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Subject: Tascam US2400 review

Posted by [Chris Wargo](#) on Thu, 12 Jan 2006 17:15:49 GMT

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My US2400 arrived two days ago and yesterday I got Cubase SL3 installed. Here is what I think about the unit, and how it works with Cubase:

For my needs, this thing kicks major ass. The build quality is solid, with all the buttons, faders, and knobs feeling like pro level stuff. Construction is at least as good as the Mackie, if not better. The lack of a weighted flywheel for jog/shuttle isn't a problem. While not as nice as the Mackie, the wheel has a decent feel and is still usable. I'll talk about the most obvious difference between this unit and a Mackie first, the missing LED scribble strips. This is probably what will be a deal breaker for some.

For me, it's OK since I am usually under 24 channels anyway, often with tracks consolidated into groups. For folks who often run more than 24 channels, you might want to bite the bullet and go for the Mackie with extender(s).

There are two reasons that I wouldn't want to use this unit for large channel count projects. The first is that the virtual scribble strips are worthless.

The strip is sized to fit on a single monitor, and the resulting font required to fit all 24 channels is super small. I'm only 36 years old, but my young eyes can't read it at an arms length. It also has no grid structure or numbers.

This is basically what you see on screen:

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kick snare OH L OH R bass DI bass mic gtr disto gtr crunch keys 1 alt  
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OK, can anyone tell me what's on channel 12, in less than 5 seconds? The second issue is the way the bank button works in Cubase SL/SX3. If you have say 28 channel strips, banking up doesn't change the physical faders to channels 25 and up. It instead makes faders 1-24 now equal software channels 5 through 28. The original 24 channels are now in different locations, which is quite confusing without a usable scribble strip. The workaround I see for this is to always work with multiples of 24 channels in the software. This way, when you bank up, you are changing all the physical faders to a totally new assignment. So here is what I plan to do to make it work for me: I will make a default project, with 24 audio channels and 24 midi channels. Bank 1 will always be my audio tracks. Bank 2 will always be my midi/VSTi channels. I now only need two rows of masking tape under my faders to label the project. Toggling between banks simply "toggles" between my top label and my bottom one. I will manage the project so that these numbers won't change. For example, If I add a VSTi, I get a new VSTi audio channel. I just need to delete one of the unused midi channels to keep my numbers in multiples of 24. This will keep the software channels from ever sliding left or right on the faders.

Again, I am speaking for Cubase implementation only, functions differ from app to app. As far as working with Cubase, if it had not been for the latest

firmware update, this unit would be going back to the store right now. Disregard any older comments found on the web about this unit's compatibility with Steinberg. The initial release of the unit didn't even include Steinberg support. It wasn't until the latest firmware that the channel strip/EQ control function was implemented, which is an important feature to me. I like to have quick access to EQ with tactile control, even if it is only the native

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My unit didn't ship with the latest firmware, so I had to update it. This was a pretty easy process. Now pretty much everything works as expected. Documentation for the implementation is pretty lame though. Instead of releasing an updated manual, there are three errata versions to the original manual. Some of them have mistakes in them, which are corrected in the latest document. Tascam doesn't really make it easy to get a hold of all the errata documents either. The most important one though, is the release notes readme file for the version 1.31 firmware update which can be downloaded from the US2400 page.

Other than the scribble strip issue, for which I have a workaround that satisfies me, I only have one other real complaint. The solo function is pretty slow. Pressing solo on the Mackie controller results in the tracks being instantly soloed, but on the US2400 there is about a 1 second lag where you hear the

solo button as mutes for all the non-soloed tracks, where as it sends out

The end-game for me is that I am keeping the US2400, selling my Mackie, buying some drafting tape, and getting ready to rock. If anyone is interested in my Mackie controller, I will sell it for less than the latest going rate. Contact me at christopherwargo \*at> hot<8>mail

-Chris

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Subject: Re: Tascam US2400 review

Posted by [Pete Ruthenburg](#) on Thu, 12 Jan 2006 17:57:58 GMT

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If that's the case then your workaround makes sense and is pretty painless. Just do projects in multiples of 24 whether or not there is anything on all the software channels.

Thanks again,  
Pete

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>-Chris

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Subject: Re: Tascam US2400 review

Posted by [Chris Wargo](#) on Thu, 12 Jan 2006 18:38:50 GMT

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Exactly Pete. It seems to align the last software channel with the last physical  
fader. IIRC, the Mackie does this too, but it isn't a big deal with the  
LED scribble strips.

One more thing, I amde a mistake. The Mackie DOESN'T have a weighted jog  
wheel. I guess I was thinking of my old C16 ;-)

-Chris

"Pete Ruthenburg" <ruthenburg@sbcglobal.net> wrote:

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Posted by [Mark McCurdy](#) on Thu, 12 Jan 2006 22:01:49 GMT

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Subject: Re: Tascam US2400 review

Posted by [Chris Wargo](#) on Fri, 13 Jan 2006 01:22:13 GMT

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From what I remember, the virtual scribble strip for the 1884 had a decent size font and cell dividers. I didn't care for that either when I owned it, but it was far better than the one that comes with the US2400. Imagine trying to squeeze 24 channels of info into a single monitor's width. The font size is around 10pts, with no distinction between cells. I haven't experienced any lags, other than the solo issue that I mentioned. I don't think this is much of an issue with low bandwidth midi commands though. My Mackie was running through a USB Mdisport 8x8 anyway. They didn't even bother to make the US2400 USB2. It's USB1.1, which seems to be fine.

BTW, I see that the FW1884 is a totally different unit than when I bought it (which was pretty soon after it was released). It now has working drivers, fader expanders, and better Steinberg support. It even ships with Cubase LE now. Very cool. Looks like Tascam initially didn't plan on even supporting Steinberg, but wound up in bed with them.

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"Mark McCurdy" <[mark@mccurdy.net](mailto:mark@mccurdy.net)> wrote:

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>> I now only need two rows of masking tape under my faders to label the  
  
>> project.  
>> Toggling between banks simply "toggles" between my top label and my bottom  
>> one. I will manage the project so that these numbers won't change. For  
>> example, If I add a VSTi, I get a new VSTi audio channel. I just need  
to  
>> delete one of the unused midi channels to keep my numbers in multiples  
of  
>> 24. This will keep the software channels from ever sliding left or right  
>> on the faders.  
>>  
>> Again, I am speaking for Cubase implementation only, functions differ  
from  
>> app to app. As far as working with Cubase, if it had not been for the  
  
>> latest  
>> firmware update, this unit would be going back to the store right now.  
  
>> Disregard  
>> any older comments found on the web about this unit's compatibility with  
>> Steinberg. The initial release of the unit didn't even include Steinberg  
>> support. It wasn't until the latest firmware that the channel strip/EQ  
  
>> control  
>> function was implemented, which is an important feature to me. I like  
to  
>> have quick access to EQ with tactile control, even if it is only the  
>> native  
>> Steinberg channel EQ. For me, I can do a better job EQ'ing with knobs  
on  
>> a crappy EQ than a mouse on a good EQ. Having instant access to all of  
  
>> the  
>> parameters is essential to me. I'll draw the analogy to playing a  
>> drumbeat  
>> versus programming one. The one I play is always going to be better.

I

>> like to "play" an EQ. For this reason, my Steinberg EQ gets used more  
>> often  
>> than my UAD ones. The EQ is implemented very well on the US2400. Gain,  
>> freq, and bandwidth are grouped together for each of the four EQ sections  
>> and are labeled on the US2400. The LED's for gain and freq work like  
a  
>> virtual  
>> pointer, but for bandwidth, the LED's "fan out" to show wide or narrow  
  
>> bandwidths.  
>> Four separate knobs control EQ on/off. Any clockwise movement of the  
knob  
>> turns the EQ on. Any counterclockwise movement turns it off. All LED's  
>> are lit for on, none for off.  
>>  
>> My unit didn't ship with the latest firmware, so I had to update it.  
This  
>> was a pretty easy process. Now pretty much everything works as expected.  
>> Documentation for the implementation is pretty lame though. Instead of  
>> releasing an updated manual, there are three errata versions to the  
>> original  
>> manual. Some of them have mistakes in them, which are corrected in the  
  
>> latest  
>> document. Tascam doesn't really make it easy to get a hold of all the  
  
>> errata  
>> documents either. The most important one though, is the release notes  
  
>> readme  
>> file for the version 1.31 firmware update which can be downloaded from  
the  
>> US2400 page.  
>>  
>> Other than the scribble strip issue, for which I have a workaround that  
  
>> satisfies  
>> me, I only have one other real complaint. The solo function is pretty  
  
>> slow.  
>> Pressing solo on the Mackie controller results in the tracks being  
>> instantly  
>> soloed, but on the US2400 there is about a 1 second lag where you hear  
the  
>> other channels quickly fade out. If I had to guess, the Mackie sends  
a

>> "solo  
>> channel" command to the software, where the US2400 internally processes

>> the  
>> solo button as mutes for all the non-soloed tracks, where as it sends  
out  
>> a "mute all the other channels" command. This is just speculation though.  
>>  
>> The end-game for me is that I am keeping the US2400, selling my Mackie,

>> buying  
>> some drafting tape, and getting ready to rock. If anyone is interested  
in  
>> my Mackie controller, I will sell it for less than the latest going rate.  
>> Contact me at christopherwargo \*at> hot<8>mail  
>>  
>> -Chris  
>>  
>>  
>  
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