

Setting up StationPlaylist Creator and Studio – The Basics

If you have purchased the package from Chilton Broadcast that includes the StationPlaylist Creator and Studio software packages then it is worth taking a little time out to ensure that these software packages are installed and set-up correctly. Ultimately, a few minutes spent now could save you time in the long run.

Before Setting Up StationPlaylist Creator and Studio

Prior to worrying about how the software works it is essential that you decide how your Radio Station's playlist is going to be structured.

Are you going to base your actual playlist on musical genre's or will you be running a generic playlist with an A list, B list and so on. You could, of course, have a mixture of both.

Whichever route you choose, it can be changed at a later date but it makes life easier if you get it right from the start.

In order to set up your Playout Computer to accommodate the StationPlaylist Creator and Studio software we recommend that you create a Folder on your main hard drive (C:\) called **Station Files**, which is where you will ultimately locate all the MP3's and MP4's for your playout.

(It should be noted that the StationPlaylist Creator and Studio software expects that you locate these files in the Programs folder but we strongly recommend against this as it makes life easier when creating backups).

Now that you have created the **Station Files** folder, open it and create one folder for each type of musical output that you intend to use. Therefore, if you are running by genre create a folder within the **Station Files** folder for, say, **Rock, Country, Rap, Pop** etc. If you plan to run by a generic playlist then create a folder for the **A List, B List** and so on. Obviously, you could also create folders for Decades (60's, 70's, 80's).

Now, you also need to consider how you wish to handle Spots and you need to create a folder for each classification of Spot play that your station may require. **Station ID's, Timed Spots, Sweeps, Promo's, Jingles, Adverts, News Intro's, Weather Intro's, Sponsors** to name but a few. Once you have decided on which route you wish to adopt with these create the folders within the **Station Files** folder in the same manner.

You will now have a system that is ready to accept all the data you need for a successful station playout system.

How Do I Create/Save MP3's/MP4's

Your Chilton Broadcast system will be fitted, as standard, with the Soundblaster Audigy 2 soundcards. As part of this package you will find Creative's Wave Studio which allows you to extract audio from CD's and save them in MP3 format. This is perfectly adequate for your needs and takes very little time to learn to use.

Alternatively, you can purchase Nero6 which contains a full suite of programmes which allow you to extract, create and modify audio. The only downside to Nero6 is that it is generally aimed at the domestic market and lacks professional facilities.

If you are seeking a more professional audio extraction/editing suite then we recommend Adobe Audition 1.5. This used to be marketed under the name CoolEdit Pro and is an extremely robust suite of software used in many recording/radio station environments. One advantage of Adobe Audition 1.5 is that it allows you to edit much larger files than many other software suites.

StationPlaylist Creator and Studio have specific requirements when naming files (MP3's) for use in the system. The naming convention is Artist (space) Hyphon (space) Title e.g. Artist – Title.mp3.

For example, if you have created a MP3 of the Beatles track “Help” then, when saving you would save it to the relevant folder as **Beatles – Help.mp3**.

Remember when saving band names that you need to decide on how a particular name should appear. The Beatles or Beatles? *Adopt the same strategy for all bands*, especially those that could have “The” prefixing them. This is important as StationPlaylist Creator and Studio software allows you to determine how many times a band can be repeated in a hour/day etc and if you have some files under “The Beatles” and some under “Beatles” these will be treated as different artists!

At a later stage you can, in the Creator programme, link artists together so that the system considers them as the same group, e.g. Beatles, Paul McCartney, John Lennon which will save you the problem of having one following the other in playout.

NB: In the current versions of StationPlaylist Creator and Studio the software doesn't recognise ID3 tags. This will change in Ver 3.0 which will be available later this year.

Setting Up StationPlaylist Creator.

With your software installed on the Playout Computer you now need to set up and configure the StationPlaylist Creator part of the software.

Open StationPlaylist Creator by double clicking on the icon.

The initial screen you will see contains 5 Tabs, Categories, Spot Groups, Rotations, Schedules and Options. Each represents a section of the software that you need to action. The art of setting up the software is to move from left to right and action these in turn.

Categories

Set up a New Category for each folder that you created on the system that contains your music files. Hence, if you set up a folder for each musical genre (or A List etc) then set up an equivalent category for each of these. Name the Category and then tell the system the location of the folder for the relevant category. Once you have save each category the system will then tell you how many music files you have for each.

Spot Groups

Set up a New Spot Group for each folder that you created on the system that contains your ID, Jingles, etc. Name the Spot Group and then tell the system the location of the folder for the relevant category. Once you have save each category the system will then tell you how many Spot files you have for each.

Rotations

Set up a Rotation for each type of hour that your station intends on using as output. A Rotation is defined as 60 mins of output.

For example, you may decided that a Rotation (i.e. One Hour of primetime) should contain a mixture of 5 A List plays, 4 B List, 3 C List and so on. It may also require that you play a Station ID at the top of each hour and have Ad Breaks at 15, 30 and 45 past each hour..

Hence, you would create your Rotation accordingly, starting off with an ID followed by an A List play, B, C, A etc. As you add each item to the Rotation the time allocated within that hour is shown on the right of the screen. NB: StationPlaylist averages the times of tracks within a Category and Spot Groups!

For StationPlaylist Studio (the software that actually plays out your rotations) to work effectively, you need to over-run each Rotation by around 3 mins. This takes into account that system has averaged the length of tracks/spots

Schedules

Having set up your Rotations, you can now create your Schedules. You can create a Schedule for each day or for a block of days. For example, your Monday – Friday schedules may be the same so you would only need to create one schedule for the week and another for weekends.

As you create a new Schedule you will see your Rotations listed on the left hand side of the screen. On the right hand side of the screen you will see the hours of the day listed. Drag and drop the Rotations into the required hours.

Options

The Options screen is the last one you need to worry about. This is where, in it's basic form you create the actual Playlist that you will later load into StationPlaylist Studio. You can create Playlists for any number of days at a time from 1 day onwards and we would strongly recommend that you don't create more than 7 days in one go as you may wish to add new tracks to each category and these will, obviously, not be selected if the Playlist has already been created.

The more 'advanced' options on the screen allow you specify how often a track, or artist, can be repeated and also allows you to group artists together as mentioned earlier. Full details of how these options work can be found in the on screen *Help* of Creator and Studio.

The above is designed to get you up and running as quickly as possible and is not in anyway designed to be a comprehensive guide to the use of the StationPlaylist Creator and Studio software packages. Both have very comprehensive facilities which are fully covered in the on screen Help.