Just when you thought there wasn’t any room in the world for another DAW, along comes a plucky new upstart that starts making waves. But instead of competing in the well stocked end of the pool, where music and post are what matters, Hindenburg is aiming for a much more sparsely populated niche: radio. Well, actually the ambition is for Hindenburg to major on story telling rather than engineering features.

Having badgered various manufacturers to do a native radio editor over the years I’m thrilled that a new start-up should be brave enough to launch an all-new product at times like these. Currently most radio (and think of a market that includes online radio and podcasting) is produced on either big networked systems like Dalet, VCS, RadioMan, etc, or on tools not designed from the ground-up for the job, like Audition, Wavelab, or – dare I say it? – Audacity. So it makes sense in one sense to pitch a product squarely at radio and broadcast production that cares not a whit for MIDI, SMPTE, or ADR.

Down To Business

On start up, Hindenburg displays a clean modern interface singularly lacking the baggage of many modern DAWs that have been fighting the 'feature wars' for a decade or more. The layout is classic, with track headers on the left, four tracks ready for action, and at the bottom of the screen a classic transport bar with clipboards on the right. On start up, there are four of these arranged vertically, and they’ll be familiar to journalists who have used RadioMan or other networked software as a handy place to keep your clips while working. Having multiple clipboards allows great flexibility in house keeping.

If you want to do something nasty to a clip now, but you think you might want the unedited clip again later, just control drag it to another clipstore. And, while the clipstores are project specific, you can have a pan project 'Favourites' to keep all your sigs, stabs, and stings in one place.

One really neat feature is the small play icon alongside every clip. Click on it and the clip plays from the top for just as long as you have the mouse button depressed. A simple thing, but it makes auditioning clips that tiny bit faster. And if you want to hear the whole clip just hold down the shift key while clicking on the icon.

You can import audio into the clipboard(s) or direct into the playlist. I was impressed that Hindenburg imported my mp2 files that are tagged with the .s48 extension without batting an eyelid. Flac files, however, are currently not supported. Clips can be dragged in directly from OS (Hindenburg is available on Windows and OSX), or direct from iTunes, or from a CD. The CD import, like much in Hindenburg, is simple, easy, and elegant.

Clips in the Hindenburg playlist have the magic five adjustments: drag the out or in, drag fades from top corners or drag level up or down anywhere on the top of the clip. Dragging a range allows you to alter the level of a segment of your clip, and when you do that you have full control over the points at which the fades start and stop, as well as the levels of the plateaus inbetween. There is no adjustment for fade shapes, but as a journalistic tool, we can live without that. You can create crossfades on a single track just by overlapping clips. Dropping a clip on a 'selected' clip replaces it, while dropping a clip on an unselected clip overwrites that portion of the clip.

Levelling Up

One of the key design aims of Hindenburg is to help you get your levels right. Each project can began audio life in Hi-Fi before joining the BBC as an audio engineer. After ten years in radio and television. Most recently, Alistair was Assistant Editor, BBC Radio Wales and has been helping the UN with broadcast operations in Juba.

THE REVIEWER

ALISTAIR MCGHEE

began audio life in Hi-Fi before joining the BBC as an audio engineer. After ten years in radio and TV, he moved to production. When BBC Choice started, he pioneered personal digital production in television. Most recently, Alistair was Assistant Editor, BBC Radio Wales and has been helping the UN with broadcast operations in Juba.

Hindenburg effects.

“The loudness meter is comprehensive while very clear – much more sophisticated and powerful than the metering journalists will be used to, and if they learn to use it properly... well, great things could happen.”

Alistair McGhee

Hindenburg

Journalist Pro

Radio DAW

Hi-Fi before joining the BBC as an audio engineer. After ten years in radio and TV, he moved to production. When BBC Choice started, he pioneered personal digital production in television. Most recently, Alistair was Assistant Editor, BBC Radio Wales and has been helping the UN with broadcast operations in Juba.
Last but not least there's the mobile dimension: Hindenburg has an iPhone app allowing you to record and edit in the field, and when your iPhone is connected by wireless to the same network your computer is on, you can even directly exchange clips from desktop to phone and back. This looks cool and had me wistfully looking at iPhones, this being an Android/Blackberry household. But, hey, Hindenburg: we do have an iPad… The app also supports emailing of clips or upload via ftp or to SoundCloud, and finally, if your phone is connected to your computer then you can load directly to iTunes.

Conclusion
I have to say that Hindenburg is an impressive system. With versions for Windows and OSX, and for your iPhone, it has a lot of bases covered. Don’t compare it with Wavelab or Sound Forge and bitch about the features it doesn’t have; Hindenburg is about focused content creation for radio and podcast people who are interested in story telling first and foremost, and for them it is a welcome relief. Hurray for Hindenburg.

Information

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Manufacturer
Hindenburg Systems
www.hindenburgsystems.com

From The Manufacturer:
“Hindenburg develops editing tools specifically for audio storytellers – radio journalists, podcaster, and other audio narrative producers. Most traditional DAWs are developed primarily for music production or as integrated subsets of a larger broadcast enterprise solution… All Hindenburg solutions are designed by, with, and for professional radio journalists and podcasters, to ensure that user needs are addressed first and foremost. Fully-integrated desktop and mobile solutions allow fast recording, editing, and delivery of radio packages or enhanced podcasts from anywhere.”

Chris Mottes, Hindenburg Systems