

SoundMachine

Syd L. Bolton

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Chapter 1

SoundMachine

1.1 SoundMachine Documentation

The Sound Machine

Version: 1.5

Written by Syd L. Bolton ©1993-94 Legendary Design Technologies Inc.

25 Frontenac Avenue, Brantford, Ontario N3R 3B7 Canada

P.O. Box 1147, Lewiston, NY 14092-8147 U.S.A.

(519)-753-6120

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What is the Sound Machine? - Description of the program.

What ISN'T the Sound Machine? - What it doesn't do.

Program Requirements - What you'll need.

Tour of the Gadgets - Gadget/function overview.

Tour of the Menus - Menu overview.

Workbench ToolTypes - Configuring the program.

What can be added? - Possible improvements.

What else we do... - How to get a hold of us.

1.2 Description of the programs

WHAT IS THE SOUND MACHINE?

=====

The Sound Machine is a set of two programs for your Amiga that will enable you to load and play sound samples that are commonly found on IBM-type systems. It will also enable you to save files in these formats.

This makes it very useful for people who frequent computer bulletin-board services, as it opens up an entire library of sound files.

There is a simpler version of The Sound Machine called '**SMPLAY**'

that should have included in this archive. It is a CLI-only version of the program that only plays sound files.

The Sound Machine presently reads and writes the following formats:

IFF - the format used on the Amiga, in 8SVX form.

RAW - RAW audio data, which most sound programs will load.

WAV - The "Wave" format, most commonly used in MicroSoft Windows.

VOC - The "Voice" format, from Creative Labs (they make the SoundBlaster for the IBM).

1.3 What this program won't do...

WHAT ISN'T THE SOUND MACHINE?

=====

The Sound Machine is NOT A SOUND EDITOR! Although you can change the playback rate and "flip" signed samples, it does not actually do any editing on the sound files.

The Sound Machine isn't the perfect sound converter, either. At present, it does not support writing 16 bit samples (although it will convert them to 8-bit for playback)

For what most people will want, however, it does everything. If you would like to see more sound formats supported, please write and we'll see what we can do.

1.4 What the program requires...

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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The Sound Machine will run on any Amiga with 512k and OS 1.2 or higher. It has been tested with an Amiga 3000 running AmigaDOS 2.1, and an Amiga 1000 running 1.3.

Under 2.x or 3.x, the program will use the ASL File Requester.

Under 1.2 or 1.3, you will need to install the "**REQ.LIBRARY**" (provided) into your LIBS directory. Do this with:

copy req.library libs:

Please note that '**SMPLAY**', the companion player-only program does not require either of these libraries.

1.5 Gadget overview...

A TOUR OF THE GADGETS

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When you first run the program you will see several gadgets along the bottom of the program window (The Sound Machine opens a Window on your Workbench Screen. If your screen is interlaced, you may move the window around). Most of these gadgets are self-explanatory:

OPEN - Presents the file requester and lets you choose a sample. Note that the program automagically detects the file-format type.

If it can't identify the file, it reads it as "RAW" and sets the playback rate to 10000. You can change the default rate through the tooltypes (see below) and also **FORCE RAW** loading.

SAVE AS - This will save the current sample (if there is one) in the format that is highlighted. When you load a sample, the screen will change to show you the type of file that was loaded. You are free at anytime to change the file type, and when you save the file that is the format you will get. Note that the program will also automagically try to use an appropriate filename (ie: if you loaded a file called "sound.iff", and then changed the type to "WAV", and select **SAVE AS**, it will change the filename to "sound.wav", though you are always free to call the file what you want.

RAW, IFF, WAV, VOC: These gadgets reflect the format. They will change when a file is first loaded, and you can then change to the format you wish to save in.

COMPRESS: This is a toggle gadget that is applicable **TO THE IFF FORMAT ONLY**.

Choosing compression with WAV format for example has **NO EFFECT**.

Choosing **COMPRESS**ion with the IFF format is a good way to save disk space as IFF files will be roughly 1/2 the size of an equivalent WAV, VOC, or RAW file. Not only that, but contrary to popular belief, using **COMPRESS**ion will not affect the quality of the sound sample since the file is expanded to its original form.

It is **NOT THE SAME** as reducing the number of bits of definition or anything of the sort.

FLIP: You will commonly need to use this gadget if you load RAW files that come from another computer system, such as the IBM or the MACINTOSH.

The way sound samples are stored on these systems is often inverse to the way the Amiga does it. For example, all 8-bit sounds are

represented with a number from 0-255. On the PC, a 0 means no sound and 255 means full sound. On the Amiga however, 128 indicates no sound. Therefore, if you ever see a file that has an abnormal amount of high peaks, try FLIPping it and playing it again. We have found this to be true of many MACINTOSH samples.

RATE: The number in this string gadget represents the playback rate (samples per second). The program will automatically put the playback rate of the file in this gadget for you. In the case of "RAW" files, there is no place for storing the rate, so The Sound Machine defaults to using 10000. You are free to change this number to get different results.

PLAY: This gadget, like its name implies, plays the current sample. It will change in appearance to 'STOP' while the sample is playing. By clicking on it in this state, the sample will stop playing.

1.6 Menu overview...

MENUS

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The Sound Machine also has a project menu, with similar options.

It allows you to OPEN or SAVE a file (with keyboard shortcuts). You will also find the ABOUT requester in here, and a QUIT option.

There is also a special menu with the following features:

- * **FORCE RAW LOADING:** Use this option to force a file into RAM as RAW.

This is useful for files that are corrupt, and also for loading multi-dac VOC files (for example, most VOC files that are large will require this as they are broken up into segments. The drawback is that you might hear a 'click' every few seconds (the header info) but then again you could always save it as IFF and edit it somewhere else). Thanks to Mark Odell for the idea.

- * **PLAY SAMPLE AFTER LOADING:** When this menu function is turned on, samples are played automatically after being loaded. This is handy as it will save you time.

- * **LOW PASS FILTER:** Turning off the low pass filter can improve sound playback with certain samples. Notice your power LED may DIM or turn off - this is completely normal.

1.7 Workbench ToolTypes...

TOOLTYPES

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Using Workbench, you can modify the default size and position of the Window that The Sound Machine opens, as well as change some other options. Here is what they are: (these show the defaults)

- * WINDOWX=0 - set the upper-left X coordinate of the Window.
- * WINDOWY=0 - set the upper-left Y coordinate of the Window.
- * WINDOWWIDTH=640 - set the width of the Window.
- * WINDOWHEIGHT=200 - set the height of the Window.
- * AUTOPLAY=No - set to Yes for auto playback after loading
- * FORCERAW=No - set to Yes for forcing RAW sample loading
- * LOWPASSFILTER=Yes - set to No for improved sound quality
- * DEFAULTRATE=10000 - set to the desired default playback rate for RAW

The rest of the program is basically self-explanatory. You can load samples and the program will graph them and display information about the sample (name, size and format).

1.8 Possible improvements...

WHAT CAN BE ADDED?

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The following options should/could be added to the program. In order to do this, we need to hear from people that are interested in having these features or have suggestions of their own. Our address is listed at the bottom of the file.

- * Support for AUD and SND files. Though basically RAW files, it would be nice to have full support for these formats for completeness.
 - * Support for 16-bit playback (through some of the new 16-bit boards) and also the ability to save in this format.
 - * Batch conversion support
 - * More DSP support, perhaps some special effects ... converting stereo samples to mono, etc.
 - * The ability to work with files that are bigger than RAM.
-

1.9 What else we do...

We hope you find this product useful. As mentioned, if you would like to see improvements made please write us a letter, send us a fax, or give us a call. We won't make improvements without user support!

We are presently contemplating making this a commercial product, with many more features and a reasonable price. If you have some suggestions for a commercial version, or would like to be put on our mailing list, just drop us a line or give us a call!

If you do find this product useful, you may find our commercial products equally as useful. Ask your dealer for a demonstration of ADDRESS IT!, INVOICE IT!, LINK IT! or dataTAX. We also now have professional 24-bit backgrounds through our "ProPics" line. If your dealer doesn't carry our products, encourage him/her to call us for more information on our Amiga products.

Have a great day!

Syd Bolton, President

In Canada/International:

Legendary Design Technologies Inc.

25 Frontenac Avenue

Brantford, ON N3R 3B7

CANADA

(519) 753-6120 voice/fax

In the United States:

Legendary Design Technologies Inc.

P.O. Box 1147

Lewiston, NY 14092-8147

U.S.A.

(519) 753-6120 voice/fax

Call our support BBS, starting August 1, 1994: (519) 753-5052.

All trademarks mentioned in this file are recognized.

1.10 Information about the REQ.LIBRARY

The REQ.LIBRARY was written by Bruce Dawson and Colin Fox. For space considerations, only the main executable has been included. If you need to use this library (1.x users) if you can't find the complete REQ.LIBRARY archive (including documentation) please contact Legendary and we will provide it free of charge.

1.11 SMPlay CLI Program

SMPlay is a CLI/Shell only program that allows you to play sound files directly, using the keyboard.

It can be very useful for scripts (like having a sound play in your startup-sequence), or for launching from directory-oriented programs like DirMaster or Directory Opus.

It is also useful for your C directory as it takes up less memory and is good for those who like the keyboard more than the mouse.
