

Guide to Cue Sheets and Track Layout

Hall / Sara 310 Green Section – Fall 2005

New: 12 total cut tracks may be used – includes 4 *optional* Stereo Tracks

Good Track Management and Layout will speed up your editing and your mix. Don't minimize the importance of the Cue Sheet. The making of your Cue Sheet should be an ongoing process. It should not be left as the last thing to do before the mix.

Suggestion:

Have a "spotting run" for all your sounds, including music.

Lay-out your tracks on a "scratch cue sheet" before you edit and revise them as you progress, good track organization will allow you more time to be creative during your sound editing and your mix.

Blank 8 1/2 x 11 practice cue sheets are available at the Sound Department Window. It is best if you sketch out a plan on practice sheets before attempting to edit your tracks. This will help you visualize your layout. Then as you edit the tracks you can use your scratch cue sheets as a reference and adjust them to reflect your final sound track layout. Once this is done you can copy your final lay-out and footages/TC onto the large cue sheets. This will save you the step of going back to recreate your final cue sheets (when you finish editing), which you may not have the time or work station available, to do.

Things to keep in mind:

1. Try to keep similar sounds on the same track, i.e. a Foley Track, Music Track, Fx Track.
2. Tracks requiring similar processing such as "eq", reverb, etc. should be on the same track.
3. Checkerboard Bgs and Music so that sounds do not butt up against each other on one track – leave enough time between FX on the same track for the mixer to do any necessary fades or level changes.
4. The Black Leader portion of both the Head and Tail SMPTE Leaders should not have sound over it. If you want sound over black (before your first frame of picture or action) you need to add your own Black Filler. This Black will count as part of your picture footage.
5. Sync Pops should be opposite the "2" Frame on your head leader and the "Finish" Frame on your tail leader. Sync "pops" are available on your "desktop" in Protools.
6. Cue Sheets begin on 00 for film footage (Picture Start on SMPTE Leader) or 00:00 for Timecode (TC). You will write the footage or TC for your "2" pop and your "tail" pop on your cue sheet.

Cue Sheets – Cont.

7. Down the Left-Side of each track column, on your cue sheets, write footage or minutes & seconds. Put the Start footage / TC of your FX or Music in the left column, put the end footage / TC in the wider of column underneath the FX description (see sample cue sheets).
8. Do not make an exact scale out of the Cue Sheets, such as one line of the cue sheet equals 1' or 00.01. A relative graphic approximation showing the relationship of tracks, will do.
9. Fades should be marked with “arrows” – for the faded effect, write the footage where the sound physically begins, and where you want the fade to begin.
10. Make sure the tracks in your Protools session conform to the labeling on your Cue Sheets, example: if on your Cue Sheet - Track 1 is Foley; then Track 1 on your Protools session should say – Foley.
11. Label the Top of each Cue Sheet with the Film Title, Production number, page / pages number, and director's name.
12. Do your practice cue sheets in pencil so you can make corrections and adjustments. Then make your Final Cue Sheets with a Sharpie. This is very important because it will make your sheets more readable in the dark mixing room.

Double Check to be sure every track (column) has a *00:00 Start Mark, “2” Sync Pop, Last Frame of Picture (LFP) and Tail Sync Pop indicated.*

Once your practice cue sheets or track layout is finalized, you can get large cue sheets from the Sound Department Window. If you need additional columns, cut the additional columns from a second sheet and tape it onto the right side of your first sheet. Remember to write your final Cue Sheets with a Sharpie and keep all your footages or TC, parallel.

Be extremely neat and accurate, your cue sheet is the Mixer's only information as to what you have cut and where (the track no. & footage\TC) they exist.

If your Mixer can't read 'em, he or she can't mix 'em.

Reminder: *Your Cue Sheets are part of your Mix Grade. Don't lose points due to sloppiness.*