times


Coloring your
PARIS Audio regions
with Paris.dat
Background of unselected segment
1009
Waveform of unselected segment
1010
Lane divider Top
1034
Lane divider Middle
1033
Lane divider Bottom
1032
Background of audio lane
1035
XFade tab shadow
1015
XFade tab highlights
1014
Text Color:
1013
Top and Left Outer
1000
Top and Left Middle
1001
Top and Left Inner
1002
(These two groups of three lines, each of a different color, create the "hi-lighted bevel" effect at the four edges of your audio segments)
Waveform of selected segment
1351
Background of selected segment
1350
Bottom and Right Inner
1005
Bottom and Right Middle
1004
Bottom and Right Outer
1003

Subject: Re: Changing your PARIS colour scheme using Paris.dat
Posted by Mike Bloomer on Wed, 10 Mar 2010 21:56:46 GMT
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There is a decent Color chart here: http://cloford.com/resources/colours/500col.htm
There is also a program called CPick which is very useful...
MB