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:

kick snare OH L OH R bass DI bass mic gtr disto gtr crunch keys 1 alt
keys lead vox bak vox vox comp harmony solo... etc.

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

a crappy EQ than a mouse on a good EQ. Having instant access to all of the

versus programming one. The one I play is always going to be better. I

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

 Four separate knobs control EQ on/off. Any clockwise movement of the knob

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

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