

## SYNTHESIS INPUT/ENTRY OPERATION

As the standard BIOS and DOS I/O routines are not normally used by the Show Control system, special input routines were created to facilitate simple and powerful data entry and editing for menus, text and numeric fields. The following notes highlight the active keys, features and operation used when most user input is entered. Note that the reference to the <return> key is equivalent to the <enter> key labeled on some keyboards. <Escape> or <Esc> is the way to back out of virtually any operation and return to the previous or next higher menu.

When the cursor appears in a field to be edited, pressing <return> at the first character will default to leaving the current field intact, and advance to the **next** appropriate entry field.

Pressing <Escape> at the first character will exit the current editing function, and return to the menu or prompt that invoked the editing.

The -> (forward) arrow key (#6) may be used to copy over characters you do not wish to change. At any point after the first character, pressing <return> will terminate the line and DELETE all remaining characters on the line.

When **not** at the first character position, pressing the <Esc> key will cause the line to revert to its initial contents, with the cursor positioned at the first character. (Pressing <Esc> again will exit to the previous menu or operation level.)

The <- (back) arrow key (#4) or the <-- (backspace) key is used to move the cursor to the left. This is a non-destructive move, and existing characters will remain on the line.

New characters entered will replace or overwrite previous text.

The DEL (delete) key may be used to remove a character, shoving all characters to the right of the cursor to fill the hole.

The INS (insert) key will create a space for a new character to be entered by moving all characters to the right of the cursor. Note that at the present time, INS.ert is a single step operation, and NOT a MODE. Any characters to the right of the cursor that exceed the field width will fall off the end.

The ->| (tab) key may be used to copy all remaining characters on the line into the new field, and is equivalent to pressing the -> (forward arrow) key to the end of the line, then pressing <return>.

The END key may be used to position the cursor to the end of the current field. All existing characters are copied into the input buffer. Pressing <return> will accept the line, <ESC> restores the original line prior to editing, and the <-- (backspace or back-arrow) key may be used to reverse-space toward the beginning of the line. No other characters may be entered or copied past the END of the field.

The HOME key will restore the cursor to the first position in the field, if not already there; in this case, the cursor will generally move to the top left field (home) in the current editing window.

In many cases, other keys will be active, such as the UP and DOWN arrow keys (moving one line up or down), **PgUp** and **PgDn**, moving one screen display page up or down, **Home**, which will return to the initial or "home" position, etc. At other times, these keys may be used to raise or lower a level, or step through a submenu, as appropriate for the type of operation being performed.

Make sure that the **Num Lock** key is **not** active; otherwise the arrow keys will be interpreted as numbers! Normally, numeric entry is done using the top row of the keyboard. (Note that the shift key may be used to reverse the function of the numeric pad from numbers to cursor keys, or vice versa.)

For all normal operations, the **Caps Lock** key must be **off**; all menus and most functions expect and respond only to unshifted characters. Assignment NAMES and event MACRO fields may use shifted letters, as well as file names (where the case is not significant).

## FUNCTION KEYS

Extensive use of the function keys has been avoided in the general input routine to allow maximum flexibility in a "context sensitive" application that require specific functions.

F9 and F10 have been tentatively reserved for insert and delete record functions (events, cues, etc.), while F1 will become a "universal" help key. F3 is reserved as a "repeat-last-operation" function.

## AUTOMENU SELECTION

Beginning with release 1.2 of the software, many menu selections may be made using the up and down arrow keys to highlight the desired option, then hitting <return>. It is still possible to go straight to the desired function by just hitting the associated letter.

Using ESC.ape will always back out of the current selection and may be repeated until the "Main Menu" is reached.

## ERROR MESSAGES

If an error is detected during input, or during some process that creates an exceptional condition, a RED box may appear in the center of the screen, describing the nature of the error, followed by "Press RETURN to continue". A short "beep" is also emitted from the speaker. As of this time, pressing <any> key will acknowledge the message, and execution will continue. One exception is DOS error messages, which can occur when loading or saving a file to disk, or during execution of many of the D.isk sub-functions. If you are asked to "Abort Retry or Ignore" during a disk operation, correct the problem (insert a disk, close the door, un-write protect it, etc.) and press Retry. NEVER press Abort! Otherwise the entire program and all files will be aborted, and control returned to DOS (Dumb Operating System!!). If all else fails, try Ignore, but this is usually a bad idea, as corrupt data may be stored.

Newer versions of DOS also offer a F/ail option in addition to the abort-retry message. Selecting F/ail will usually return control to the Synthesis system, but correcting the problem is still the best option.

## YES/NO VERIFICATION

Certain operations, especially those that may delete a cue or over-write existing data will ask for verification, such as "Are You Sure?".

Pressing "Y", the <space bar>, or the <return> key are all equivalent to "yes-proceed with the operation". Responding with "N" or the "ESC.ape" key indicates "no-do not perform the operation" If (most) any other key is struck, the computer will respond with a short beep, and await one of the acceptable responses as listed above. Usually, when this prompt is made, it means that the data in RAM currently in use will be modified, and un-recoverable (unless you are lucky enough to have a recent backup file on disk)!

## NUMERIC ENTRY

For fields requesting a TIME in the format of MM:SS:FF, as in event times, sync jam or offsets, or lighting timing, the input is fairly free form, in that any three valid numbers may be entered separated by punctuation (.,:), or a space. Only one digit is required if that is what you intend. Thus,

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1,2,3
1 2 3
01.02.03          MM:SS:FF
01 02.3   are all interpreted as   01:02:03

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Leading "0's" are optional, but not required. Leading spaces are stripped, but act as a delimiter between multiple numbers, as in the example above. Note that in a time field expecting three numbers (i.e. minutes, seconds, and frames), leading zeros are required to enter just frames or seconds.

Fields expecting a decimal number, such as parameters for events, may be entered in HEX by preceding the number with a "\$" character. Thus, \$10 is the same as entering 16 in response to a numeric entry.

Once the hex (\$) character is entered, it is further possible to enter ASCII characters for numeric translation by using the " (quote) symbol, so entering \$"A will be translated as the decimal/hex equivalent to the ASCII character "A" (65 in decimal).

There are some fields that EXPECT a hex number, such as the debugger or Upload service. It is still possible to enter an ASCII character preceded by a quote (i.e. "D), but decimal input is not possible.

## ANYTHING ENTRY

One of the features we kept was the handy method of putting "anything" into a field. By holding the ALT key, the decimal equivalent of the ASCII code may be entered on the NUMERIC KEYPAD. When the <ALT> key is released, the character should appear. Codes such as 13 (carriage return) will act the same as if they had been entered directly. Note that codes above 128 will have the IBM character set displayed on the screen, but may behave differently with printers or other devices.

## RESET

Yes, the ubiquitous <CTL><ALT><DEL> sequence WILL reset the system, just like hitting the reset button. All information in the computer's RAM memory will be lost.

It is the user's responsibility to ENSURE that DOS has been told to ignore a BREAK (Control-C or Control-BREAK) sequence. Before running the program, type BREAK <return> at the DOS prompt. If it reports that break is "ON", type BREAK OFF <return> before running the system. The AUTOEXEC.BAT file MUST include a BREAK OFF command!

If for some reason you DO "break" out of the program, re-boot IMMEDIATELY, as most of the interrupt vectors used by the program will not be properly restored, and will be pointing into the ozone. It is not possible to recover data if the program is interrupted in any manner, including use of a debugger.

**NOTES**