

Syntrillium Software *Cool Edit Pro 2.0*

I don't know why the world works this way, but it seems that everyone jumps on the bandwagon like sheeple. What I'm getting at is that most people will choose one item over another based on popularity or marketing rather than looking at the options and choosing the best one for them. *Cool Edit* is a program that is widely used, yet is rarely written about or mentioned in the pro audio world. I don't know why, because even as a shareware two-track editor, it kicked ass over everything else out there. I've always had *Cool Edit* on my computer to do certain audio tasks, but have never used it as my regular, day-to-day editor. I've always turned to TripleDAT for day-to-day stuff until now. If you have never heard of *Cool Edit* before, then you owe it to yourself to check out a demo of this new version. If you have checked it out before and you thought it didn't meet your needs or felt it had too many quirky things, then you should check out this new version because you will be pleasantly surprised. If you have been a user of *Cool Edit* in the past, then you need to check out this version to be blown away. The improvements in this version warrant a new product name. It's not just an upgrade that adds a few new pointless features. This is an overhaul. Every single thing that I didn't like about previous versions has been addressed. The program is now a lean, mean, fighting machine. If you buy a top notch, speed-demon computer and a couple of great audio cards, you might be out \$5000—but this system will rival the RADAR, Mackie or Tascam systems in quality; and it's way more versatile, cost effective and upgradeable.

Here are a few things that Cool Edit has always been good at:

1. It works with whatever hardware you throw at it. If the sound card you are using is seen by your computer, *Cool Edit* will see it.

2. It has an amazing parametric EQ that I wish I could cart around with me to use in any console. The EQ is super powerful, very accurate, and very versatile.

3. A really nice noise reduction algorithm that rivals the NR in every other program out there, except maybe Ray Gun or Cedar.

4. Format Conversion. This new version supports Windows PCM (.wav); mp3PRO® (.mp3); Windows Media Audio 8 (.wma); Cool Edit Loop (.cel); CD Audio (.cda); Windows Video (.avi); Apple AIFF (.aif); Next/Sun (.au); Amiga IFF/8SVX (.iff, .svx); ACM Waveform; Dialogic ADPCM (.vox); Raw PCM Data (.pcm); Sound Blaster Voice (.voc); 8-bit signed raw (.sam); DiamondWare Digitized (.dwd); SampleVision (.smp); IMA/DVI ADPCM (.wav); Microsoft ADPCM (.wav); and Windows IEEE float (.wav).

Here are the major upgrades:

1. It now allows you to work in loop mode like ACID does. There is also a website at loopology.com that is a receptacle for loop sharing, much like acidplanet.com.

2. It will support the importation of .avi files which will allow you to do sound design for picture. If your video card has dual monitor support then you're swinging!

3. Its editing features are the same as most editors. This means that you will be able to quickly move from program to program without having to remember new shortcuts. *Cool Edit* allows you to program and change the shortcuts so they make sense to you. This editing style is a really important improvement for me because I dreaded editing in *Cool Edit* because you used to have to go to two-track mode to restore a particular file to its original length. You already know how to do this in Pro Tools or Nuendo by grabbing the end of the file and pulling it out, which reveals the original file as it was recorded. This new version allows you to do this now, and it makes things so much easier.

4. This new version supports up to 128 stereo tracks (that's 256 tracks, guy!) with 24-bit resolution and up to 192k sampling. Internally, it processes files with 32-bit resolution so it actually will allow higher resolution files if your hardware can support it.

5. This version allows you to not only extract audio from CDs for use in your projects, but it also allows you to burn CDs with an optional CD burning utility. This utility isn't the most versatile program I've seen, but it's no worse than Easy CD Creator or Hotburn or any of the other programs that just assume that you are doing songs and that you would never have a single file that needs multiple IDs.

6. You know how Pro Tools has an insert section that allows you to apply an effect to an entire track? This version does that too. It can do this with its internal effects as well as Direct-X effects.

7. Let's talk about internal effects. *Cool Edit Pro* has 45 of them. Besides the basic things like normalization (you do know that this is DSP, don't you?), DC bias adjustment, phase inversion, MS decoding, volume changes, and fades, there is compression/expansion; ADSR manipulation; stereo image enhancement; delay effects including reverb, echo, flanging and distortion; parametric and graphic EQ; FFT filters; pitch-shifting; noise reduction; and many weird effects like brainwave synchronization, Doppler effects, a Vocoder-type effect, and something called convolution.

8. To help you in multi-track mode (or using *Cool Edit* as a multi-track tape machine) the program can generate a click-track of various musical styles. (Yes, there is even a custom feature so you can create an 8/12 time signature with a tabla).

10. For sync issues, *Cool Edit* can be a master or a slave to SMPTE, supports MIDI, and allows MIDI program control.

Did I mention it sells for \$300! There is simply no better deal out there for the professional quality and interface it offers. So you can go out and get Pro Tools because that's what everyone uses; or you can get off your lazy ass and research the multitude of options available to you and get the one that will actually allow you to do the work you need to do, rather than conforming to some sort of industry standard. What happened to your punk rock aesthetic anyways? Fuck the Cops!

(www.syntrillium.com)

-Scott Colburn <www.scottcolburn.com>

Summit Audio *TLA-50 Tube Compressor*

Like it's bigger brother, the Summit TLA-100 and the venerable LA-2A, the TLA-50 has a less-is-more approach, with only two knobs, gain and gain reduction, on its half-rack space panel. There are however two three position switches for attack and release times, giving you a bit more control than the classic two knob compressor. Unlike the LA-2A, this is not an opto-compressor and Summit wouldn't divulge the topology of the unit, referring to it only as "Summit Audio Compression." Regardless of topology, this unit sounds fantastic. It's got great attack and release presets. You can whack the signal with a fast attack setting to get a cool pumping effect without making things sound muddy, or use as it as a very clean transparent compressor with the attack set to slow with faster release times. This tube compressor is not low-fi; it is very clean, and very warm nor does it add any harsh artifacts common in crappy gear. I have enjoyed this compressor most on vocals and acoustic guitar. The TLA-50 comes in very handy when trying to even out the low end of a boomy acoustic guitar eliminating the need to use a lot of EQ. The TLA-50 is the little brother to the TLA-100 which costs almost \$1500 more. Unlike a lot of cheaper units the TLA-50 is descended from a line of top-end units and very few compromises have been made in the audio circuitry. It's electrically identical to it's big brother the TLA-100 except that the Jensen 990A output op amp has been replaced with a proprietary Summit Audio op amp. We were hard pressed to tell the difference. The metering is also different, but your ears should be the final judge anyway. At \$695 list, recordists on a budget can now own a top-of-the-line compressor without having to find someone strapped for cash on eBay and selling their vintage gear at stupid prices.

(www.summitaudio.com) -Eric Broyhill

Electro-Harmonix *Holy Grail Reverb Pedal*

What do you do when the guitar player you're recording wants reverb on their guitar but doesn't have any on their amp? Do you "add it in the mix"? Screw that, add it to the amp. The *Holy Grail* is a digital reverb pedal with simulations of spring, hall and flerb. The spring is fairly realistic, especially at lower mix settings. The hall is big, usually too much, but makes for some deep, drenched effects. The flerb is a flanged reverb that is pretty horrible sounding—like some bad '80s guitar tones. The reverb/instrument mix can be adjusted all the way to pure wet, unlike most stomp boxes, and creepy underwater sounds can be found there. The drawbacks of this pedal include a healthy amount of hiss, noisy spots on the blend knobs on both units I tried and no way to control the size of the reverbs. I'd advise purchasing one from a retailer where you can try it out, as both units I used had defects—one made huge whooshing noises as the mix was changed and the other wouldn't pass any signal in bypass! (\$136, www.electro-harmonix.com) -LC

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