

Source Talkback and 2Q Talkback Remote

■■■ TALKBACK SYSTEM

Mike Aiton finds his communications nirvana with a nifty piece of kit offering console-style talkback without any hardware and a radio remote control system for audio consoles.

STOP – DON'T turn the page or you will be in danger of missing one of the best kept secrets of savvy studio owners around town. Do you work with remote clients on a telephone patch? Or across continents with the amazing voodoo of Source Connect? Do you record talent who you need to speak to in a booth? or even (perish the thought) with 'the luddites blunt weapon of choice' – ISDN? If so, then read on! This is a really sexy little combo of products that will please your clients and your talent no-end.

GETTING TO THE SOURCE OF IT

The Source Talkback part of the combo is made by Source-Elements and is an AAX native 32- and 64-bit plug-in (for Mac OSX 10.7 upwards) that gives console-style talkback without any hardware.

'What features does it have?' I hear you ask. In Pro Tools it allows simple talkback activation in momentary mode using the '\ (backslash key); in latching mode with 'shift' + '\ and now, best of all, it comes with auto talkback (like an Avid Icon series) where the talkback is off in play, and open (activated) in any other transport mode.

Set up is a breeze in Pro Tools: create an aux input track that has your mic input (I used my Avid Omni input 2) and place the talkback aux native plug on this track, and route this to your talent's cans. Next, put the talkback master native plug on your master fader or wherever your speakers are fed from. These two plugs are glued together

with 'software string' so that whenever you hit the backslash key, click either of the talkback plug-in buttons or engage the auto talkback feature, the GFX on the plugs changes to 'talkback open' and your monitoring is dimmed by a user settable amount (in the options menu). *Voilà* – large console-style talkback in seconds. It's as easy as pie.

The software has been thought out so that whatever the plug is doing, whenever you hit the '\ key your talent will hear you. If you are in play using auto talkback and your young puppy producer insists on speaking before the transport is stopped, just hit the '\ key and your talent will hear them. If you then halt the transport, auto talkback will engage and you can let go of the '\ key. This brings me neatly to the next part of the solution.

REMOTE CONTROL

Michael Donahower at Techshop NY has developed 2Q – an ingenious radio remote control system for audio consoles. This is a sophisticated radio remote that can be worn around your neck (on a 2Q lanyard) that can either activate a console talkback system, or, in this case, come programmed to operate Source Talkback. It comes as standard with two remotes (and can operate with up to 10) and a mains powered receiver. The receiver for the Source Talkback version has a foot switch jack input and a USB output that plugs into your Pro Tools computer. I connected a Yamaha sustain pedal to the receiver to try. Unfortunately



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that pedal was wired with the logic reversed and pressing it deactivated the talkback rather than activating it. When the USB lead was plugged in and the unit was powered, up came a Mac prompt that a keyboard had been plugged in and gave me a choice of three. I chose Euro English – which seemed to work nicely on my Pro Tools PC running OSX 10.8.5. That was the sum total of the installation.

SUMMARY

I cannot get the 2Q to hiccup, misfire or so much as burp out of tune. My studio is not large, but the receiver doesn't ever fail to pick up the transmissions. Clients love 'the dangly thing around the neck'

and find it easy to use and the 'touch to talk' logic just so simple, even for TV producers! Good enough even for legendary producer Phil Ramone? He loves it! Battery life is estimated as at least annual (with normal use).

So what could be improved? The first thing would be for Source Talkback to go AAX DSP then VST and AU for 'other sound applications'. It should also be noted that Source Talkback and the 2Q remote can be used by musicians in the booth as a listen back activator (or 'lazy talkback' for those with a broadcast pedigree). The guitarist's SM58 over his smoking Marshall cones will not work well as a reverse talkback mic as the levels would be very wrong but if you rig another microphone you can allow the guitarist to press his 2Q and Source Talkback will let him discuss his delicious use of chromatic Aeolian passing notes over the subdominant chord in the last take (or

not!). The 2Q system is customisable for all major console talkback systems. So what's not to love? It is an inexpensive and very highly recommended combo indeed.

THE REVIEWER

MIKE AITON was weaned at the BBC. But after breaking free nearly 25 years ago and becoming one of London's busiest freelance dubbing mixers, he can mostly be found in his Twickenham dubbing suite, mikerophonics. In his spare time he takes therapy for his poor jazz guitar playing and his addiction to skiing and Nikon lenses.

INFORMATION

Feature set

- Source Talkback
 - AAX 64-compatibility
 - Momentary, Latching, and Auto modes
- 2Q
 - Wireless talkback
 - Range of over 75ft
 - Ability to use up to 10 transmitters

www.source-elements.com
www.twocue.com