Using SoundApp

Drag and Drop Interface

Playing sounds with SoundApp is simple; just drag and drop some files onto the SoundApp icon. In addition, files can be opened via the traditional File menu Open command. Balloon Help is available to provide more information about the various preferences and buttons in SoundApp.

SoundApp can optionally search through nested folders dropped onto it, looking for sounds to play inside. While playing sounds, typing command-period will halt playback for the current selection of files dropped onto SoundApp. Typing period will halt the playback of the current sound and play the next one, if any. In addition, the left and right arrow keys can be used to skip to the next sound or return to the previous sound, respectively. Unless the Play List is open, only the previous ten files can be returned to. The “+” and “-” keys can be used to change the volume during playback.

In addition to playing many file types, SoundApp can also convert supported sound files to a number of formats. The suitcase option, in particular, creates files that can be opened in the System 7 Finder and manipulated just like font suitcases. In order to convert files, hold down the conversion key, by default the shift key, when dragging the files onto SoundApp. Be sure to continue holding the conversion key down until SoundApp comes to the foreground. The conversion key can be changed in the Keys section of the Preferences dialog.

Using the Play List

Files can be played directly or added to a Play List. Files are added to the Play List by holding down the key specified in the Keys section of the Preferences dialog box. By default this is the option key. All the sounds dropped onto SoundApp will appear there, instead of being played. It can be re-ordered by dragging a selection while holding down the option key. Only contiguous file selections can be moved at one time. Double-clicking on a selection (or pressing the space bar) will play the currently selected files. The Play All button will play all sound files in the list in the order they appear. Holding down the conversion key during any of these play operations will convert instead.

Play Lists can be saved and then opened later. This can be used to group a favorite selection of sounds for easy playback. SoundApp can only have one Play List open at a time. Opening another Play List when one is already open appends the files in the opened list to the currently open Play List.

If the Drag Manager is present, available with System 7.5 or under 7.1 if the Macintosh Drag and Drop extension is installed, SoundApp can take advantage of it. Files can be dragged to the Play List from the Finder or any other application which supports dragging files from it. In addition, files can be dragged from the Play List in a similar manner.

Memory Allocation

SoundApp tries to allocate the memory for playback from its partition first. If it can’t, it then tries the MultiFinder temporary memory allocation facilities. If there isn’t enough Multifinder temporary memory available, it will resort to double-buffering. (See Special Features section below.) MOD playback allocates memory using the MultiFinder temporary memory allocation facilities only. This allows SoundApp’s memory partition to be kept very small. If it cannot get enough memory, the file will be skipped and noted in an Errors dialog along with any other files which SoundApp could not play.

Special Features

Based on the settings in the Preferences dialog box, double-buffering can be used all the time. When disabled, double-buffering will only be used when there is not enough memory to play the sound. This will allow SoundApp to play sound files larger than the available memory, provided the file system on which the sound file resides is fast enough to keep SoundApp’s buffers full. All file types can be double-buffered except compressed SoundCap and G.72x AU files. Compressed WAVEs and stereo 16-bit sounds place extra demands on the processor and file system and can only be double-buffered on a relatively fast Macintosh, e.g. a Quadra or better.

If you experience problems playing CD-quality sounds or compressed WAVEs, try disabling the Fast Macintosh preference. With this disabled, those sound files will not be double-buffered. This requires more memory, of course. Slower Macintoshes may also experience problems playing MOD files with more than four tracks. If this occurs, try turning off the Real-Time Filter and/or Stereo preferences. Selecting a lower sampling rate also helps considerably.

Sun Audio μ-law and a-law files are not encoded like other sound formats, and they need to be converted in a special way. They encode a larger dynamic range than what can be played in an 8-bit sound, so a conversion factor is needed for 8-bit playback. The Sun Conversion preference controls how SoundApp will make this conversion. The “Smart” Sun conversion factor will scan the file looking for the loudest passage and then set the conversion factor to prevent most clipping. This feature, while providing the best playback quality, is fairly slow. Preset conversion factors can be set to eliminate preprocessing and thus provide immediate playback. The numerical conversion factors control how much SoundApp will scale the sound. Larger numbers provide less scaling and will sound quieter. Although smaller values will play louder, it will do so at the expense of clipping and thus sound quality. However, some files were recorded at less than full volume and will sound fine with a lower factor. Optionally, these and ADPCM files can be played and converted at 16-bit resolution for higher quality playback. This is controlled by the Play AU & ADPCM As 8-Bit and the Convert AU & ADPCM As 8-Bit preferences. With these preferences unchecked, the Sun Conversion preference is not used, and these sounds are played/converted at 16-bit resolution instead. Sounds can only be played at 16-bit resolution if Sound Manager 3.0 is installed.

If desired, SoundApp can change the creator code of sound files dropped on it, so double-clicking them will run SoundApp. In addition, nice color icons will be used. During conversion, SoundApp create a new directory where it will store the converted files. Optionally, it will prompt you for a new directory, prompt you for each file or store the file in a specified directory, depending on the setting of the Output Location preference. Another preference determines to which format SoundApp will convert files. Sounds can be optionally converted into 16-bit files if the input files were 16-bit. This is controlled by the Convert 16-Bit To 16-Bit preference.

The Import To QuickTime menu item in the File menu can be used to convert any file supported by QuickTime into a QuickTime file. Some examples are: AIFF files, CD audio tracks, General MIDI files, pictures, etc. To use this option, QuickTime must be installed. Version 1.6 or later of QuickTime is required for importing CD audio data and version 2.0 or later is required for importing General MIDI files.

SoundApp can accept Open AppleEvents, which will play the referenced sound file(s). It will also accept Quit, which, of course, quits SoundApp. These features can be accessed via AppleScript.

Notes
• MOD conversion only extracts the instrument samples.
• Some WAVE compression formats, compressed VOC files and some types of AU files are not supported.
• Conversion of QuickTime movies to a format other than AIFF requires a temporary file.

Enjoy.