Auto Track Pro v3
Installation & Set-up Guide

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Introduction

AutoTrack Pro is a complete music and link scheduling system designed to produce lively, diverse schedules for radio stations of all types and sizes. Autotrack Pro has been developed with the help for many of the UK's leading radio programming professionals and has been designed to offer the speed, power and flexibility that modern radio needs whilst remaining intuitive and simple to use.

AutoTrack Pro is compatible with most leading radio playout systems and can be used to produce a schedule for live or automated programs. It's flexibility means that it can be used for at a wide variety of radio from 'Hot Hits' style music stations to program or talk based broadcasts. AutoTrack Pro also provides extensive Link scheduling tools to allow you to schedule much more than just music. Links can include jingles, promos, 'live read' scripts and just about anything else that your station needs.

AutoTrack Pro has been developed from the ground up with modern playout technology and digital broadcast platforms in mind. Integrated Artist Management means that you can not only use AutoTrack Pro to manage your audio output but also schedule additional text information, pictures and hyperlinks to provide a full multimedia schedule for your station.

Once all the music and links have been scheduled as per your criteria, you can make any changes that you wish before the final schedule is 'pushed' to your station's playout system. AutoTrack Pro will even help you to select alternative items by showing you what other songs or links are available and whether placing them in the log would break any of the Rules or Guides that you have set up to ensure you get the perfect sound for your station.

Chapter 1: Scheduling – Basic Principles

Before we get started on running AutoTrack Pro for the first time, it is important to take a few moments to review the principles that AutoTrack Pro uses to schedule both songs and links. An understanding of the basic mechanics that AutoTrack Pro uses to generate schedules will help you to decide the best way to set up your system and also aid in learning how to get the most from the software.

Lets start at the very beginning. AutoTrack Pro can basically be broken down in to three distinct areas.

The Songs Databas e

The Songs database is basically a list of all the songs that the system can select from when it is automatically generating a schedule based on your criteria. The Songs database is divided up in to Categories with each song that is added to the system being assigned to one or more categories. In addition to Categories, AutoTrack Pro also allows you to specify a Type for each song that is stored in the system. Each song that you add to the Songs database is assigned a unique number and given a Song Card, which covers all the basic information about the song (artist name, title etc) as well as an abundance of additional information that can be used to tailor the system to your needs.

The Links Database

The Links database is very similar to the Songs database except that instead of storing all the songs that are available to the system, the Links database is used to store all other items that you want to appear in your final schedule. Typical examples of items that might be stored in the Links database include audio items such as jingles, promos & sweepers as well as non-audio items such as scripts or promotional reads. As new links are added to the system, they will be assigned a unique number and a Link Card will be created. The Link is added to one or more Link Categories and any additional information that you want to add is put on the Link Card.

The Link and Songs databases combine to provide AutoTrack Pro with a stock of programming material that can be selected from in order to produce a complete schedule to meet your needs.

Clocks & Rules

The final piece in the AutoTrack Pro jigsaw is Clocks and Rules, which work together to allow you to produce a framework for how you want your station to sound for each hour of the week and also to lay down some ground rules that you want AutoTrack Pro to follow when it is picking songs and links to fit in to your framework.

Clocks are used to specify what goes where in each hour so a clock might look something like this.

> Hour Start
> Link – Start of hour jingle
> Song – A-List
> Song – Recurrent
> Link – Station ID
> Advert Break
> Etc…..

Once you have completed a few Clocks, they can be assigned to hours of the week and then used by AutoTrack Pro as the basis for generating your station schedule.

In addition to Clocks, Rules can be assigned on a per category basis for both song and link categories and used to fine-tune your station output to meet your exact needs.
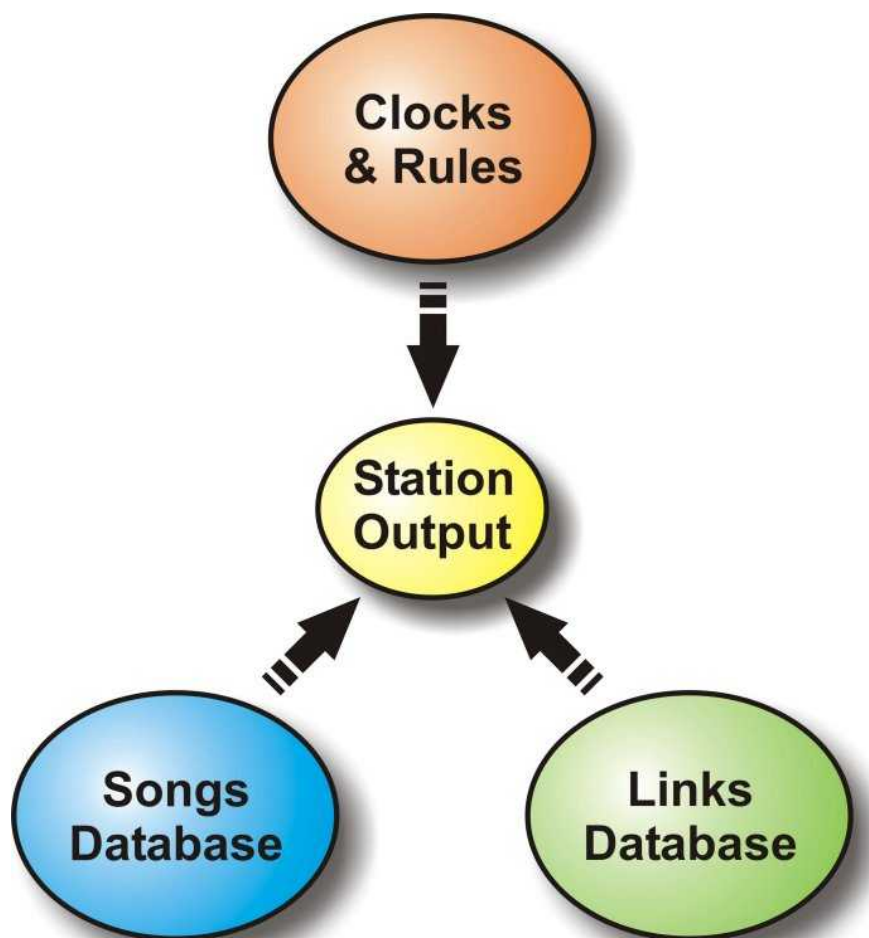
The Deck Of Cards Scheduling Method

In the last section we reviewed the three basic elements of AutoTrack Pro, the Songs database, the Links database and the Clocks & Rules. We will now look at how AutoTrack Pro actually picks songs and links to follow the framework for your shows, as specified by the Clocks.

Imagine if you had a deck of cards and you wanted to play a simple game where you had to pick alternate red and black suited cards. You shuffle the deck and then pick the top card, which is the 8 of hearts. You then take the next card from the deck and it is the ace of spades so that is ok because our first card was red and our second card is black. The next card is the 2 of clubs but this means that we have had two black cards in a row, which breaks the rules of the game so we leave the 2 of clubs on the top of the deck and look at the next card down. This is the 4 of diamonds, which means that it is a red card and therefore is ok. Finally, we can now use the 2 of clubs, which is still sitting at the top of the deck. It was originally rejected because a red card was needed but can now a black card is needed, the 2 of clubs can be used. If you were to continue with this game, eventually all 52 cards would be picked with the colour of the cards alternating between red and black.

Now let us imagine that we added some more rules to our game. Lets say that as well as alternating colour, we also said that the cards could not be the same suit as the previous card used of that colour i.e. if a heart was first, a club or a spade could be next but a diamond would have to be picked after that. This would mean that to select a card that did not break any rules then we might have to search several cards down in the deck leaving the rejected cards where they are to be tested again next time.

Finally, we could introduce some special case in which when a rule is broken, the card is actually moved to the back of the deck to stop it from being tested next time round.

The above example would not make a very engaging game but it does provide a simple but accurate analogy of how AutoTrack Pro picks songs and links to be scheduled.

In AutoTrack Pro, each Song or Link category is effectively it's own deck of cards where the top item in each deck is the next item that should be scheduled from that category assuming that scheduling that item will not break any of the rules that you have set. Once it has been picked, it is placed at the back of the deck and will take time to work its way back to the front. If the top item in the deck does break one or more rules then it is (usually) left at the top and the next item down is tested. This process is repeated until either a suitable item is found or the maximum number tests are performed.

As we mentioned earlier, each category is it's own deck of items and a typical Clock will include several different categories so in effect, you have several 'decks of cards' all rotating independently to ensure that you a mixture of items that follows your station rules, sounding the way you want it to and still using all of the active items in your Songs and Links databases.
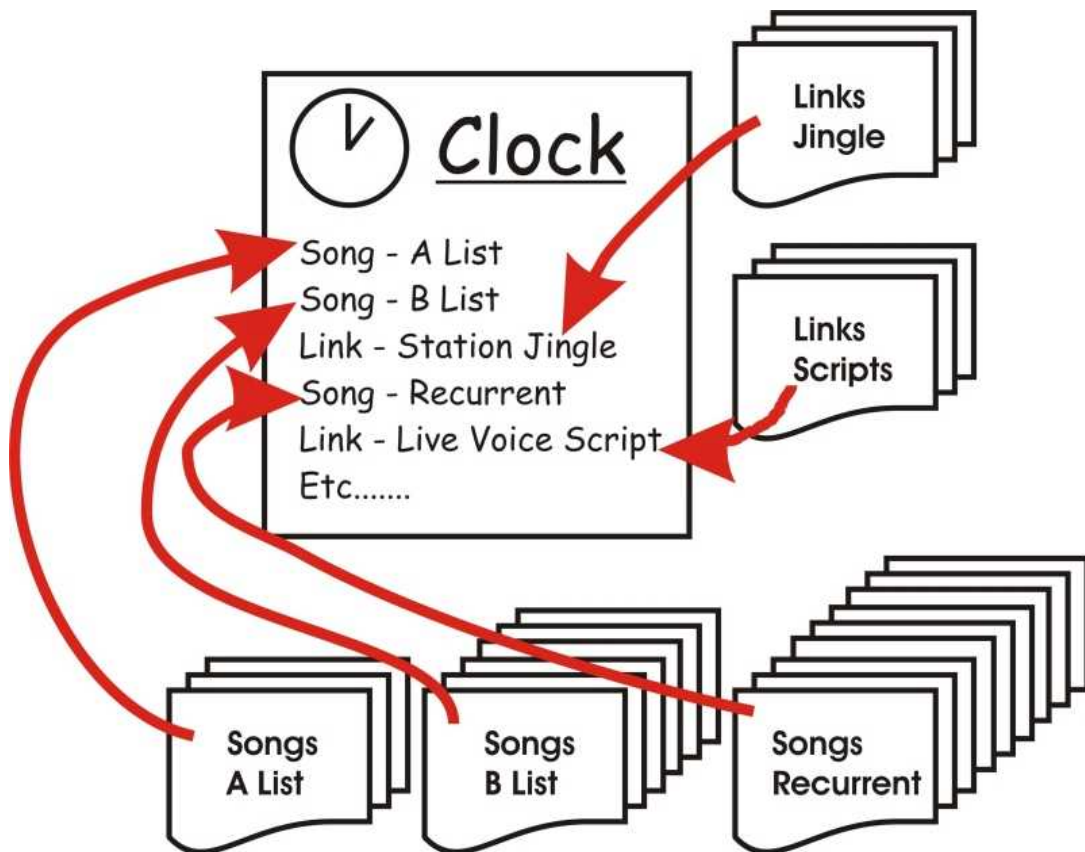
This is the basic premise for all scheduling in AutoTrack Pro and although it does get a little more complicated with additional rules, guides, collections and styles but as long as you remember that fundamentally, the whole system revolves around a bunch of decks of cards, then you should be ok.

Chapter 2: Getting Stated

AutoTrack Pro can be installed on any PC at your station but you will probably get the most from the system if you can install it on a PC that has network access to your playout system. If you use Myriad by P Squared for your station's playout and automation then AutoTrack Pro can be configured to interact with your Myriad system to provide information on tracks that are played and tracks that are dropped to allow more accurate song rotation and schedule histories.

Installing AutoTrack Pro

To Install AutoTrack Pro, place the CD in your computers CD drive and the installation page should automatically open.
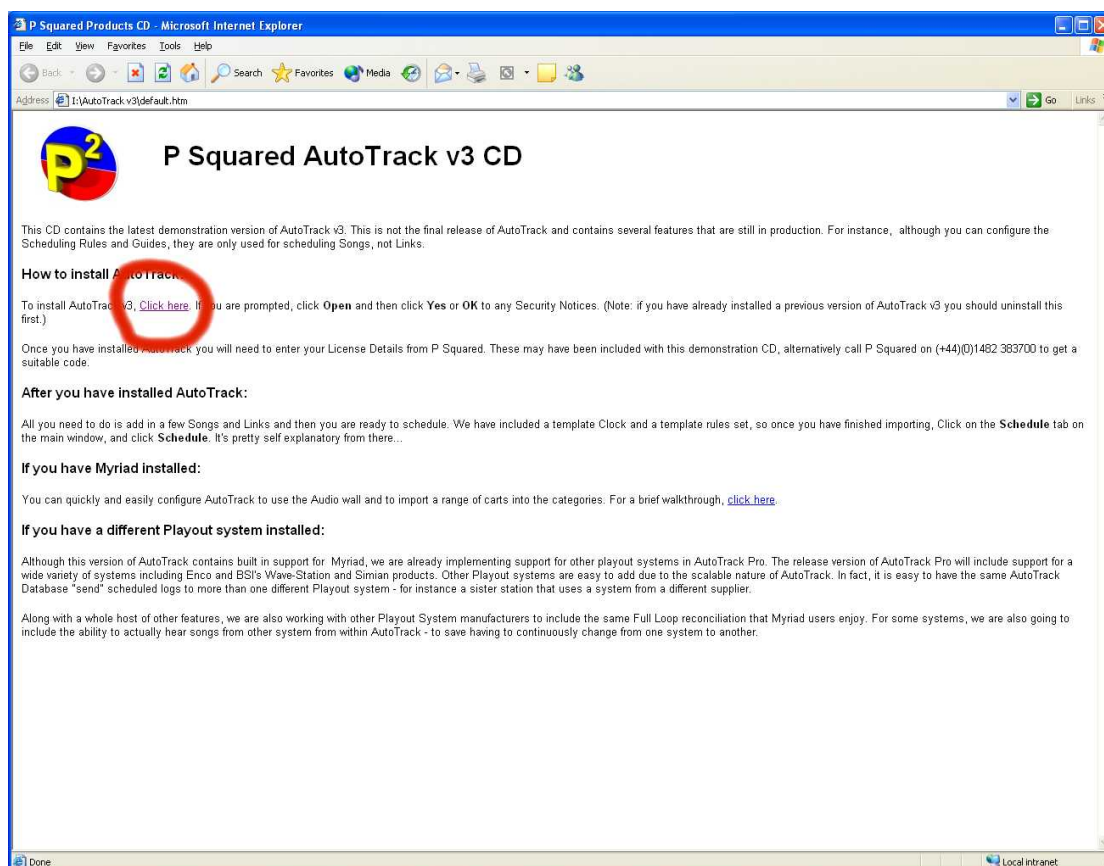
Click on the hyperlink to the start the installation and click on Open when the Open / Save screen appears.
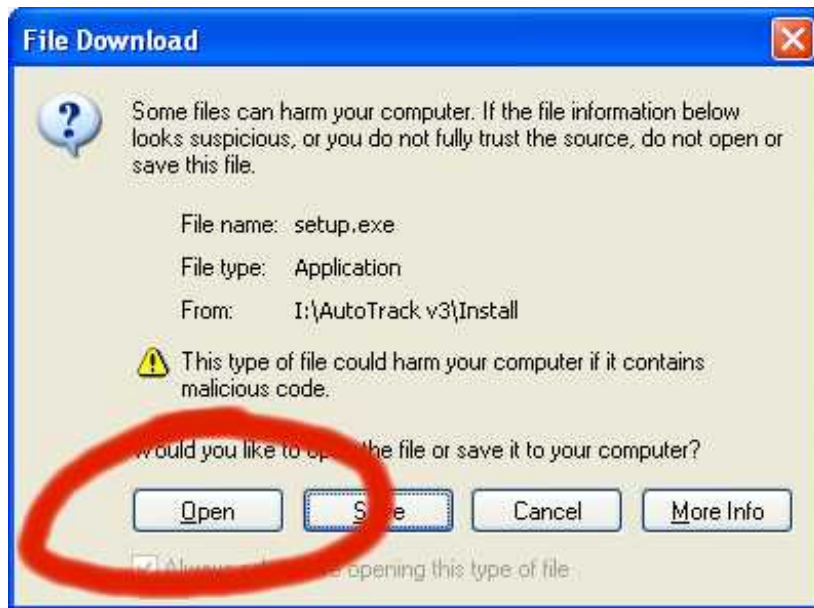
This will start the InstallShield installation process. Follow the on screen instructions to install AutoTrack Pro.
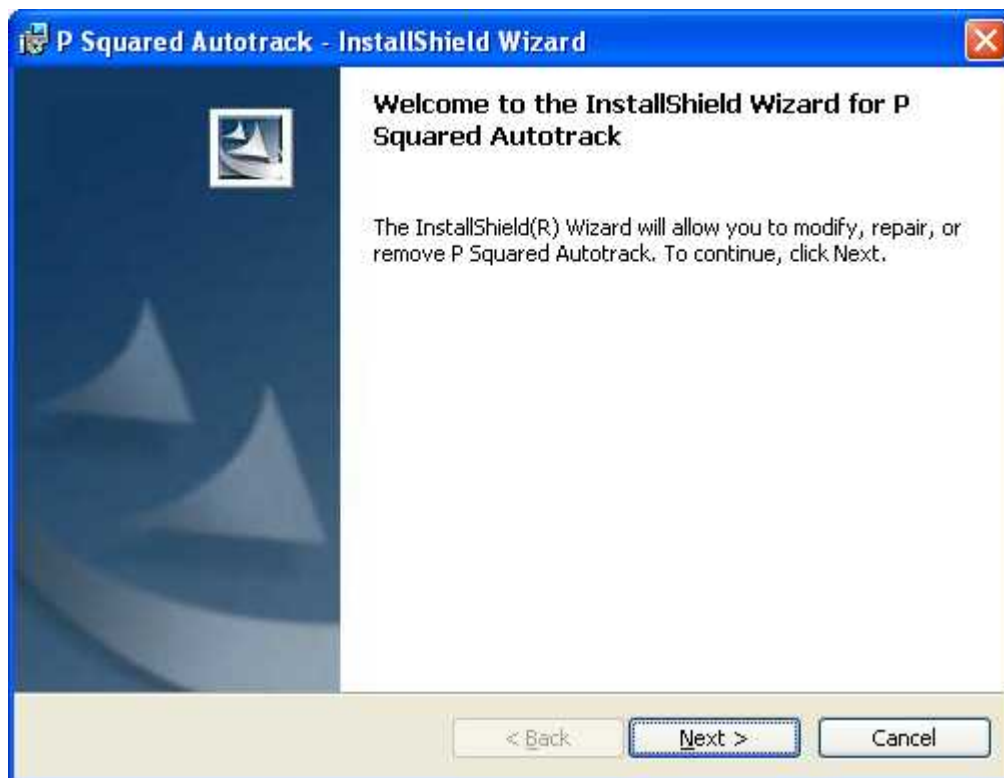
Once the installation process is complete you are ready to run AutoTrack Pro for the first time.

Licensing AutoTrack Pro

Although you have installed AutoTrack Pro, you will not be able to actual use the system until you have entered a current License Code that must be obtained from P Squared.

The License Code that you are issued is dependent on a number of factors including the type of license that you have purchased, the number of PC's you are allowed to install it on and also the actual PC that it is being installed on to.

The Licensing procedure for AutoTrack Pro is not complicated but you will need certain information to hand to get started and you will also need to either call or email P Squared with certain information in order to complete the License procedure.

The first thing that you will need is the License Certificate that P Squared provided with your software.

If you can not find it or are not sure you received it with your system then do not worry. You can still call or email P Squared to get a valid License Code although it will take a little longer.

The information that you need from your License Certificate is as follows.

P Squared Unique ID (P-SQUID) – This is your stations unique reference name.

The License Certificate Name – The name that the License Code is issued for.

The Features Code – A special code that outlines specific features in AutoTrack Pro

All three of these can be found on your **Software License Certificate** or can be provided by P Squared.

Once you have this information, you are ready to run AutoTrack Pro for the first time and start the License procedure. When AutoTrack Pro starts up, if no License Code is available or the License Code that you were using is not longer valid then the AutoTrack Pro Licensing screen is displayed.
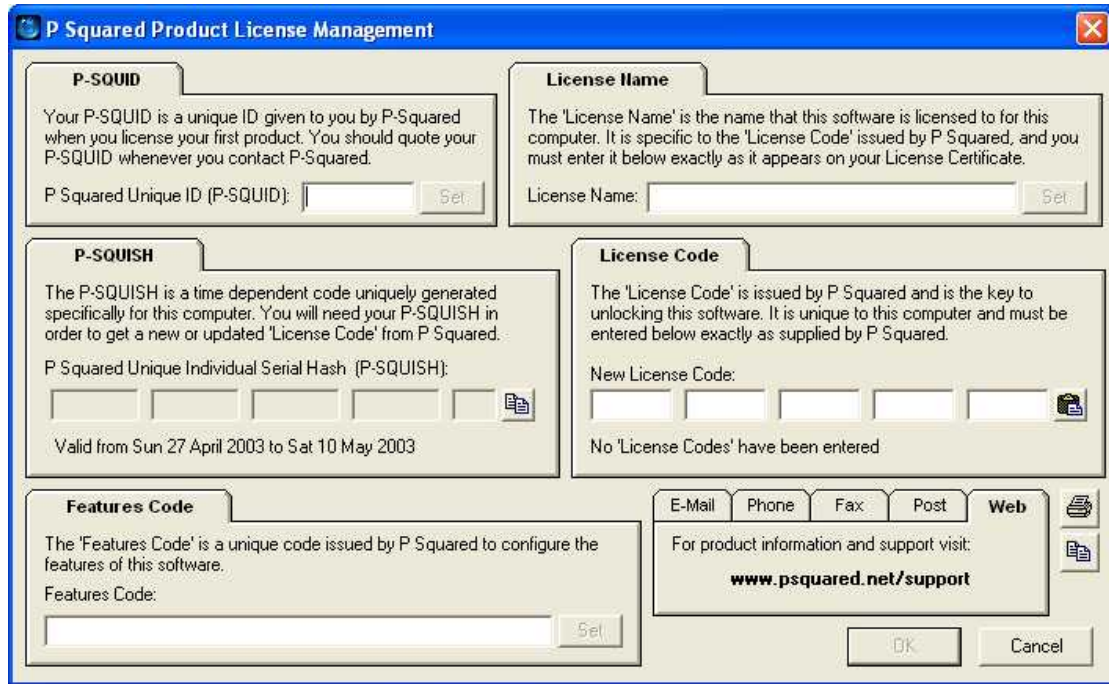
Step 1 – Type In The P-SQUID

Type the P Squared Unique ID in to the P-SQUID section of the License screen and click on the Set button to the right of the P-SQUID.

Step 2 – Type In The License Name

Type the License Certificate Name in to the License Name box and click on the Set button to the right of the License Name.

Step 3 – Type In The Features Code

Type in the Features Code in to the Features Code section on the License screen and click on the Set button to the right of the Features Code.

Step 4 – Note The P-SQUISH And Contact P Squared

You will see that the P-SQUISH section of the License Code is automatically generated at this stage. The P-SQUISH is a unique number generated based on the License details you have entered, the time and date that you have entered them and the physical PC that it is being installed on to.

The P-SQUISH is needed by P Squared in order to generate a valid License Code for your AutoTrack Pro system. You will need to either ring P Squared on 01482 383700 (+44 1482 383700 from outside the UK) between the hours of 09:30 – 17:00 (British

Standard Time), Monday to Friday (excluding holidays), outside of these times, you can still ring and leave your details as well as your P-SQUISH. Alternatively you can send an email to licenses@psquared.net with your station details, product title and P-SQUISH.

TIP: The copy button to the right of the P -SQUISH is really useful if you plan to email the code to P Squared .

The P-SQUISH is only valid for a few days after it is generated so you should contact P Squared as soon as it is convenient.

Step 5 – Enter The License Code P Squared Give You

Once you have provided P Squared with your P-SQUISH, they will either give you a new License Code on the phone or email it to you if you contacted them via email initially.

Once you have this new License Code, type it in to the License Code section on the License screen and click on the OK button to complete the Licensing process.

Tip: The License Code is only valid for a couple of days from issue so you should enter it as soon as your receive it .

Periodic License Renewal

In most cases, AutoTrack Pro is purchased as a single, 'one off payment' license, which means that you make a single payment to P Squared and they grant you a license to use their software for the duration of the license period (usually 50 years).

Although most AutoTrack Pro users will only have to make one payment in order to use the software on an ongoing basis, all License Codes that are issued are restricted to only be valid for a certain period of time (usually 12 months). This is to help prevent software piracy that increases the cost of software production and jeopardises continued development and support.

Your AutoTrack Pro system will automatically warn you 14 days before it's current license is due to expire so you should always have time to obtain a new license code from P Squared.

To obtain a new license code, click on the Settings menu and select License Details from the list. This will open the License screen, which already has your P-SQUID, License Certificate Name and Features code from the last time you entered a License Code.

The P-SQUID will also be available although it will be different to the one used the last time you entered a License Code as it is generated (in part) based on time ands date.

Make a note of your P-SQUID and P-SQUISH codes and telephone or email P Squared (see above for contact details and hours of business) with the details. They will then give you a new License Code that can be typed in to the License Code.

Database Enabler Codes

In addition to the License Codes that allow you to use AutoTrack Pro (covered above) each Database within AutoTrack Pro also needs a unique Enabler code to allow you to open and work with the database. The reason that the Enabler code is necessary is that a standard AutoTrack Pro license covers the use of the product for a single radio station. You can run multiple stations from a single AutoTrack Pro installation but you do need to obtain an individual Enable code for each database.

You will be asked to enter the Enabler code for each database, the first time you enter the database or the first time that you enter a database after a pervious Enabler code has expired.

P Squared will provide Enabler codes along with License Codes for AutoTrack Pro and the enabled period will usually be the same as the main License code, however, you may also be able to obtain a short term Enable code to allow you to set up additional experimental or short term databases. These short term codes are issued at P Squared's discretion.

So What Do I Get For My Money?

Confused? AutoTrack Pro's licensing model can be a little daunting when you first look at it. It may also be confusing knowing exactly what your license does and does not allow you to do. To help sort out any misunderstandings, the following list tells you exactly what a single standard AutoTrack Pro license allows you to do.

A Standard Single AutoTrack Pro License Entitles You To The Following

Main AutoTrack Pro License - Allows you to install AutoTrack Pro on your main desktop computer for general, everyday use.

'Portable' AutoTrack Pro License - In addition to installing AutoTrack Pro on your main 'desktop' PC, you can also install a second copy on your laptop or home PC for working on when away from your desk. This second license is included as part of the main license but it does carry restrictions in that the 'portable' license is capable of performing all AutoTrack Pro functions except Send To Playout which is disabled on your 'portable' license.

Main Database Enabler Code - The standard AutoTrack Pro single license includes an Enabler code for your main database which offers full functionality.

Trial Database Enabler Code - As well as the Main Database Enabler Code, the standard license also entitles you to a second Trial Database Enabler Code which allows you to build up and test alternate databases but will not allow you to 'send To Playout' or print out the schedules. This database is intended to allow you to experiment without taking a chance with your 'on air' database. You can copy between databases using AutoTrack Pro and you can enable the 'Trial' database as a 'Full' database at any time by contacting P Squared (although your standard single license will only allow you to have one Full and one Trial database at any one time). P Squared are also able to issue short term 'Full' enabler codes to allow you to setup and prepare a 'Trial' database for an RSL, upgrade it to 'Full' for the broadcast and then downgrade again afterwards. This is a lot more cost effective (depending on how often you do it off course) than purchasing an additional 'Full' database that you do not use all the time.

So What Else Can I Buy To Expand My System?

To expand your system beyond the single standard setup outlined above, the following upgrades are available from P squared.

Additional AutoTrack Pro Licenses - These allow you to install AutoTrack Pro on additional PC workstations to access and work on the same databases as your single standard license. These additional licenses offer a low cost option to allow two staff members to work on and maintain a single set of databases from separate machines.

Additional Full Database Enablers - You can add additional databases to your AutoTrack Pro system to allow you to generate and maintain the schedules for multiple stations (using multiple playout systems) from a single PC. Additional 'Trial' Database Enablers are also available to allow you to setup and test new databases before committing to purchasing a new Full Database Enable.

For details on costs for both of these options, please contact sales@psquared.net.

Naming Your Radio Station

Once you have entered a valid License Code, AutoTrack Pro will be ready to run for the very first time.

Before you get to the main AutoTrack Pro screen, you will be asked to enter the name of the radio station that you want to use AutoTrack Pro for. If you are using AutoTrack Pro to schedule output for multiple radio stations, you only need to put the first stations name in at this stage.

Choose a name that is unique for your station and that will be easily recognisable for future reference. Lets say we are setting up the system for a stations called Hot FM, we would set the station name to be Hot FM.

Once you have entered the station name, you will get another message box informing you that the average song length has been calculated for each category. As this is the first time that we have run AutoTrack Pro, this message is irrelevant but later when we look at copying databases, the meaning will become clearer.
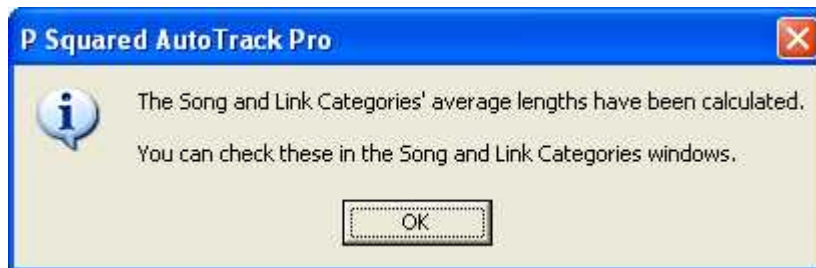
AutoTrack Pro is now ready to run for the first time.

Chapter 3: Main Screen Layout

AutoTrack Pro
Basic Screen Layout

The Menu Bar

Songs - add and review songs on the system

Links - add and review jingles, promos, text and links on the system

Clocks - build frameworks for your programs and assign them hours of the week

Rules - configure and assign the scheduling rules for your station

Schedule - generate, manipulate and remove the schedule AutoTrack Pro produces

Playout - send or retrieve final schedule from the playout system

Cart Players - Listen to the music on your system (Myriad users only)

The main AutoTrack Pro screen is broken down in to three distinct areas. The Tab Strip, the Menu Bar and the Cart Players (Myriad users only).

The AutoTrack Pro Tab Strip

The left hand side of the screen contain a 'tab strip' that is used to access the different areas of AutoTrack Pro. The tab strip is broken in to the following sections.

The Songs Tab

The Songs Tab allows you to add new Songs to the system as well as search for Songs already on the system and view the schedule history of a particular or artist. You can also use the Deck View option on the Songs tab to manage the individual Song Category Decks and to 'drag and drop' Songs between different Categories.

The Links Tab

The Links Tab allows you to add new audio or text based Links to the system. In AutoTrack Pro, Link refers to jingles, promo's, pre-recorded voice links or 'live read' text items that are scheduled by AutoTrack Pro in much the same ways as Songs. Links are divided in to Link Categories and each Link Category has it's own deck (just like Song Categories). Links can by audio items, text items or a mixture of both. You can also use the Link Tab to search for an existing Link on the system, view a Link's schedule history and 'drag and drop' Links between Link Categories using the Link Deck Viewer.

The Clocks Tab

In AutoTrack Pro, Clocks are frameworks for an hour of program to be scheduled by AutoTrack Pro. The best way to think of Clocks as a paper list of what you want to appear in the final show, without filling in the actual detail. For example, a clock could look something like this:

Jingle – Hour Start Category
Song – A List
Song – B List
Jingle – Station ID Category
Advert Break – XX:10 (10 past hour advert break)
Jingle – Station ID Category
Song – Recurrent…..etc

This is obviously simplified but it hopefully gives you the basic idea behind clocks.

The Clocks Tab allows you to add new Clock to AutoTrack Pro and to search through and manage the existing Clocks on the system.

You also need to assign Clocks to actual hours of the weeks and this is done with the Assign button on the Clocks Tab.

The Rules Tab

The Rules Tab allows you to add and manage the Show Rules and Station Rules that AutoTrack Pro uses when it is scheduling output based on the Clocks that have been assigned to specific hours of the week.

Show Rules are rules that refer specifically to items with a specific show or Clock. You can have multiple Show Rules sets in a single Clock so you can effectively change the specific Show Rules several times within a single hour-long show.

Station Rules are different because although you can have several sets of Station Rules on the system, only one is active at any one time and the active Station Rule set applies to all shows generated by the system.

The Rules Tab is also used to search for existing Show and Station Rule sets and to manage their use.

The Schedule Tab

The Schedule Tab allows you to actually tell AutoTrack Pro to pick all the Songs and Links for shows in a specific time and date range.

Once the Schedule has been generated, the Schedule Tab also allows you to view what AutoTrack Pro has produces and to make any amendments that you wish before the final schedule is sent to your playout system. When using the View Schedule facility, AutoTrack Pro will help you to make amendments by allowing you to view alternative selections for Songs and Links as well as warning you of any Rules that would be broken if the alternate selection was used.

The Schedule Tab also includes tools needed for un-scheduling previously scheduled time and date ranges and to remove them from your playout system. You can also view a Schedule History to see what times AutoTrack Pro has already generated schedule for.

The Playout Tab

The Playout Tab allows you to send the generated schedule for a specific time and date range to your Playout system. This is often done automatically as part of the schedule process so you may find that you do not visit he Playout Tab very often.

Myriad users can also use the Playout Tab to remove sections of programming from the Playout system and also to update information between AutoTrack Pro and the Songs tab on the Myriad Audio Wall.

This introduction to the tab strip is only meant to give you an overview of what is available; all of the options and tools available on the AutoTrack Pro Tab Strip are covered in more detail later in this manual.

The Cart Players

The Cart Players are located at the bottom of the AutoTrack Pro screen and are only used if you are using Myriad as your stations main playout system. The Cart Players allow you to review audio-based items such as Songs or audio Links (jingles etc) much the same as you would in your Playout system. There are usually two Cart Players in AutoTrack Pro.

The three control buttons on the right hand side of the Cart Player are used to control playback and the position indicator located beneath the Cart Description can be dragged to 'fast forward' or 'rewind' the Cart.

We shall look at Cart Players in more detail later on.

The Menu Bar

The Menu Bar is used to access all other areas of AutoTrack Pro including setting the system up, adding or amending Songs or Link Categories as well as generating reports and managing your system.

The options available on the Menu Bar are covered in more depth later in this manual.

Chapter 4: Setting Up AutoTrack Pro

Before we can start adding Songs or Links to AutoTrack Pro there are several decisions that must be made about how you intend to use the system and how you want to define the Songs and Links that you add.
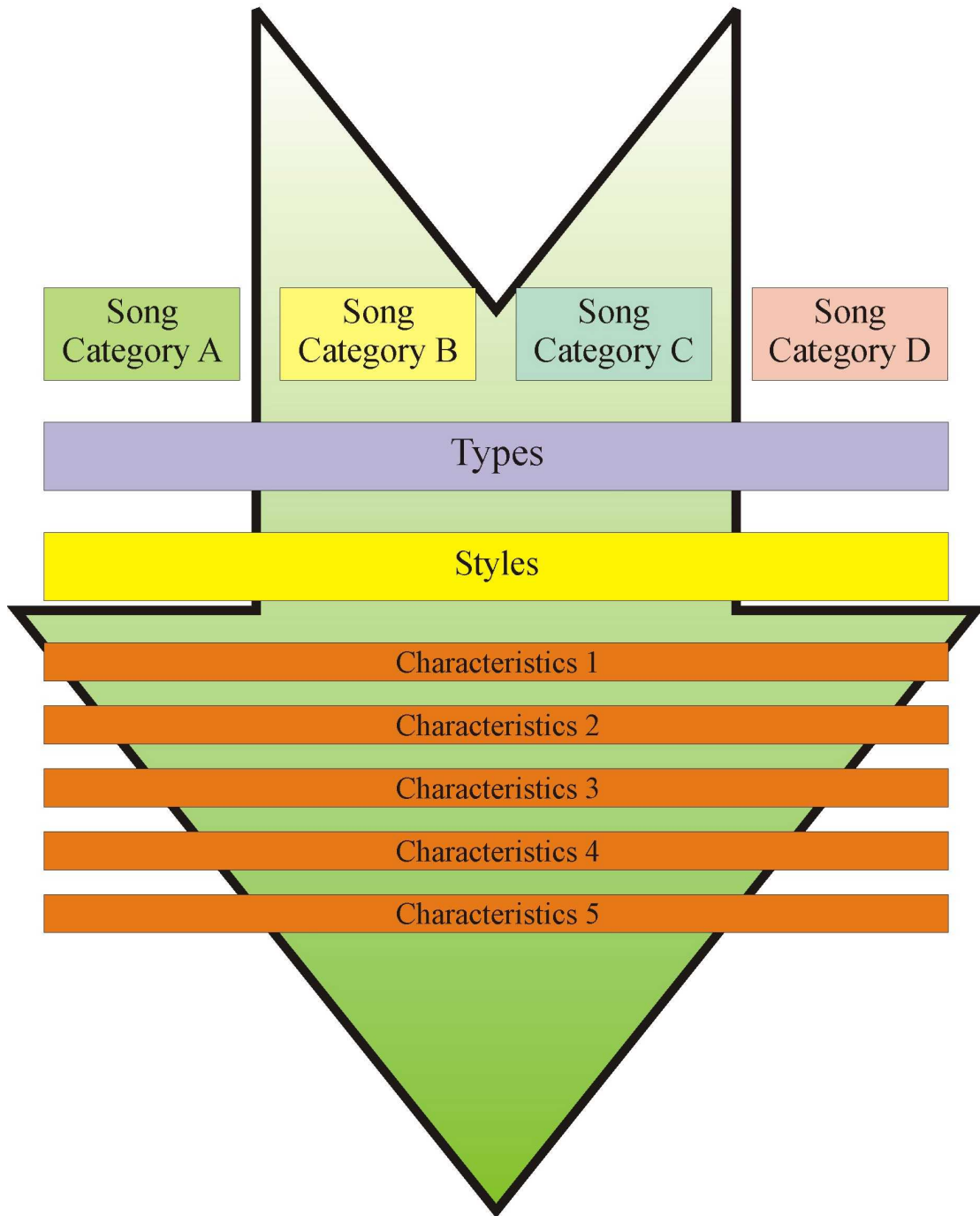
It is worth taking some time to consider the following elements in AutoTrack Pro. You will get more from the system if you have a clear idea about how you want the scheduling to work and getting it right at this stage can save you a lot of hard work and anguish later on.

AutoTrack Pro comes pre-configured with the most common settings so we only need to add a few bits of additional information.

Song Classification Hierarchy

AutoTrack Pro uses a number of ways to classify Songs and they are arranged in a hierarchical fashion. The diagram below shows how Song Categories are the top level of classification with Types being effectively a sub-category. Next is Styles which are used to classify the style or feel of the song and finally, there are up to five Characteristics that describe the individual sound of the Song in question.

Song Classification Hierachy

Song Category A

Song Category B

Song Category C

Song Category D

Types

Styles

Characteristics 1

Characteristics 2

Characteristics 3

Characteristics 4

Characteristics 5

Each one of these levels of classification is customisable to your stations needs so whilst one station may use something like this:

Categories: A-List, B-List, Recurrent, Classics
Types: Pop, Dance, Rock, Rap
Styles: Fresh, Summer, Big Night Out
Characteristics: Energy, Tempo, Mood

Another station may opt for:

Categories: Pop, Dance, Rock, Rap
Types: 80's, 90's, Current, Chart
Styles: Funky, Glam, Hi Energy
Characteristics: Energy, Tempo, Mood

Unfortunately there is not really a right or wrong way of setting the system up. The only important thing to remember is that the most important classifications should be your Song Categories with Types being the next most important, Styles coming next and Characteristics being general descriptions for the Songs.

The classification methods outlined above are the main methods used in AutoTrack Pro but there are also several other classification methods that are available if you wish to use them. They include:

Media – For non-hard disk items
Gender – For sex
Collections – Used for grouping similar items together in a Song Category

Collectively, we refer to these different ways of classifying a Song as Classification Elements.

You will also come across other Classification Elements in AutoTrack Pro and because almost all are totally configurable, you can create your own system that suits you station perfectly whether you are playing cutting edge dance or classical jazz.

Not all stations will need to use all of the methods of classification and even if you set them all up, you do not have to use them on all Songs or even at all if you decide later on that you have too much classification.

This example is focused on Song classification in AutoTrack Pro but a very similar hierarchy exists for Link classification also.

Song Categories – General Overview

Probably the single most important thing to get right in AutoTrack Pro is setting up the Song Categories that you want to use. The Song Categories are top level of classification of Songs in AutoTrack Pro. Each Song Category is it's own Deck (see The Deck Of Cards Scheduling Method for more details) and the Songs in the Deck rotate as they are scheduled. When AutoTrack Pro is generating a schedule, it uses the Clocks to determine what Song and Link Categories go where in each hour of programming. Whenever a Song from a particular Song Category is called for by a Clock, AutoTrack Pro uses the Song at the to of the Deck providing that doing so does not break any rules. It then moves that Song to the back of the Deck to begin it's rotation again.

The reason why the Song Categories are so important is because they are the primary way of classifying Songs in AutoTrack Pro and although you can add or change Song Categories at any time, doing so may involve re-categorising items in your database.

Setting Up Song Categories

You can set up to 32 top level Song Categories in AutoTrack Pro. To set up your Song Categories or to add to amend existing Song Categories, click on the Songs option on the Menu bar and select Categories from the drop down menu.

This will open the Songs Categories window, which allows you to add Song Categories to the system.
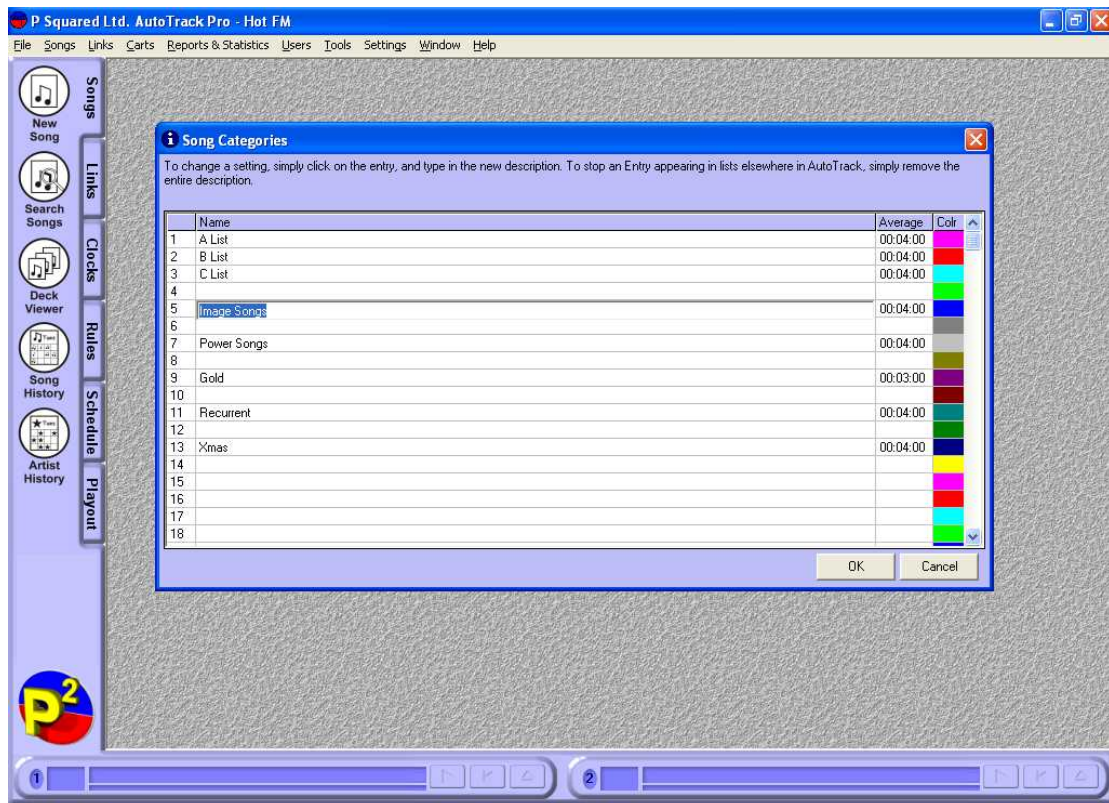
The Song Categories are numbered from 1 – 32 and for each Song Category, you can type in a name and an average length for the Songs in the category. You can also click on the coloured box to the right of each category to select the colour that represents that category on any graphs or reports the AutoTrack Pro produces.

You can add in as many Songs Categories as you like (up to 32) and can amend the names or add new categories in to empty slots even once the system is up and running.

Tip: The average length is used as a starting point only. As you add Songs to each category, AutoTrack Pro can update the average Song l   ength in each category to accurately reflect what is actually in each category. This feature is accessed by the Tools menu and the Update Average Length option.

Song Types – General Overview

Song Types are best considered as a secondary categorisation method after the Song Categories. Each Song that is entered in to the system is added to a Song Category but it can also be added to a Song Type as well.

The main difference between Song Category and Song Types is that the Song Types that you set up are used by Songs in all Song Categories.

Lets say that we have three Categories – A-List, B-List and Recurrent and three types of Rock, Pop, Dance.

Songs in the A-List could be of Type Rock, Pop or Dance as could Songs in the B-List or the Recurrent Categories.

Unlike Song Categories, giving a Song on the system a Type is not compulsory so you can set up Types and then only use them on selected Songs, AutoTrack Pro simply ignores any rules that refer to Types if they apply to a Song that has no Type. You may decide that Types are not necessary at all in which case there is no need to set them up and they can be ignored from this point onwards.

Setting Up Types

Song Types are set up in a very similar way to Song Categories. To set them up, click on the Songs option on the menu bar and select Types from the menu list.

This will open the Song Types window.
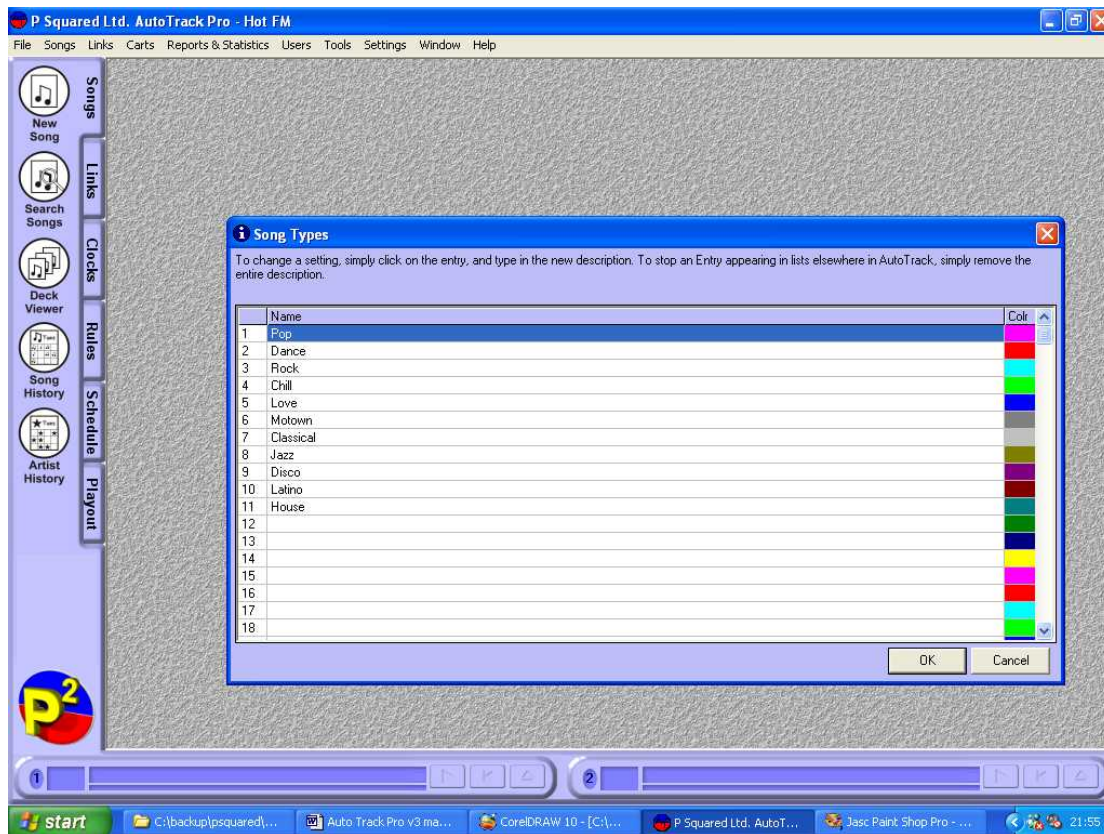
As with Song Categories, the Types are numbered 1 – 32 with space by each Type for the name to be entered. There is no average length in Types but you can select the colour for each Type by clicking on the coloured box to the right of the Type.

When you are happy with you Song Types, click on OK. You can add additional Types (up to 32 in total) or alter existing Types at any time by going back to this window.

Media – General Overview

The majority of modern radio stations use some type of hard-disk based playout system and one of the jobs of the music scheduler is to generate a program schedule that can be used by the hard-disk playout system for live assisted or automated programs but, it is important to remember that you can use AutoTrack Pro to schedule live programs that are not restricted to hard-disk items available on the playout system.

The Media list allows you to add up to 32 Media sources to the system so when you add a Song to the database, you can select whether it is on the playout system or if it is CD or Minidisc.

Setting Up Media

Setting up the Media that you want to use on your system is done in virtually the same way as you set up Song Categories or Song Types but before we do that, we are just going to alter one of the default setting in AutoTrack Pro to allow the inclusion of non-hard disk based items in the system.

Click on the Settings menu and select Database Settings.

This opens the Database Settings for AutoTrack Pro which cover almost all of the major setting for the system. We will cover these in more detail later but for now, make sure that you are on the General Tab and un-tick the box that says Only Allow Hard Disk Items. Click on OK to save the settings.
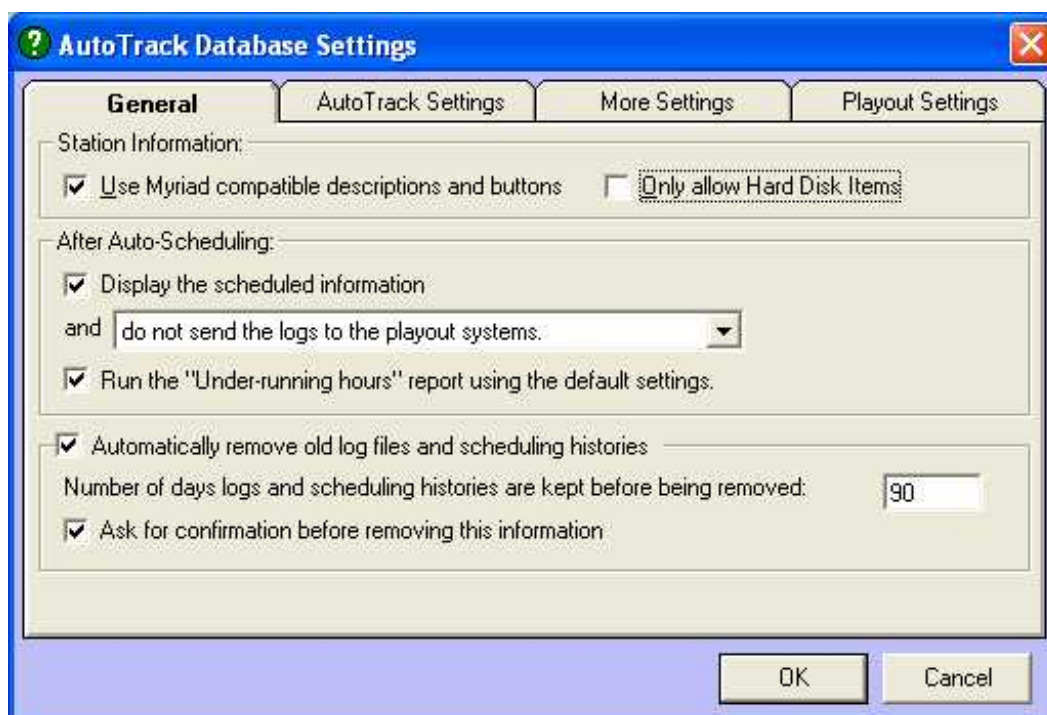

While we have this screen open, it would be worth mentioning that if you are using AutoTrack Pro for a playout system other than Myriad then you should un-check the Use Myriad Compatibility Descriptions and Buttons option, which removes references to Myriad specific features or names. More on this later.

Now we are ready to add in some Media so click on the Songs menu option and select Media from the menu.
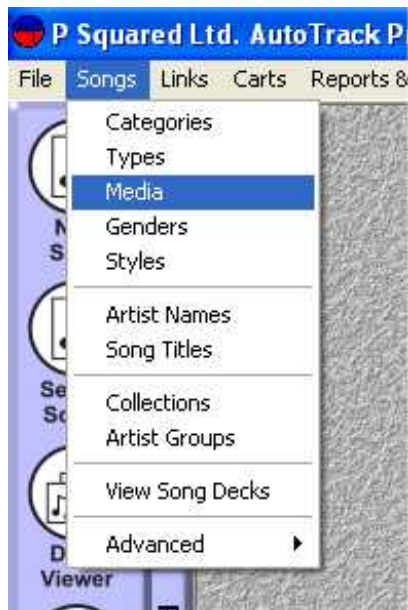
This opens the Media window.
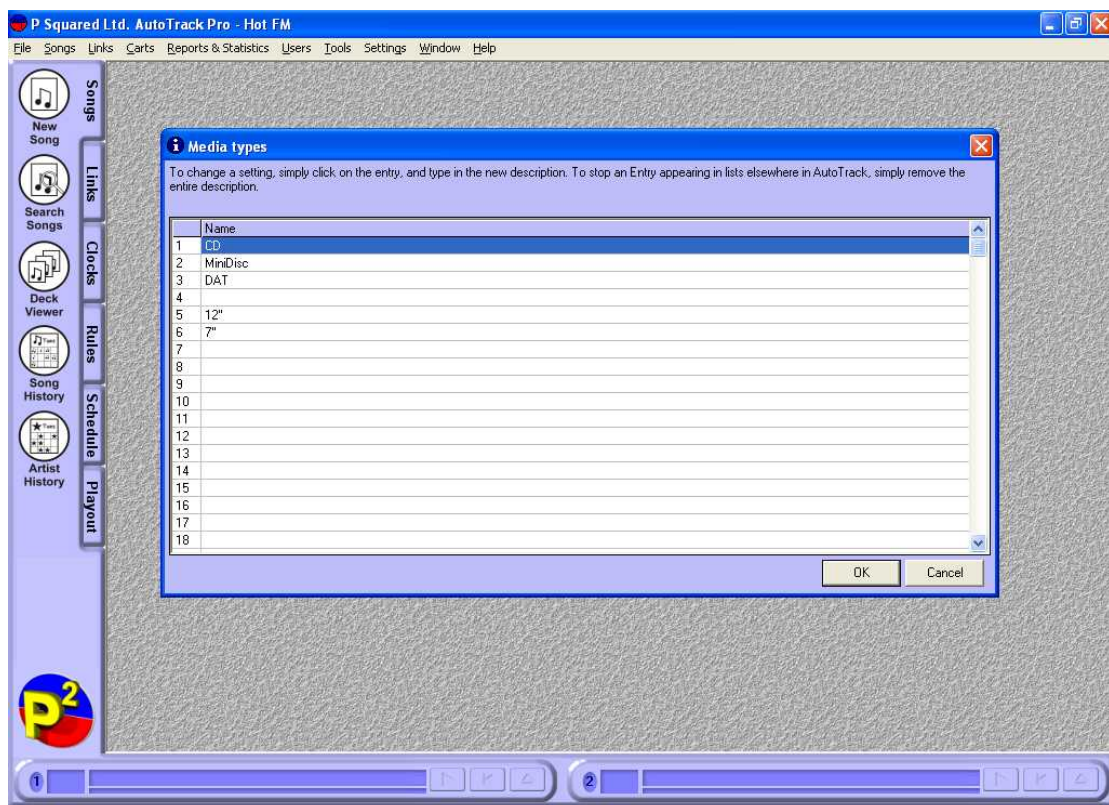
As with the other classification types that we have already covered, you can have up to 32 different Media that are labelled sequentially. To add a new Media, click on an

empty slot and type the new Media name in to the box. There is no additional information to be entered for Media. Once you are happy, click on OK.

Genders – General Overview

AutoTrack Pro lets you set up to 32 different Genders to help you classify Songs. Thirty two may seem a little extreme after all there are only two aren't there?

Well yes and no. Obviously there are only two true Genders but in AutoTrack Pro we use the Genders to specify more than just the sex of an artist. You may wish to add 'boy band' or 'girl band' to the list. You may also add things like 'male soloist' and 'male group' to your Gender list.

AutoTrack Pro allows you to apply special rules to Gender, which means that you could set the system up so that it could not play two 'boy band' Songs in a row or that if it plays a 'boy band' Song it must follow it with a 'female solo artist' etc.

Genders are another example of AutoTrack Pro's flexibility. The majority of stations will only need to use a few Genders but should more prove necessary in the future, you can always add them in.
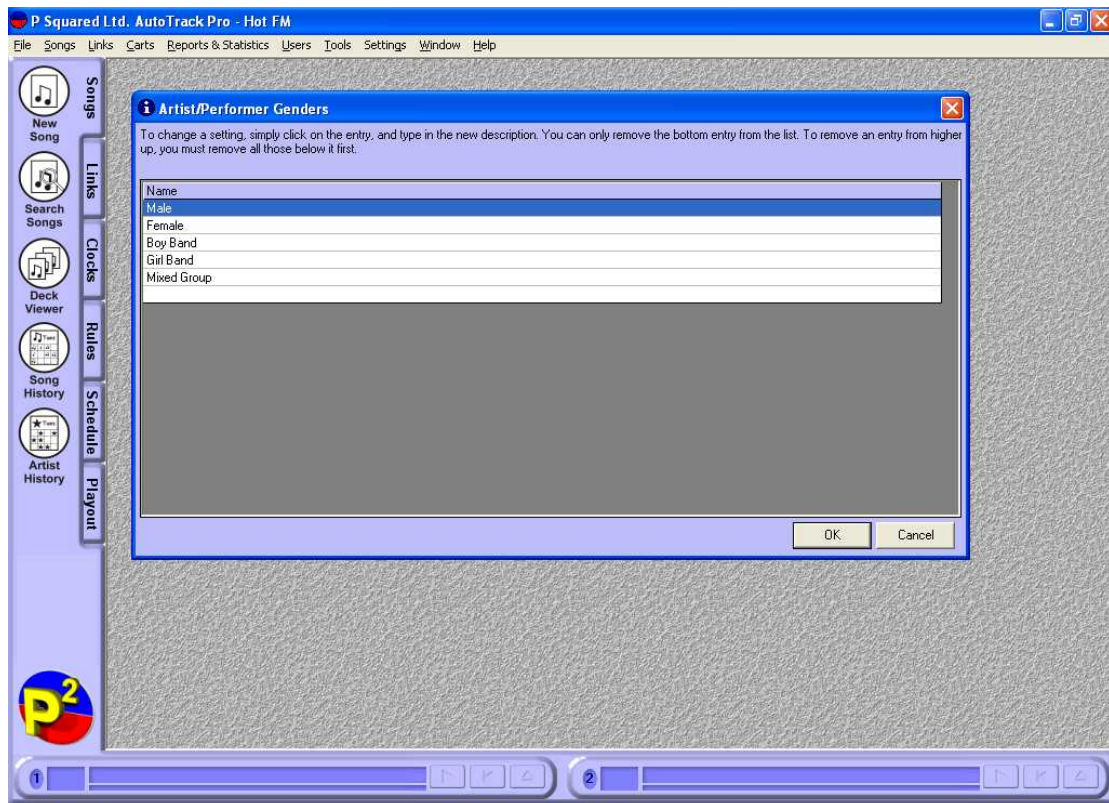
Setting Up Genders

If you are reading through this manual then you can probably guess how to set up Genders already but if not then here is how to do it.

Click on the Songs menu and select Genders from the drop down options.

The Genders window then allows you to add in Genders by clicking on one of the 32 slots and typing the Gender name in to it.

<Picture needs updating to cover new colours per gender>

You can also alter the colour used by AutoTrack Pro for each Gender by clicking on the coloured box to the right of each Gender and selecting the desired colour. Colours are displayed by AutoTrack Pro whenever Genders are used in setting up Rules for your station or in generating reports that refer to Genders.

Styles – General Overview

As you can see from the diagram Song Classification Hierarchy section, Styles are the third major classification element in AutoTrack Pro and unlike all the other elements, you can set up to 64 different Styles to help you classify your Songs.

Another fundamental differences that separates Styles from all the other classification elements is that a Song in the system can have multiple Styles (up to 64 in fact) whist it can only be in one Song Category and be one Type, Gender, Media etc at a time.

> *Interesting Fact: actually this is not strictly speaking true as the same Song can exist in Multiple Song Categories at the same time as long as it has a unique Song Number in each.*

Styles can be applied to items in Clocks and can be configured to be used as a 'AND' condition (e.g. must be Funky Style AND Big Night Out Style) or as a 'OR' condition (e.g. must be Funky Style OR Big Night Out Style). For more information on Style usage, please refer to the Clocks section of the manual.

Setting Up Styles

Just when you thought you had it all in hand, along comes Styles which are set up in a slightly different way to all the classification elements we have looked at previously.

To set up Styles, click on the Songs menu and select the Styles option.

The Styles window looks very similar to all the others but if you look closely you will see that the Styles are not numbered sequentially like the other Classification Elements.
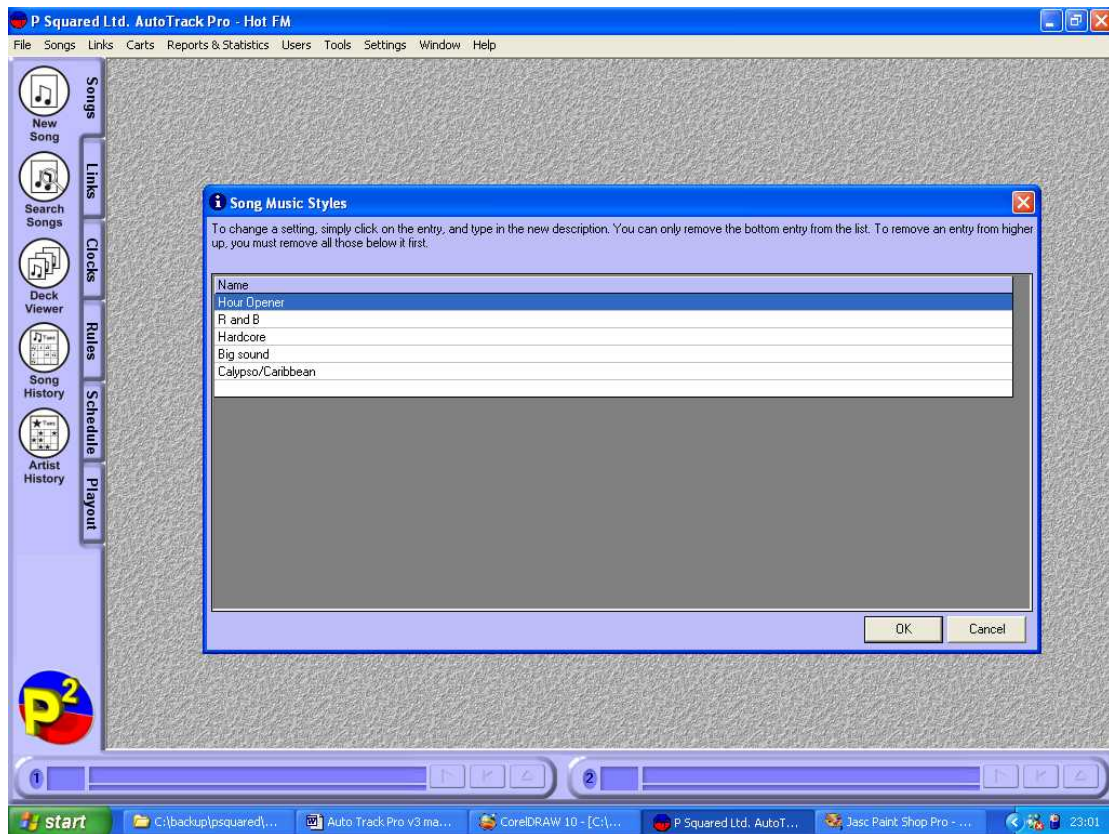
You can see that the bottom Style is blank. This can be used to add a new Style to the system by typing in a new Style name in to the blank Style box and press <Enter> on your keyboard. The new Style will be added to the list and a new blank Style will appear at the bottom.

You can continue to add Styles to the system in this way for up to 64 Styles. When you are happy, click on OK to save your new Styles and return to AutoTrack Pro.

Characteristics – General Overview

Unlike all of the other classification elements we have looked at so far, Characteristics allow you classify certain attributes to help describe the sound of the Songs and to specify to what degree the Song matches the description.

The simplest way to explain Characteristics is by way of example.

Lets say we wanted to use a Characteristic called Power to describe how powerful each Song is in the database. We would first add the Characteristic of Power to the system and then enter six levels of Power by which to rate each Song. One example might be:

Characteristic: Power

Weakest Level: Feeble

Weak level: Poor
Middle Week Level: Below Average
Middle Strong Level: Above Average
Strong Level: Strong
Strongest Level: Powerful

You can set up to five different Characteristics in AutoTrack Pro with six levels of strength in each. These Characteristics can then be applied to a whole Song or separately to the beginning and end of a Song as it is added to the database. The Show Rules then allow you to tell AutoTrack Pro what levels of Characteristic are allowed to follow what other levels on a show by show basis giving you complete control of the diversity of transition that the system will schedule between two Songs.

You can set up to five Characteristics but you can chose to use any combination of them, or none at all on a Song by Song basis. Characteristic Rules are ignored when they are applied to a Song that does not carry that Characteristic.

Tip: Please note that Links and Songs share the same Characteristics to allow the transition control rules to apply to Songs and Links equally.

Setting Up Characteristics

Characteristics differ considerably from the other classification elements that we have covered so it is not surprising that setting them up is done in a different way also. To set up Characteristics, click on the Settings menu option and select Database Settings.

This will open the Database Settings window. Click on the AutoTrack Settings tab to add or amend your Characteristic settings.
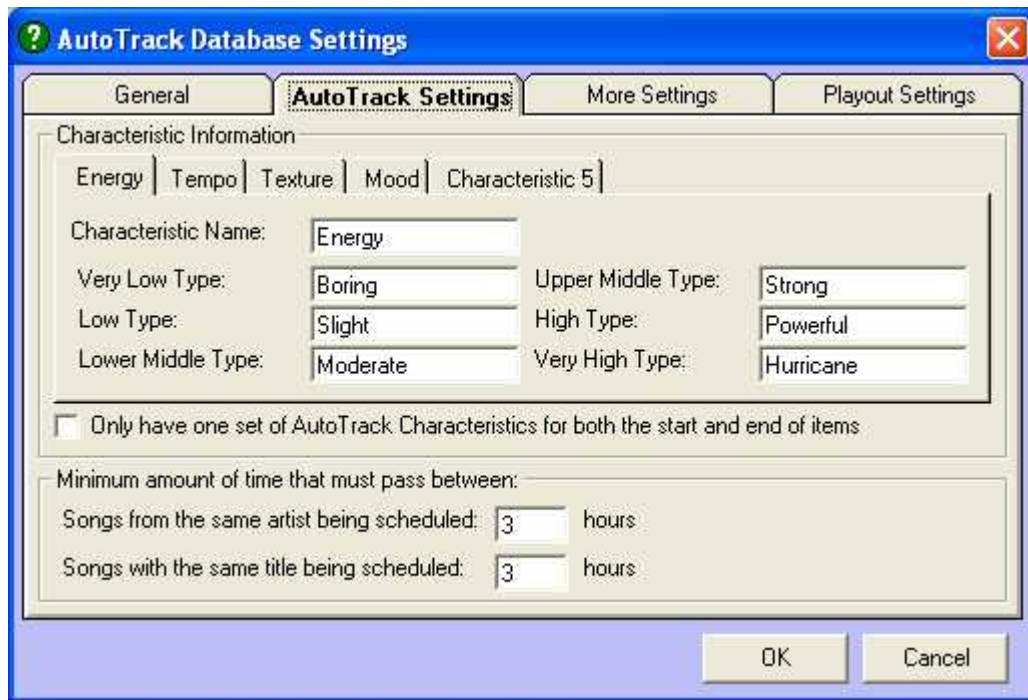
As you can see from the picture above, the five Characteristics are each represented with their own tab and the Characteristic Name and six levels are shown on the tab. In the above example, the Energy Characteristic is selected and the six levels are clearly visible. If we wanted to alter either the name or the description for any of the six levels, all that we would need to do is type the amendment in to the appropriate box and click on OK.

If you are running AutoTrack Pro for the first time or you have not set up Characteristics before then the five tabs along the top would read Characteristic 1 – 5 respectively. In the above example, only the fifth Characteristic has not been set. So lets set it?

Click on the Characteristic 5 tab and type in the new Characteristic name in the Characteristic Name box. As you do this you will see that new name will appear on the tab as you type it in.

Next, type in a suitable description in to each of the six levels for the Characteristic.
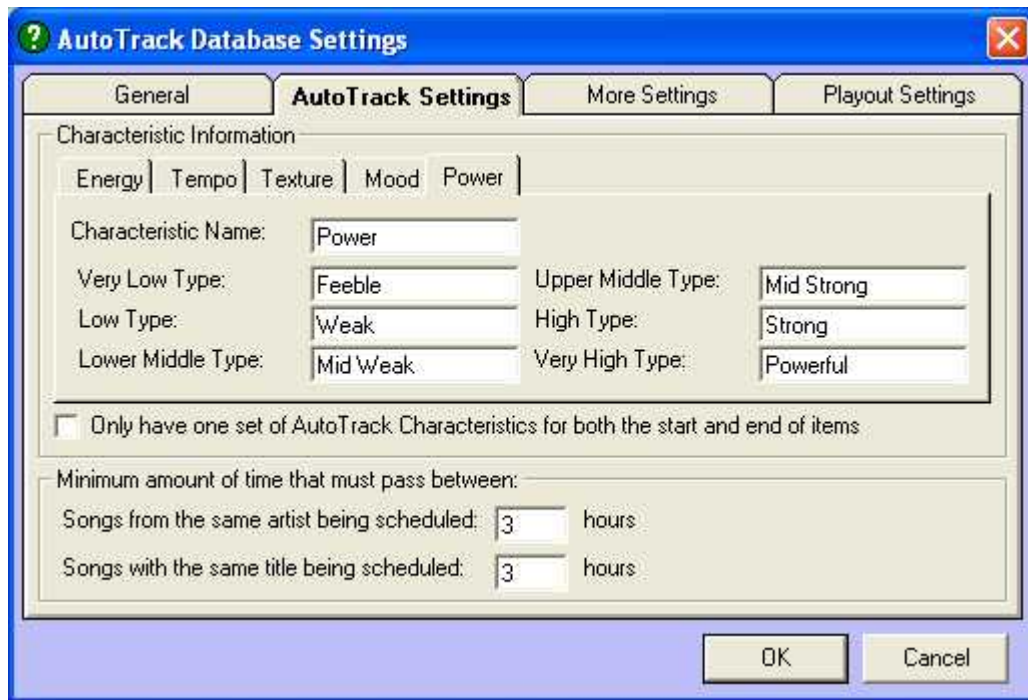
That is it, all we have to do is click on OK to save your new Characteristic but before we do, lets take a look at the other settings on this page.

Below the main Characteristic section is a tick box for Only Have One Set Of AutoTrack Pro Characteristics For Both Start And End Of Items. This long winded description basically allows you to decide whether you want to set the Characteristic levels separately for the begin and of each Song that you add to the system, or whether a single level with suffice for both.

It is more accurate to have separate Characteristics for the start and end of each Song (box un ticked which is the default) but his does take more time when adding Songs to the system so you may wish to tick this option anyway.

The final section of the screen allows you to set a default minimum separation for both Artists and Titles in AutoTrack Pro. The minimum separation means that once a Song is scheduled, that Song or any other Song by the same Artist(s) can not be scheduled until the respective minimum time (in hours) has elapsed. In AutoTrack Pro you can set minimum separations on a per Artist and per Song basis so this setting really acts as a safety net to provide a default amount of separation between similar tracks.

Collections – General Overview

Collections in AutoTrack Pro are a way of grouping multiple items within a Song (or Link) Category so that the Collection acts as one single item in the Deck, rotating as normal but the Collection itself contains several items in a 'mini deck' such that when the Collection reaches the top of the Deck that it is in, the item at the top of the Collection 'mini deck' is scheduled (providing that doing so does not break any rules)

then it is placed at the back of the Collection 'mini deck' and the whole Collection is placed at the back of the main Category Deck.

Effectively, a Collection is a 'mini deck' that rotates within the main Song or Link Category Decks.
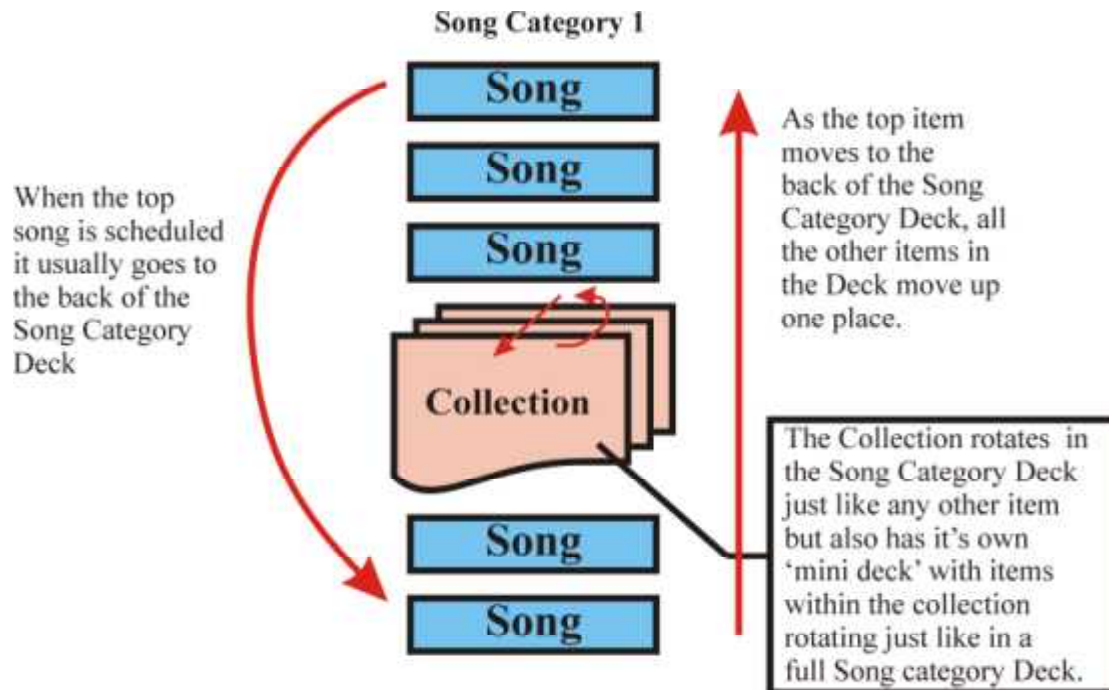
Unlike most of the classification elements we have looked at so far, Collections are designed to be added to the system as you use it so you do not have to make any decisions at this stage as to what Collections you want to use.

There is no limit to the number of Collections that you can have in AutoTrack Pro but Collections can only 'live' in one Song or Link Category Deck at a time so any items added to a Collection from another Category Deck will effectively be moved to the Category that the Collection lives in.

AutoTrack Pro allows you to add Collections to both Song and Link Category Decks. There is no fundamental difference between them.

Setting Up Collections

You can set up Collections at any time from either the Songs menu or directly from a Song or Link Card as you add the card to the system, or edit it later.

To setup a Song Collection you can click on the Songs menu and the select Collections option.

This will open the general Collections Window, which allows you to select either Song Collections or Link Collections to work with. It also covers Artist Groups but more on these later.
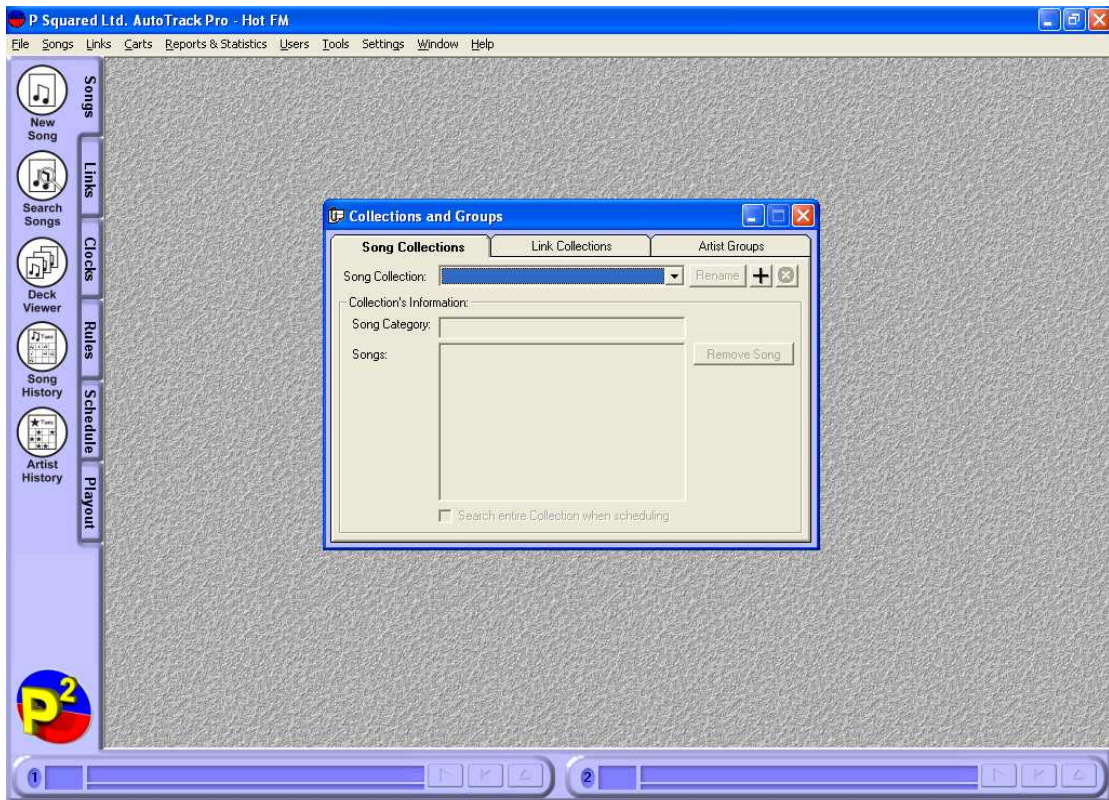

We are wanting to add a new Song Collection in this case so make sure that the Song Collections tab is selected and click on the ”+” button to create a new Song Collection.

This will then open the New Collection window, which allows you to create a new Song Collection with in one of the Song Categories.

Alternatively, you can also create a new Collection from a Song or Link Record Card. To do this, create a new Song or Link Record Card (click on the Songs or Links tabs and click on the New Song or New Link buttons on the left hand side of the screen) or open an existing one (use the Search button on the Songs and Links tabs to find the respective Song or Link you are looking for). Click on the More Information tab (the second tab along for both Songs and Links.
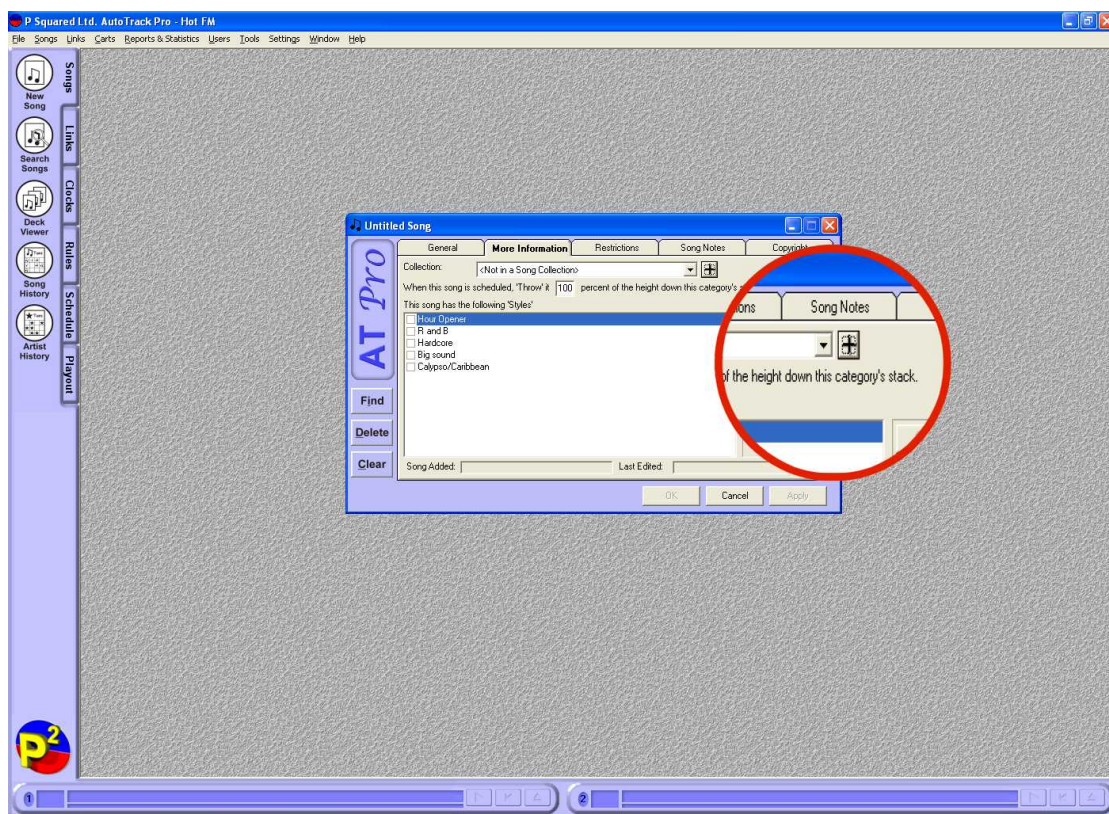
Next click on the "+" button to open the New Song or Link Collection window.

N.B. AutoTrack Pro will automatically open the New Song or Link Collection window depending on whether you were working with a Song Or Link Card when you click on the "+" button.

In this case below, we have created a Song Collection called "The Kylie Recent Hits Collection" which will rotate within the 'A – List' Song Category. You may wish to set up a Collection like this to put the last few Kylie hits in to. This way, the "Kylie's Hits" collection rotates through your "A – List" Song Category just like a normal Song but when it gets to the top of the Deck, a Song from the Collection is picked instead. This means that you can have the "Artist" Kylie being played as regularly as other Songs in your "A – List" but instead of the same Kylie Song playing, her recent hits are rotated evenly.

When a Collection reaches the top of the Deck, the top item in the Collection is the first to be considered for scheduling. AutoTrack Pro then applies all the normal Rules and Guides to see if that Song is suitable to be scheduled. If it happens that the top item in the Collection is not suitable, one of two things can happen. Either AutoTrack Pro will then continue to look through the Collection for an item that is suitable or it will ignore the other items in the Collection and look at the next item in the Category Deck as normal.

The route that it chooses is determined by the "Search Entire Collection When Scheduling" option that is available on the New Collection window (see above). If this item is checked, when the top item in a Collection is not suitable to be scheduled (because it breaks a rule or a guide) then the next item in the Collection is checked for suitability instead. This process continues until a suitable item in the Collection has been located and scheduled or until all items in the Collection have proved unsuitable in which case the Collection is treated just like any other non scheduled item and the next item in the Category Deck is examined as normal.

If this option is not selected when setting up the Collection, only the top item in the Collection is examined for scheduling and if it is not suitable then the whole

Collection is treated as a normal failed item and the next item in the Category Deck is examined as normal.

The above explanation is equally valid for both Song Collections and Link Collections and the vagueness about what happens when a Collection fails to schedule is due to the fact that in AutoTrack Pro, what happens when an item at the top of a Category Deck fails to be scheduled is determined by what Rule it would break and how the system is configured to react when that Rule is broken. For more details on Rules and resulting failure actions, please refer to the Station Rules section of the documentation.

Adding Songs Or Links To A Collection

Once we have created a Collection within a Song or Link Category, we can start to add Songs or Links to the Collection. There are two alternative methods for adding Songs or Links to Collections. Both methods work in exactly the same way for both Songs and Links so although we will be concentrating on Songs and Song Collections in this explanation, the same methods can be applied when working with Links and Link Collections.

Songs (or Links) can only be added to a Collection that resides in the same Category as them.

Example: In the above example, we created a new Collection calle   d Kylies Recent Hits in the A -List Song Category with the intention of adding a number of Kylie songs to the Collection so that Kylie as an artist rotates around the A   -List the same as any other Song in the Category but each time the Collection hits the to   p of the Deck, a different Kylie song plays. In order to add the Kylie Songs that we want to the Kylie's Recent Hits Collection, the Songs must be in the A   -List Song Category in the first place. To help you do this, AutoTrack Pro makes it easier by allowin   g you to 'drag and drop' items from one Song or Link Category to another using the Deck Viewers (see View Deck for Songs and Links).

In order to demonstrate how this process works, we will have to skip ahead for a second and assume that we already know how to add Songs and Links to the system and that we have already added a few Songs to the A-List Song Category. It may be worth looking at the 'Adding Songs' and 'Adding Links' section at this stage if you are unsure but knowledge of how the Songs were added to the system is not necessary in order to add them to the Collection.

Method 1: Adding Songs Directly To A Collection

In this method, we will open the Song Record Card for the Song we want and add it to the Collection directly from the Song Card.

In order to do this, we first have to locate the Song that we want to work with. To do this, click on the Songs Tab and then the Search Songs button.
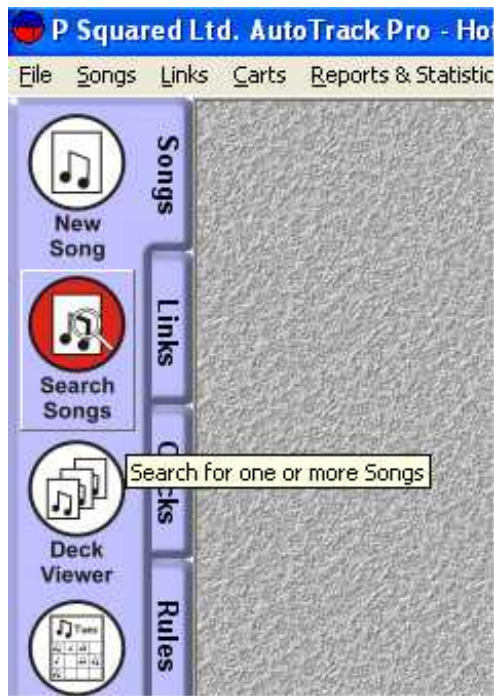
This will open the Search For A Song window which is AutoTrack Pro's primary way of searching for a Song or a selection of Songs.


In this case, we are looking for all the Kylie Songs in the A-List so the simplest way of finding what we want is to list all the Songs that live in the A-List. This is done by selecting A-List from the Category drop down list and then clicking on OK.

As we did not specify any other search criteria, a list of all the Songs currently in the A-List will be displayed.

N.B. For more information on how to narrow your search parameters and get the most from the Search For A So ng window, please refer to the Search Songs section of the documentation.
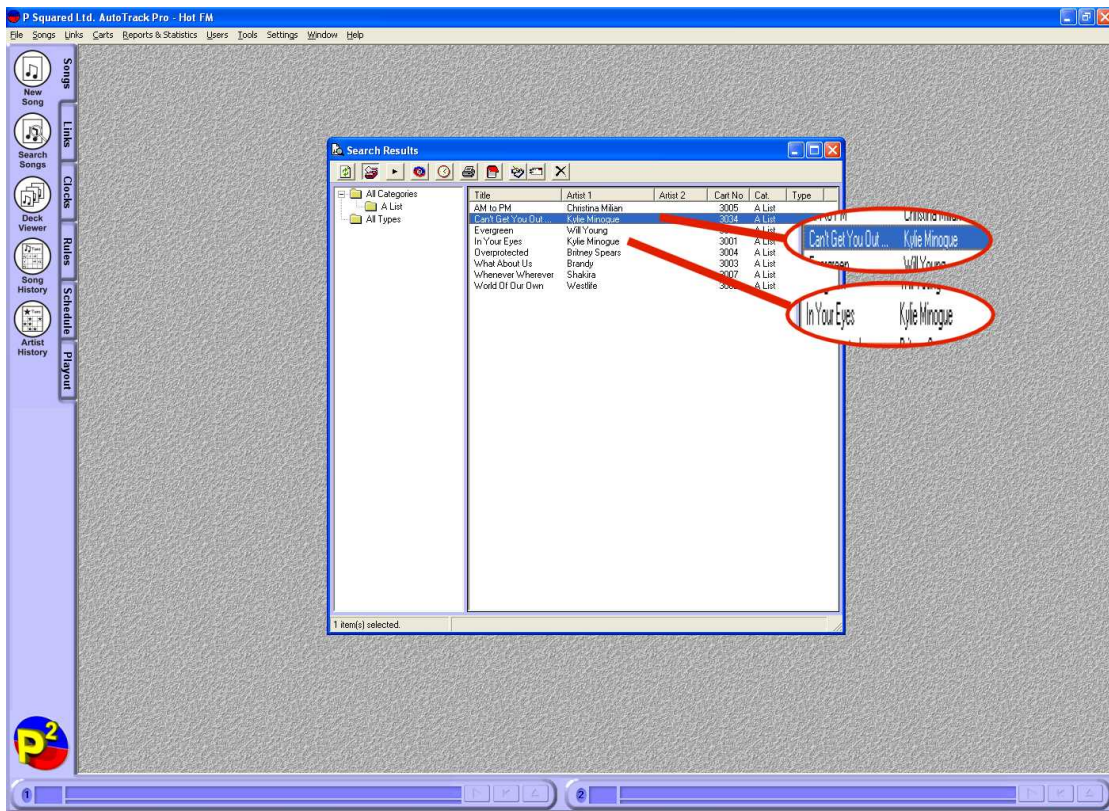
As you can see, there are two Songs in the A-List by Kylie so we want to add them both to the Kylie's Recent Hits Collection. To do this we need to open each Song by double clicking them in turn.

If we double click on the first Kylie Songs (Can't Get You Out Of My Head) then the Song Record Card for that Song is displayed.
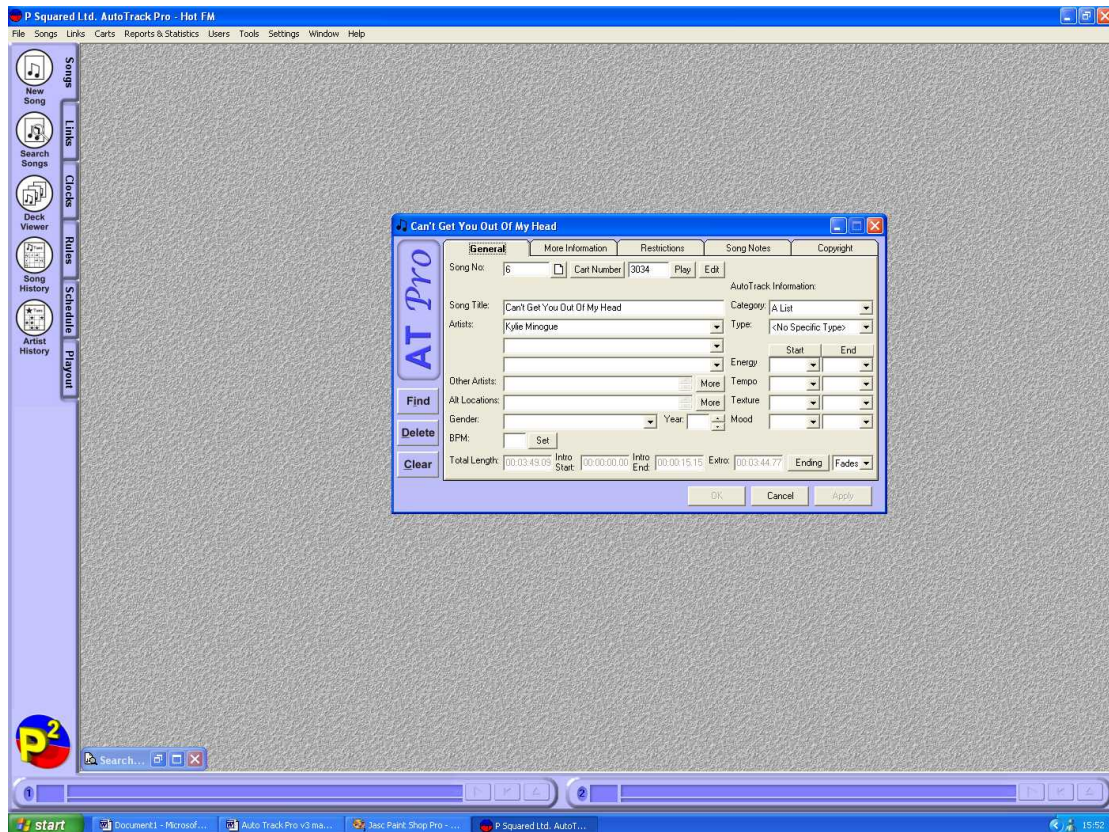
Initially, the General Tab is displayed which contains the general information about the Song. This is the tab that you will use the most when adding Songs to the system and making changes to existing Songs, however, in this case we are not interested in any of the information on the General tab and instead need to switch to the More Information tab to add the Song to the Collection.
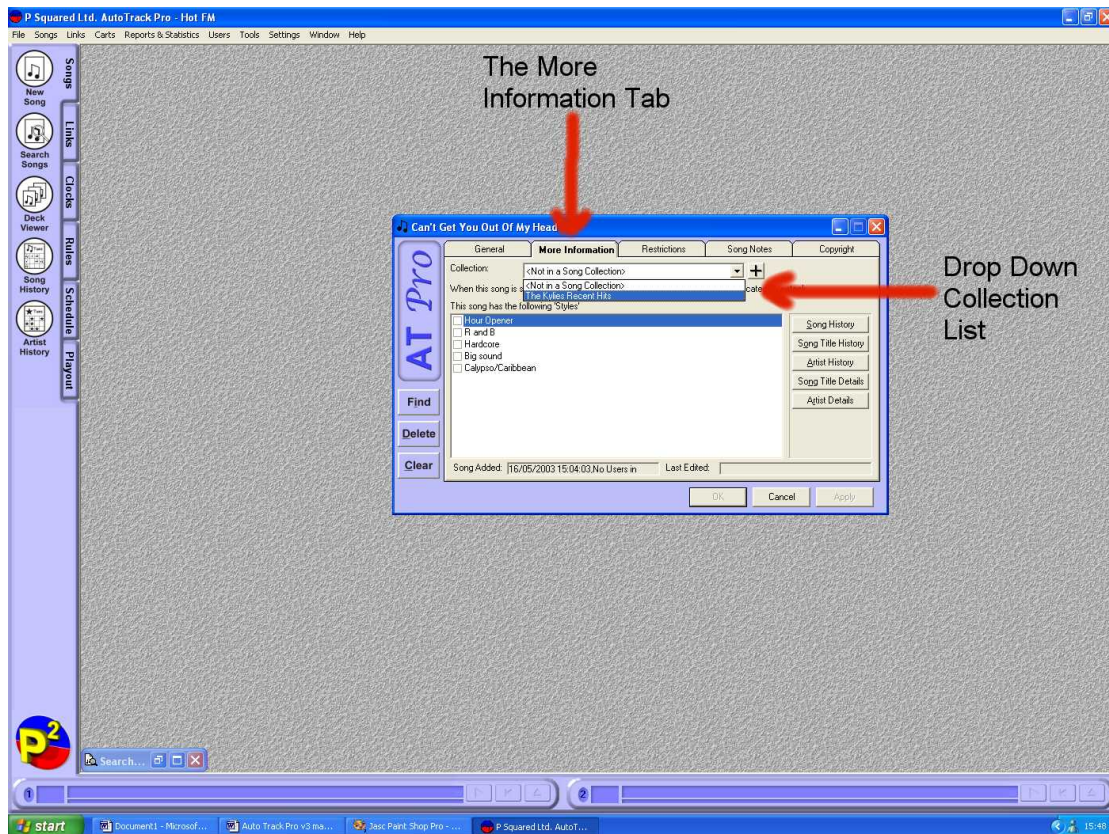
Once on the More Information Tab, the Song can be added to the Song Collection by selected the desired Collection from the drop down Collection List (see diagram).

This Collection List is a list of all the Collections that are available within the Song Category that the Song currently resides in. Highlight the Collection that you want the Song to be added to and click on OK to complete the process.

OK, the first Kylie track has been added but we still have another that we need to add so we now need to go back to the Search For A Song Results (the window should still be open, it is minimised in the screen shots above) and double click on the other Kylie track. Repeat the above process to add it to the same Collection.

Method 2: Dragging Songs From The Deck Viewer

An alternative method for adding Songs to a Collection within the same Category is to use the Deck Viewers to drag the Songs in to the Collections.

As with method 1, we will have to skip ahead slightly as we need to use the Deck Viewers which are a visual way of seeing the Song and Link Categories without having to search for them first. The View Deck buttons are located on the Song and Link Tabs respectively and are used to open Decks for each Category on the system.
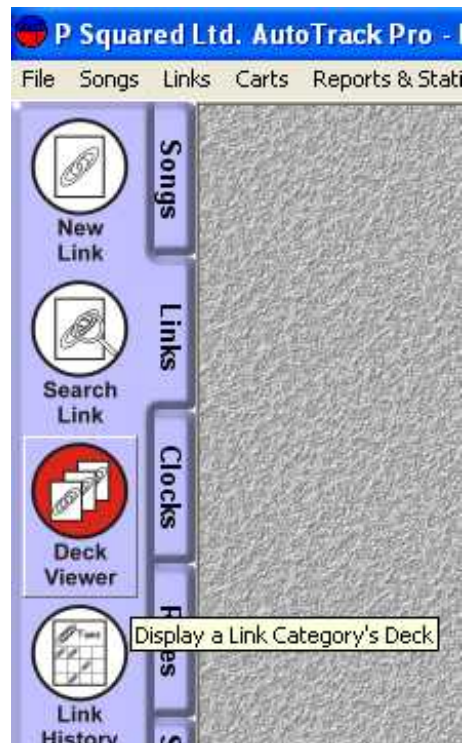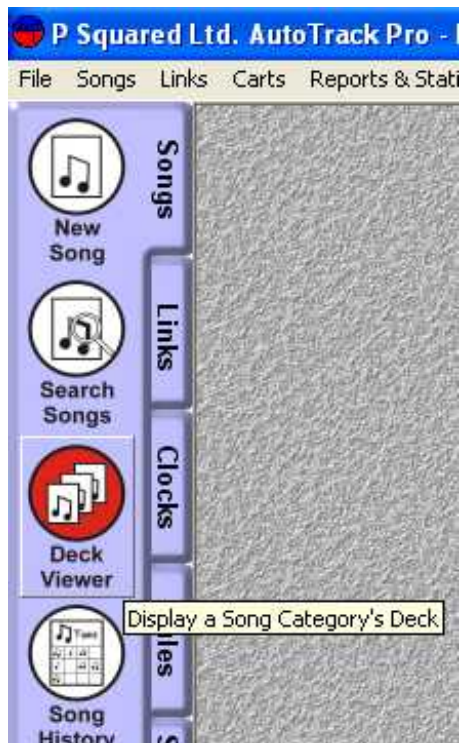
The Decks are often used as a quick way of looking at all the items in a Song or Link Category and because you can 'drag and drop' between them to move items between Categories, they are often the fastest way of manipulating your AutoTrack Pro database.

In this example, we will concentrate on the Song Decks and Song Collections but the same methods can be used for Links.

The first thing to do is to open the A-List Deck by clicking on the Songs tab and then the Deck Viewer button. This will open the Deck Viewer window which allows you to select the Category Deck that you want to work with using the drop down list.
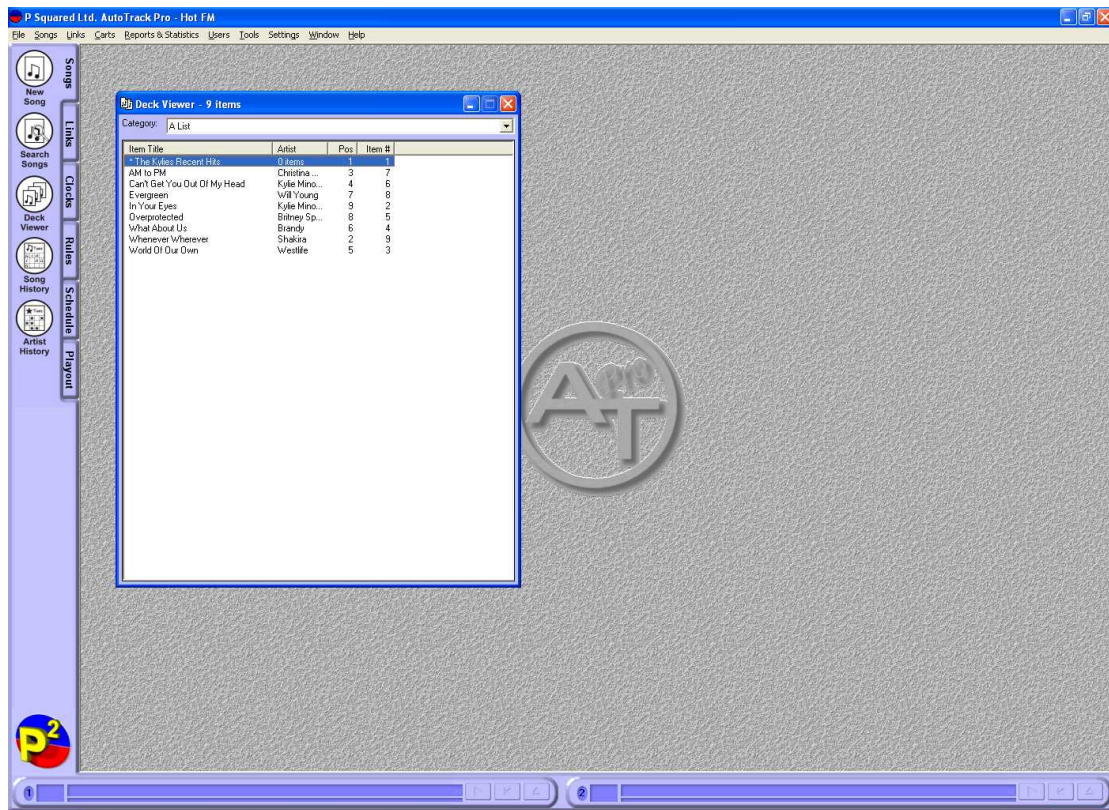
Tip: You can click on the Deck Viewer button several times to open multiple Deck Viewer windows to allow you to drag Songs (or Links) from one Category Deck to another but more on this later (see Deck Viewers).

If you take a closer look at the Deck Viewer, you will see that the Kylie's Recent Hit's Collection is located in the Deck (it has a * beside it to indicate that it is a Collection) as well as all the Songs in the A-List. At present, the two Kylie Songs are still in the general A-List Deck so now we need to add them to the Kylie's Recent Hits Collection.

| Item Title	Artist	Pos	Item #
* The Kylies Recent Hits	0 items	1	1
AM to PM	Christina ...	3	7
Can't Get You Out Of My Head	Kylie Mino...	4	6
Evergreen	Will Young	7	8
In Your Eyes	Kylie Mino...	9	2
Overprotected	Britney Sp...	8	5
What About Us	Brandy	6	4
Whenever Wherever	Shakira	2	9
World Of Our Own	Westlife	5	3

We want to drag the Songs we want to add to the Collection, directly into the Collection window so the first thing we want to do is to click on the Songs menu and select Collections.
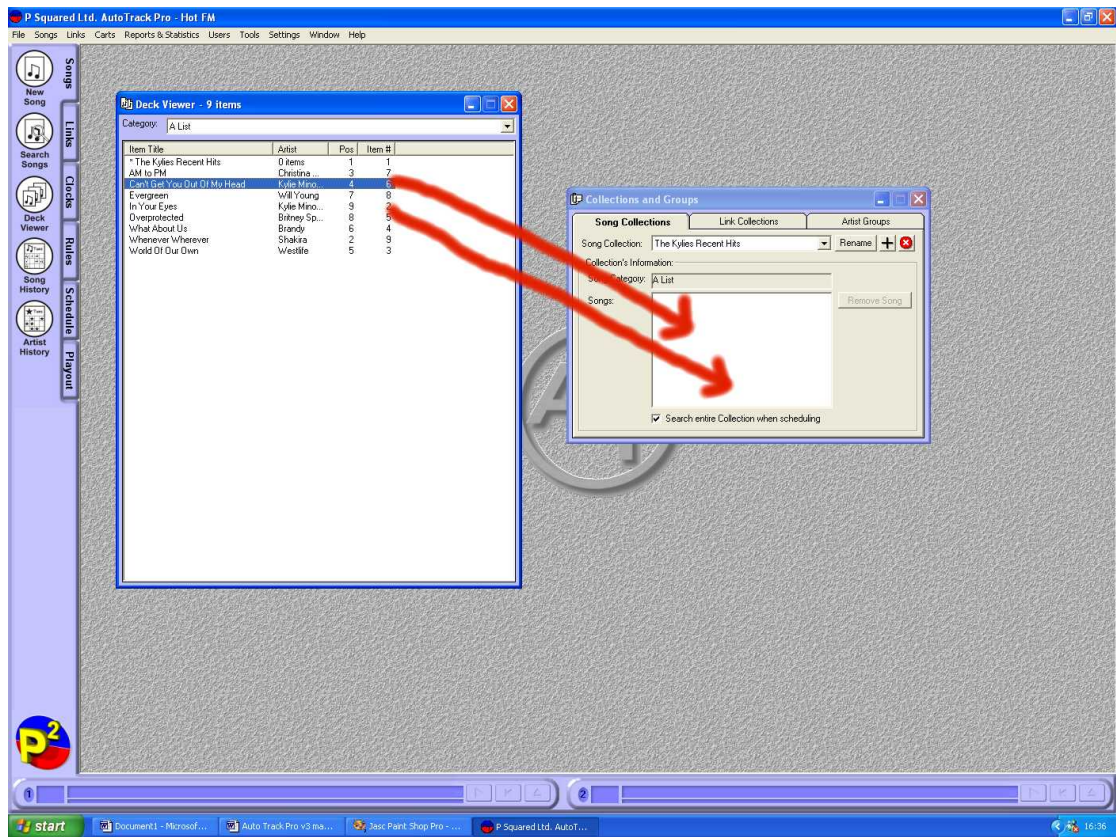
Make sure the highlighted Collection is the Collection that you want to work with using the drop down list on the Collections Window and then drag the Songs that you want to add from the Deck Viewer window in to the Collection window.
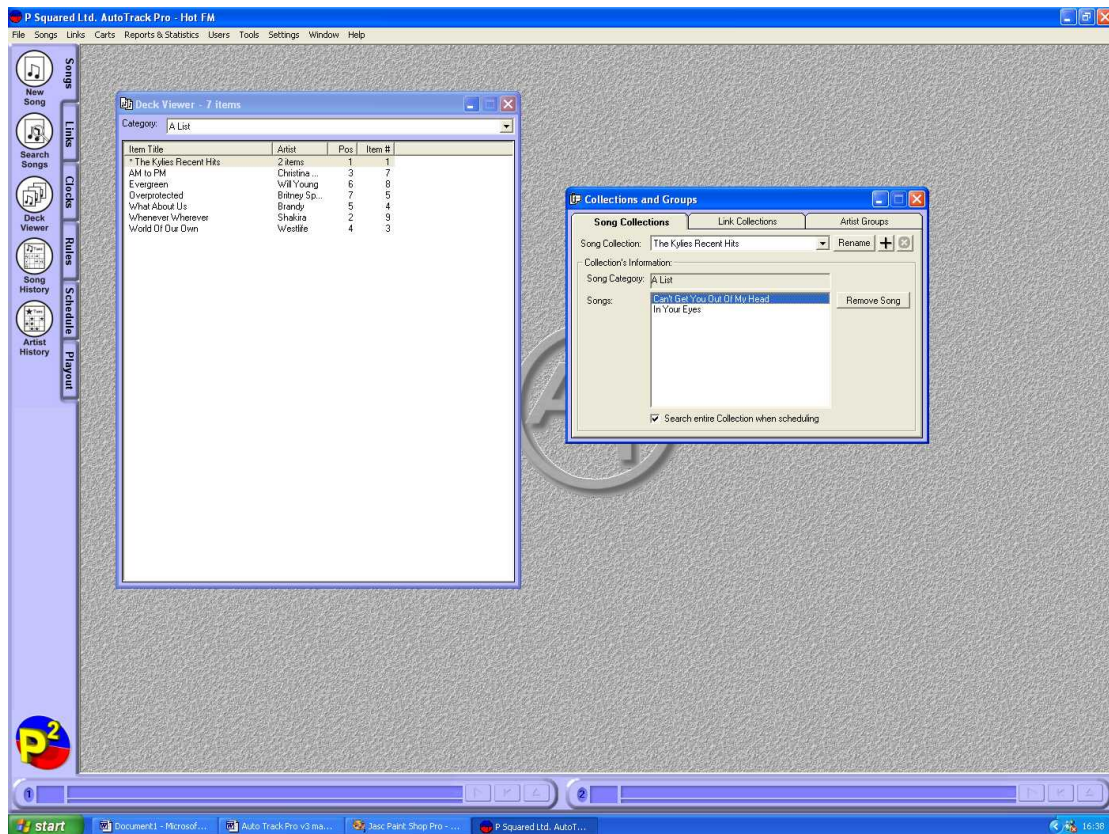
The Songs will be added to the Collection and removed from the main Song Category Deck.

If you attempt to drag a Song (or Link) in to a Collection that is in another Song (or Link) Category, AutoTrack Pro will prevent you from doing so and remind you that items added to a Collection must come from the same Category as the Collection. As mentioned earlier, you can use multiple Deck Viewer window s to quickly and simply move items between Categories to allow you to add them to Collections.

As ever, when working with Links, the processes are all the same but you need to use the Link Deck Viewer and the Link Collections window.

Viewing And Editing and Deleting Collections

Once all the Songs that we want to add have been added, the Collection is ready. If you wish to review the Songs in a Collection or to remove a Song from a specific Collection, you can edit the Collection by clicking on the Songs menu and Selecting the Collections option.

This will open up the Collections window that we have seen before only this time, we can select the Kylie's Recent Hits Collection and view the Songs that are in it.
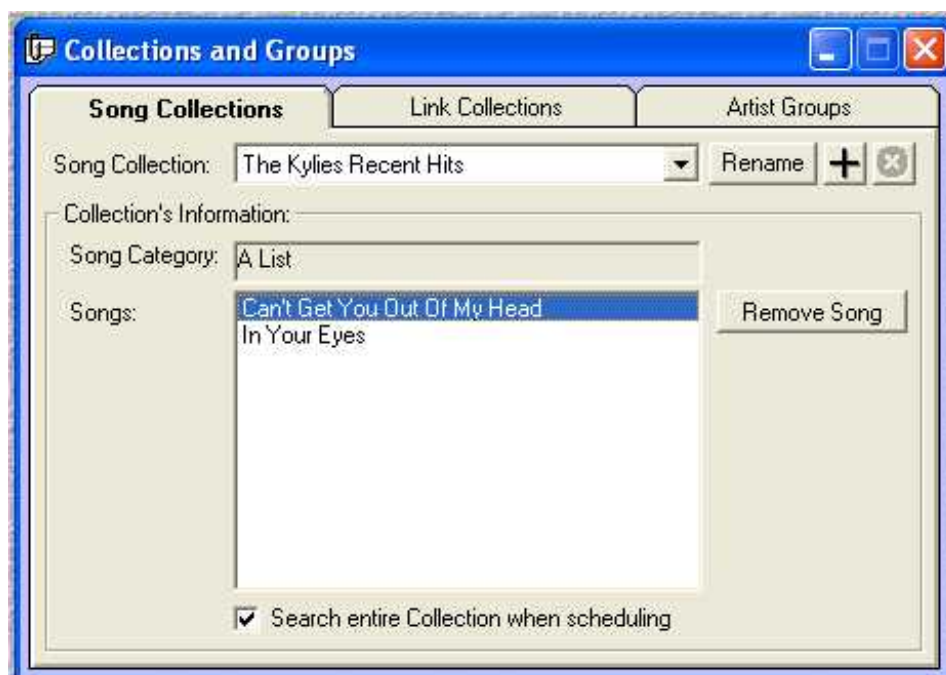
From here you can Rename the Collection, alter whether the entire Collection is searched when the top item fails to schedule (see Collections – General Overview) and remove Songs using the Remove Songs button. When Songs are removed from a Collection, they are put back in to the same Category as a stand-alone item.

You can use the "X" button to delete the Collection all together but this option only becomes available if the Collection is empty. In other words, you can not remove the Collection without removing all of the contents first.

Finally, you can edit any item within the Collection by double clicking on it to open the Song Record Card.

The same is true if you are working with Link Collections.

Artist Groups – General Overviews

Artist Groups in AutoTrack Pro are used to link individual Artists or Groups of Artsists together so that minimum separation rules can be applied no only to an individual Artsist but also to former groups and other former group members.

Perhaps the most obvious example of the usefulness of Artist Groups is the case of The Spice Girls. In the late nineties, The Spice Girls had a string of number one hits before the band split and the members went their separate ways. Since then, all five of The Spice Girls original members have gone on to launch solo careers.

Lets say we are setting up a simple AutoTrack Pro database to schedule for a 'hits' style radio station. The majority of the music on the station will be less than three years old but we also have a large back catalogue of 'classics' from the 80's and 90's which we want to appear in the schedule. In this scenario, it is possible that our AutoTrack Pro database would include all of The Spice Girls hits as well as solo tracks by Geri Halliwell, Mel C, and Emma Bunton (not Mel B or Victoria Beckham - after all there has to be some boundaries!). Artist Groups allow us to create a Artist Group in to which can be added The Spice Girls, Mel C, Geri Halliwell and Emma Bunton. By adding the overall group name (The Spice Girls) as well as the individual Artists name, we can tell AutoTrack Pro that they are all linked and to apply separation rules to them all accordingly.

Lets say for example, we add a Rule that says that a Song by the same Artist cannot be played within 2 hours. If a Mel C track is scheduled, obviously any other Mel C songs on the system will not be played for at least 2 hours but if Mel C also belonged to The Spice Girls Artist Group then no songs by Geri Halliwell, Emma Bunton or The Spice Girls could be played within 2 hours either.

The most obvious use for Artist Groups is highlighted above but they can also be used to link less related artists o groups together. You could create a Pop Idol Artist Group and add Will Young and Gareth Gates to ensure that your separation rules apply to them as if they were in the same band even although they are not. You could even add Hear Say and Liberty X as well if you wanted make sure your listeners only heard one 'made by TV' band in any 2 hour period (based on the 2 hour rule we mentioned earlier).

As you can see Artist Groups provides a very powerful way of linking together related artists to give you full control of the way your station sounds.

Setting Up Artist Groups

You set up (practically) as many Artists Groups as you feel you need on the system. Each Artists Group has a unique name to allow you to identify with it.

To set up Artist Groups, click on Setting menu and select Artist Groups.
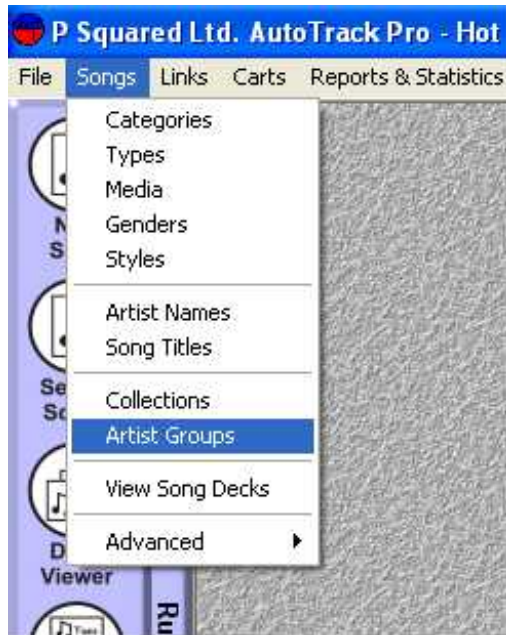
This will the Artist Groups window (which you should recognise from the Collections we were playing with earlier) which allows you to create new Artist Groups as well as edit and remove existing Artists Groups.

IN this case, there are no Artist Groups on the system so none are displayed. Click on the "+" button to add a new Artist Group.

To follow the example above, we are going create a new Artist Group called The Spice Girls which will ultimately contain The Spice Girls as well as all of the members solo names.

There are no setting to alter at this stage so simply type in the Artist Group name you want to use and click on OK.

We have not added any Artist to the Artist Group as yet so that is the next thing to do.

Adding Artists To Artists Groups

Once again, in order to see how to add Artists to an Artist Group, we will have to skip ahead a bit and assume that we already know how to add Songs to the system and that we have already put a few in.

Unlike Collections, Artists Groups are not tied to a specific Song on the system but rather the Artist Name which is added as the Song is put in to the system. Because

Artist Groups work on Artist Names and not individual Songs, an Artist need only be added to an Artist Group once in order for all of their songs to be treated as part of the Artists Group.

Individual Artists can be added to Artist Groups using the Artist Names window, which is a special tool, used to manage and review Artists in AutoTrack Pro. To access the Artist Names screen, click on the Songs menu and select Artists names.

You can then select the Artist that you want to work with by expanding the Artist tree on the left hand side of the window and clicking on the Artist in question.
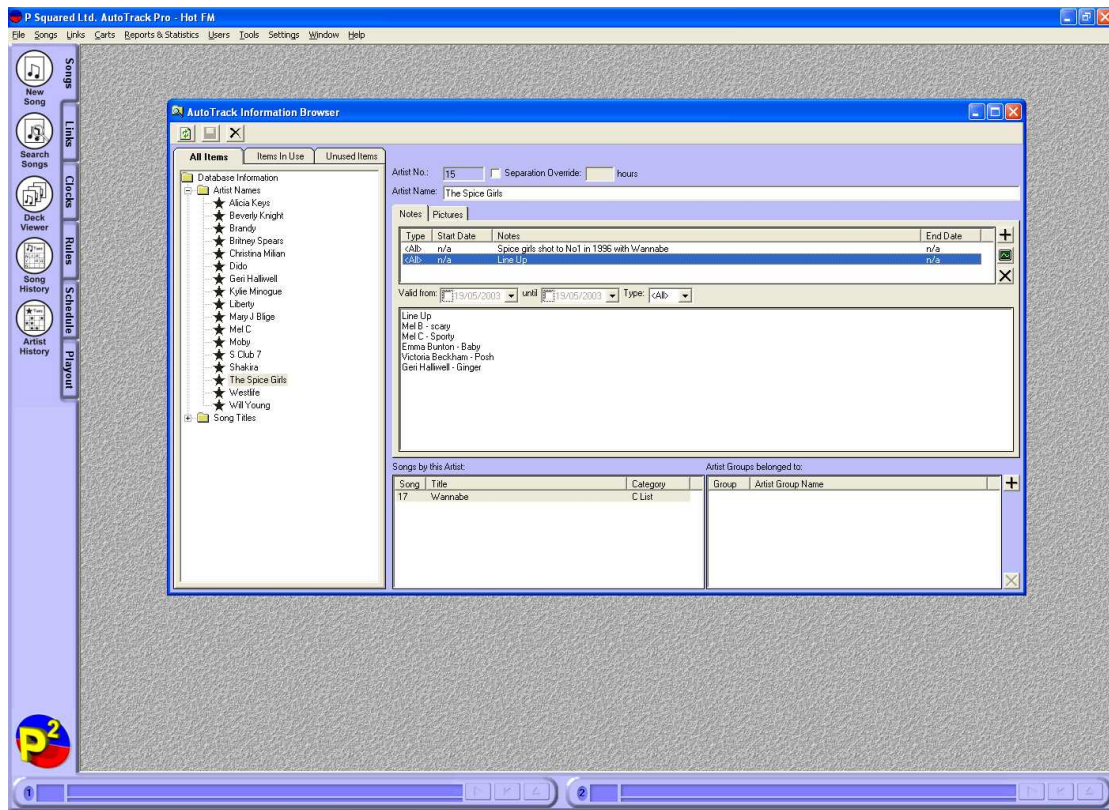
In this example, we have selected The Spice Girls and ca see that there are some text notes for The Spice Girls but there is only one Song on the system by them. The thing that we are most interested in is the Artist Groups section in the bottom right hand corner of the window.
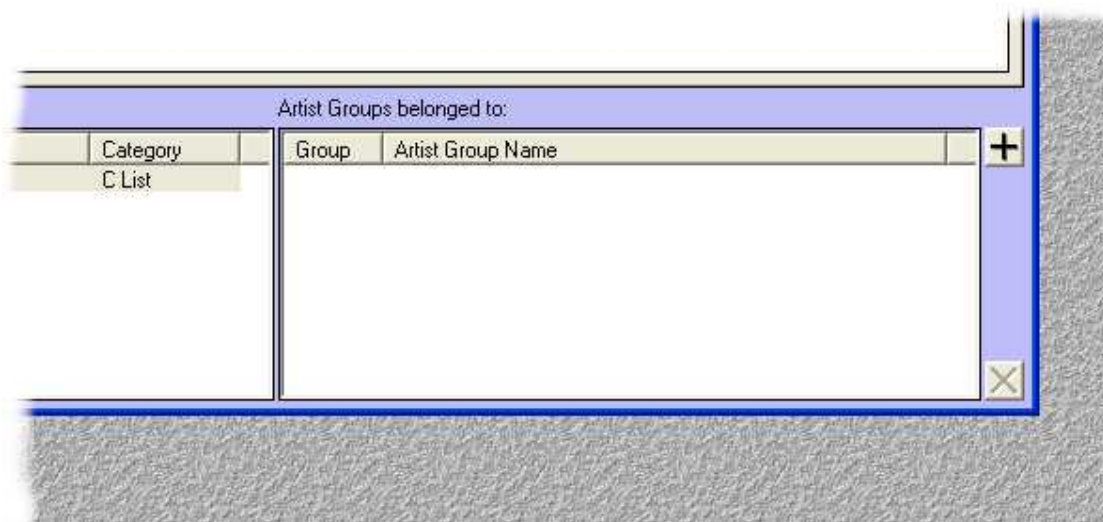
Currently this The Spice Girl do not belong to an Artist Group but by clicking on the "+" button, we can add it to the Artist Group we created earlier.

! Hold on a second, aren't we adding The Spice Girls To The Spice Girls Artist Group here – well yes!

The Artist Group name is only a reference name to make it easy to remember which is which. In this case we called the Artist Group "The Spice Girls" but it is only it's name, the actual Spice Girls band have to be added to it just like any other Artist.

Select the Artist Group that we want to add the Artist to and click on OK.

The same Artists can belong to multiple Artist Groups so Artists that have been in a large number of bands (like the members of the Beetles etc) are OK.

In this case, we add the Artist The Spice Girls to a Artist Group (also called The Spice Girls confusingly). If we added another Spice Girl song to the system in the future, it would also automatically be treated as if it were in The Spice Girls Artist Group.

Caution: AutoTrack Pro uses the Artist Name to recognise Artists and manage Artists Groups. You need to take care when adding Artists to the system that the same Artist Name is used each time. In the above example, we created an Artist Group to link The Spice Girls with all the Spice Girls solo efforts. Any new The Spice Girls tracks that you add would automatically be added but if you put the Artist Name as Spice Girls then AutoTrack Pro would view this a new Artist entirely and not apply any separation rules between The Spice Girls and Spice Girls (unless they were both in the Artist Group). Remember: try to write and spell Artists Names the same way each time you use them.

Now all we need to do is use the Artist tree on the left hand side of the Artist Names window to find Mel C, Geri Halliwell etc and add them to The Spice Girls Artist Group in the same way.

You could even add All Saints and the All Saints members solo records to the same Artist Group if you wished to keep them apart in your station schedule.

Tip: When you click on the "+" button, you will notice that the Artist Name is automatically displayed in the drop down list that allows you to select the Artist Group to add the Artist to. If you select this Artist Group or type a   new Artist Group in to the box then click on OK, the Artist Group is automatically created and the Artists added to that Group. This is a quick and simple way of adding additional Artist Groups to the system without having to go to another window.

Viewing, Editing and Deleting Artist Groups

You can review an Artist Group at any time by clicking on the Songs menu and selecting Artist Groups.

From this window, you can select the Artist Group you want to work with from the Artist Group drop down menu, as see the Artist that are in the Artist Group in the Artist field.

If you highlight an Artist, you can remove them from the Artist Group by clicking on the Remove Artist button. Double clicking on the Artist will open their details in the Artist Names window (see Add Artists To Artist Groups).

The Rename button allows you to change the name of an existing Artist Group, the "+" button allows you to add a new Artist Group (see Setting Up Artist Groups)

whilst the "X" button allows you to delete an Artist Group but only once all the Artists have been removed from the Artist Group.

There is no equivalent to Artist Groups for Links.

Link Categories

Just like Song Categories, Link Categories are the primary way of classifying Links that you add to the system. Each Link Category is a deck of Link Record Cards (like Songs) and when a Link from a Category is requested by a Clock, the Link at the top of the Link Category Deck will be scheduled as long as doing so does not break any of the configured Rules or Guides.
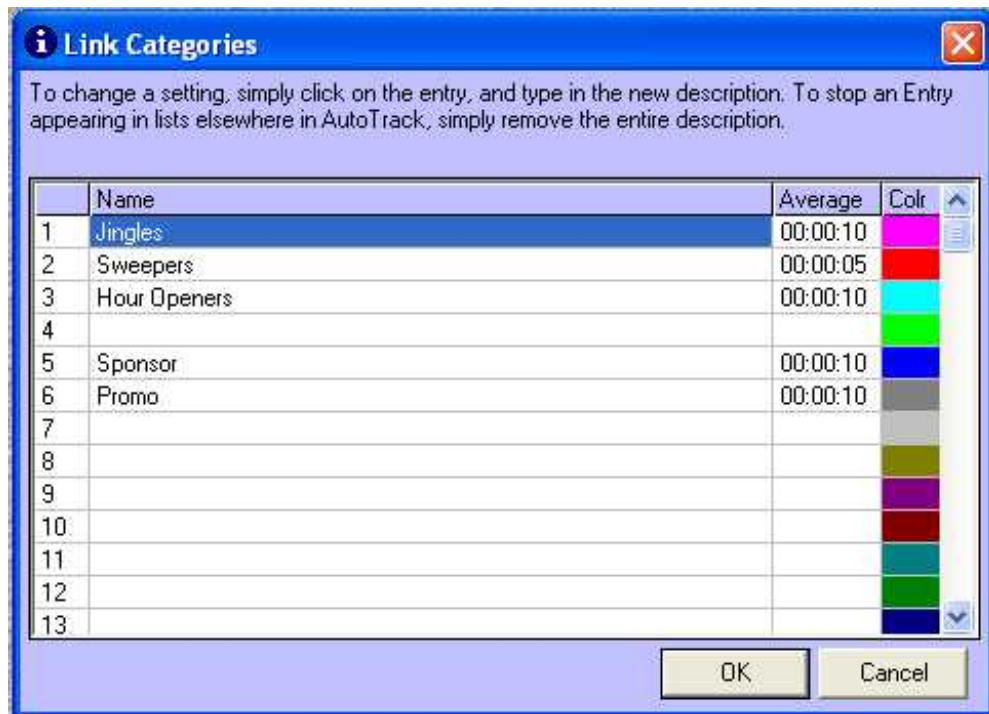
You can set-up up to 31 Link Categories in AutoTrack Pro.

Setting Up Link Categories

To set-up Link Categories, click on the Links menu and select Categories from the list of options.


This will open the Link Categories window, which allows you add new Link Categories or edit existing ones.

To add a new Link Category, simply type the Link Category Name in to one of the free rows. You can also edit existing Link Categories by selecting the Link Category and typing in the changes you want to make.

You can also type in the average length of the Links in each Link Category in the Average column (N.B. these can also be calculated for you by using Update Average Category Length's option on the Tools menu).

Finally, you can assign a colour to each Link Category by clicking on the 'Colr' column and selecting the colour from the colour palette window.
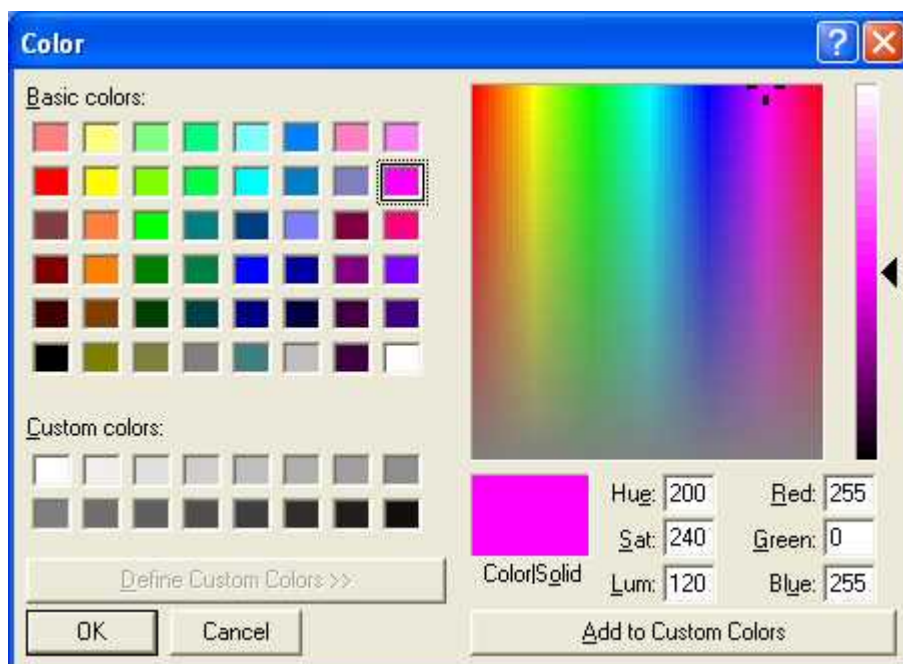
These colours are then used to represent the Link Categories when you are preparing reports in AutoTrack Pro.
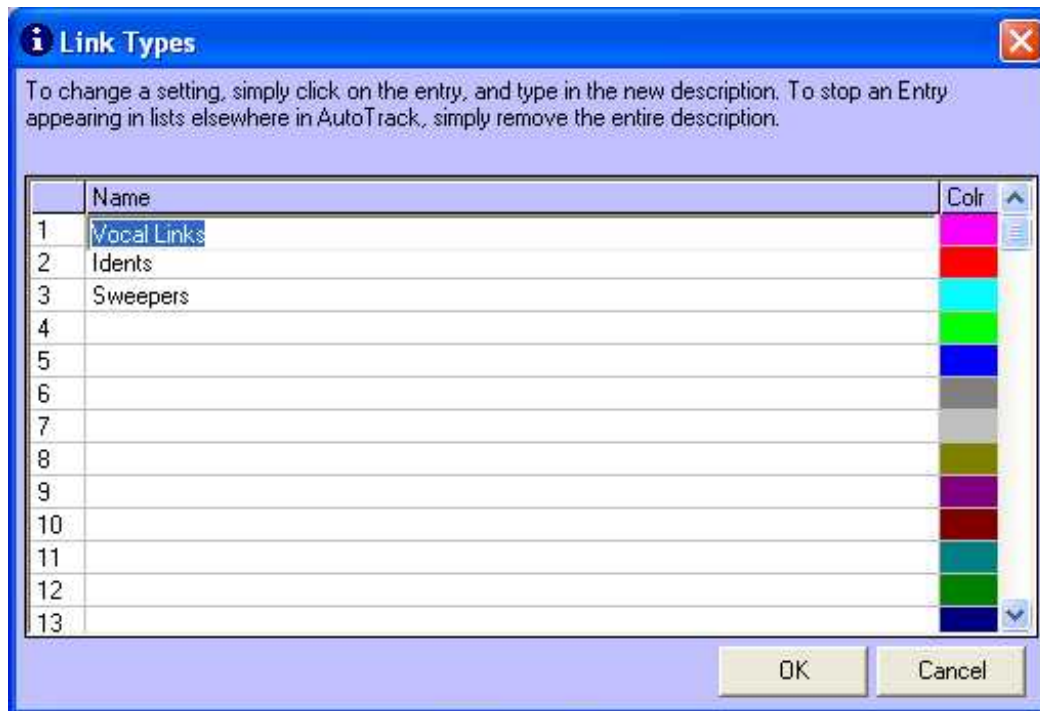
Link Types

Just as with Songs, Links can be sub-classified to allow you greater control by using Link Types.

Setting Up Link Types

You can set up 31 Link Types by clicking on the Types option on the Links menu.

This will open the Link Types window.

You can add new Link Types and edit existing Link Types in the same way that you add and edit Link Categories. Select either an existing or empty Link Type and type in the Link Type's name in to the Name column.

You can also select the colour associated with the Link Type by clicking on the 'Colr' column.
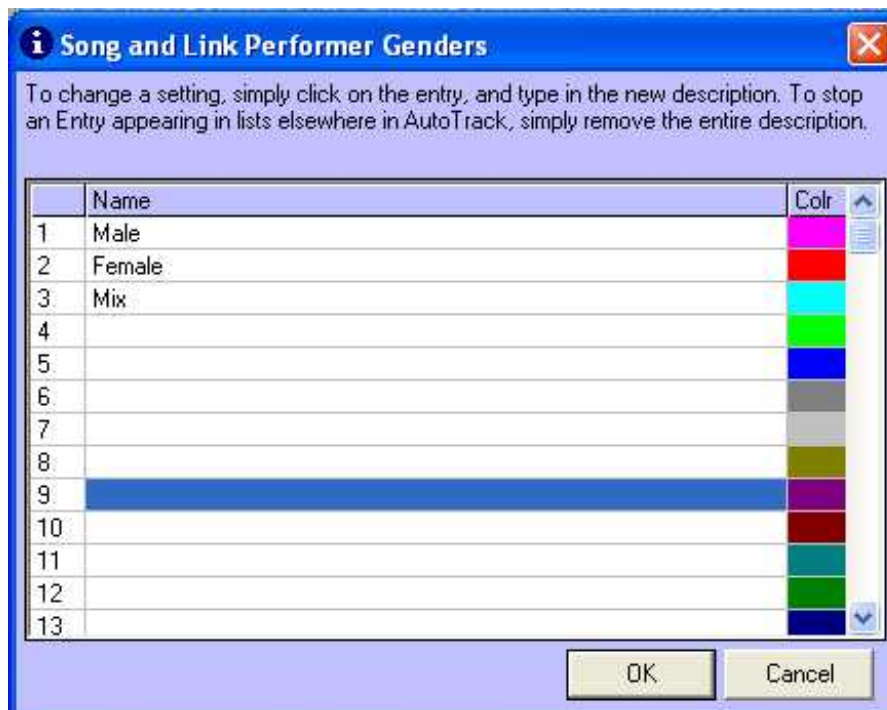
Link Genders

As with Songs, you can set up 31 different Genders to be used to help classify Links. Link Genders are commonly used to describe the sex of the principle voice over artist used to 'voice' the Link.

Setting Up Link Genders

To set up Link Genders, click on the Links menu and select the Genders option.

This will open the Link Genders window.

You can add new Link Genders and edit existing Link Genders in the same way that you add and edit Link Categories. Select either an existing or empty Link Gender and type in the Link Gender's name in to the Name column.

You can also select the colour associated with the Link Gender by clicking on the 'Colr' column.

Link Collections – General Overview

Link Collections work in the same way as Song Collections in that Link Collections are effectively 'mini-deck' rotating within one of the main Link Category Decks. The Link Collection rotates within the Link Category Deck (that it is located in) in the normal way but when it reaches the top of the deck, the top Link within the Link Collection is scheduled (assuming the Rules allow it to be scheduled), it is placed at the back of the Link Collection and the Link Collection is placed at the back of the Link Category Deck.

For a full explanation of Collections (both Song and Link), please refer back to the Collections – General Overview section covered earlier. Here you will find a more details on how Collections work and why they are useful. It also covers how to create Collections and add Songs and Links to existing Collections, Most of the examples concentrate on Song Collections but because Song and Link work and are used in exactly the same way, the same methods can be employed when working with Link Collections.

Setting Up AutoTrack Pro To Work With Your Playout System

AutoTrack Pro works with a number of leading playout systems. It can also be configured to export the scheduled log to multiple playout systems simultaneously so that two stations using totally different playout systems could use the same schedule.

Because of the wide level of diversity between different playout systems, some the features available in AutoTrack are disabled when you are using it to export to some playout systems, similarly, AutoTrack Pro also adjust some of the terminology that it uses to mimic the terminology used by your playout system to make using the two systems together easier.

As mentioned earlier, AutoTrack Pro allows you to add support for multiple playout systems (whether they are by different manufacturers or you want to output the same log to several stations using the same playout system) but in order to determine how the system is configured and what terminology is used, we have to set a primary playout system which is used to determine the way AutoTrack Pro works.

Adding Playout Systems To AutoTrack Pro

In order to complete the AutoTrack Pro set up process, we will need to add a playout system to AutoTrack Pro so that it knows where to send to generated schedule to when you are happy with it. In the case of some playout systems, AutoTrack Pro can also communicate with the playout system to get information about the audio stored on the playout system (i.e. lists of Songs and Links recorded on to the playout system) as well as information about what was actually played from the log to allow you to reconcile what was played with what was scheduled to be played.

N.B. Not all supported playout systems allow AutoTrack Pro to use all of it's advanced features, the list below shows the most commonly used playout systems that AutoTrack Pro supports and what features each system enables.

Playout System Compatibility Chart

| Playout System	Send Logs	Reconcile Logs	Access Audio	Browse Audio	Play Audio	Edit Audio	User Security
Myriad v2.6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Enco DADPro32	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Planned	TBC	TBC
Enco Dad	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Planned	TBC	TBC
MediaTouch	Yes	Planned	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
GeneSys	Yes	Planned	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
DCS Maestro	Yes	Planned	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
DCS "BlueScreen"	Yes	Planned	No	No	No	No	No
Radiomation	Yes	Planned	No	No	No	No	No
Barrcode BCX	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No

Key
- Yes
- Planned
- TBC
- No

Not all the systems that AutoTrack Pro supports are listed on this chart as new systems are being added to the list all the time. If your stations playout system does not appear on this list, please check www.autotrackpro.com to see if AutoTrack Pro is compatible.

If your playout system is not currently compatible with AutoTrack Pro then don't worry. We will add compatibility for just about any system that can accept a scheduled log as a text file. In most cases we will customise the output of AutoTrack Pro to your playout system's manufacturers specification, free of charge in order to allow you to use AutoTrack Pro with your chosen playout system. The only exception to this is where doing so presents major technical difficulties in which case you will be advised of this before your purchase AutoTrack Pro.

You should always clarify with P Squared Ltd, prior to purchasing AutoTrack Pro, that your stations playout system is compatible or that AutoTrack Pro can be modified to make it compatible, prior to placing an order for the system.

Adding A Playout System

To add a playout system to AutoTrack Pro, we need to click on the Settings menu and select Database Settings.
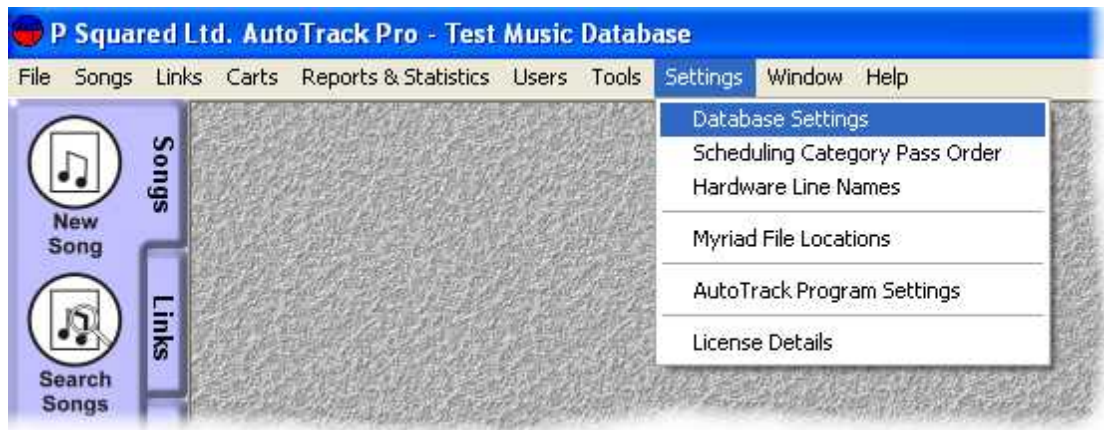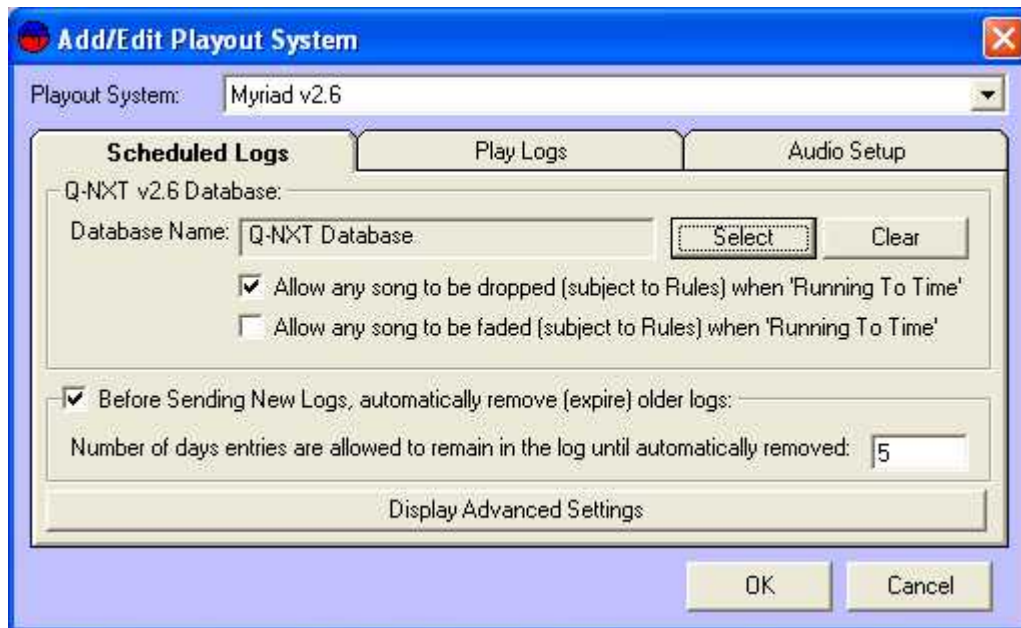
The Database Settings window allows you to add and configure the settings in AutoTrack Pro. We have looked at this window on a number of occasions in the past but this time we are only interested in Playout Tab which is the fourth tab along.
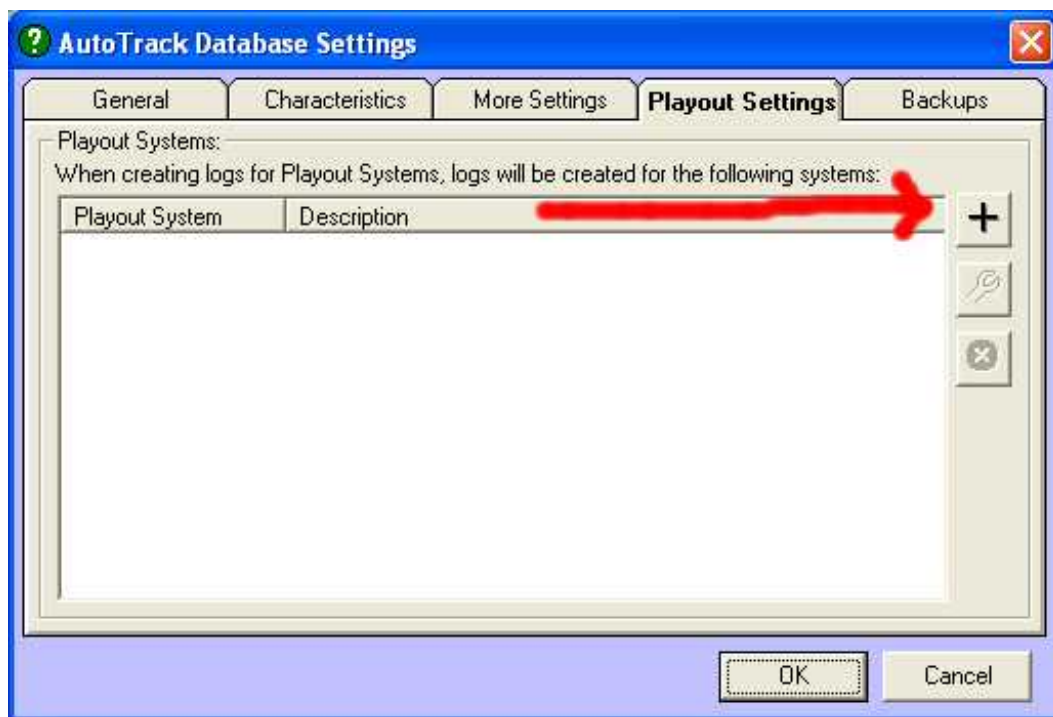
If no playout system has been added to the system then this window will be blank (as in the image above). To add a new playout system to AutoTrack Pro, click on the '+' button.

This will open the Add Playout System window that allows you to select the playout system type that you want to add and also to configure the details for that playout system.

Adding A Myriad System To AutoTrack Pro

To add a Myriad system to AutoTrack Pro, click on the Settings menu and select the Database Setting option. This will open the general Database Settings window, switch to the Playout tab (fourth one along) and then click on the '+' button to added a new playout system to AutoTrack Pro.

This will open a blank playout system window which will allow you to select Myriad v2.6 and configure it to work with your existing Myriad system.
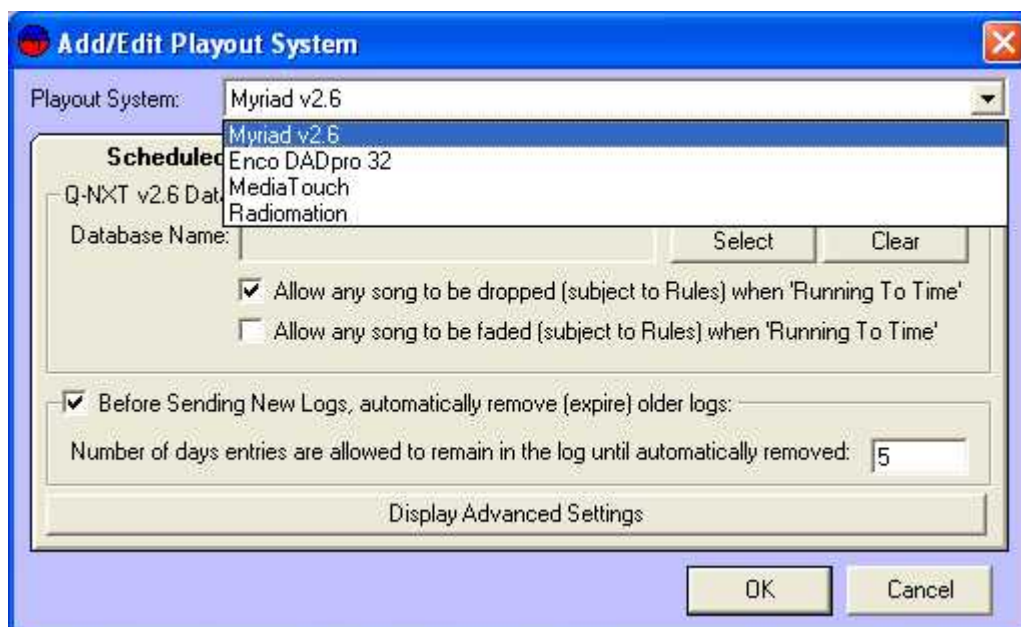
The first thing we need to do is select Myriad v2.6 from the Playout System drop down list at the top of the screen. We can then add in the detail needed to allow AutoTrack Pro to interact with Myriad.

Myriad is also developed by P Squared Ltd and as such, the relationship between Myriad and AutoTrack Pro is closer than the relationship between AutoTrack Pro and other playout systems. This may not always be the case as we are currently working closely with a number of third party developers to allow AutoTrack Pro to work more closely with their products in the future.

N.B. When AutoTrack Pro is first installed, it will automatically look for a Myriad system on you the local PC and also on your network. If it detects a Myriad installation then it will automatically add Myriad to the Playout window as the primary playout system. It will also allow you to set what Q-NXT database you want AutoTrack Pro to 'push' the log to once you are happy with it. This will also be added to the default Myriad playout system.

But back to our new Myriad system then we need to add. After selecting Myriad v2.6 from the Playout System drop down list at the top of the window, we now have a blank Myriad playout system that can be configured to our needs.
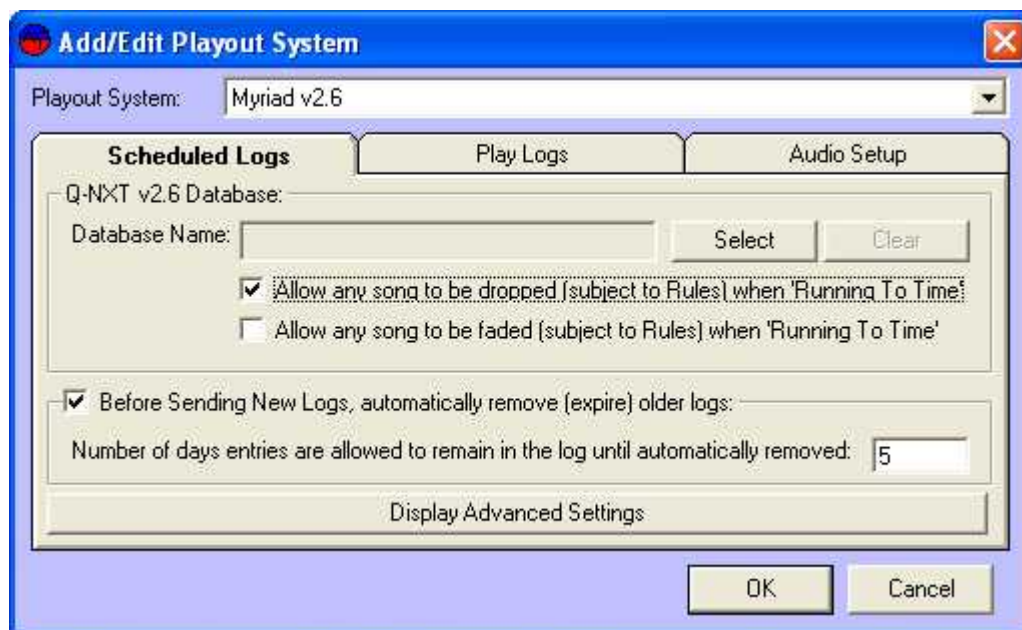

In general, the location of the Myriad system will automatically be detected so this would not have to be set. If you did need to set the Myriad file locations then this is done on the Settings menu using the Myriad File Locations option. You can then set the local or network location using the File Locations window.

If you do need to alter these, the Data Location is the network folder that contains all of the Myriad data (including the AutoTRCK sub folder). The Cart Locations are the folders that store all the audio files that make up the Myriad Audio Wall. For more details on these setting, you should consult your Myriad documentation as altering these settings (if auto-detected by AutoTrack Pro) could impact upon your Myriad installation.

For the purposes of this explanation, lets assume that the Myriad settings were auto-detected and are OK. Now all we have to do is fill in the extra information on the Add / Edit Playout window.
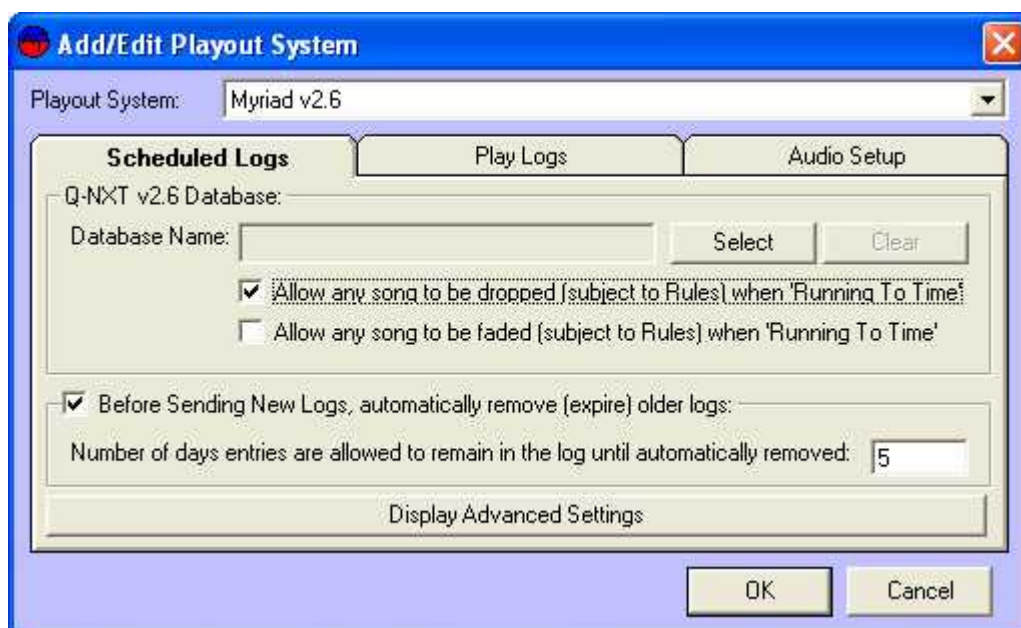
The Schedule Logs Tab

Q-NXT v2.6 Database Name: This allows you to set the Q-NXT database that the finished schedule logs will be 'pushed' in to. This should be set to be the same Q-NXT database that your main 'on air' Myriad system uses. To select a Q-NXT database, click on the Select button to open the database browser window.

Select the database that you want AutoTrack Pro to push in to and click on OK.

You can also clear your selection by clicking on the Clear button but if no Q-NXT database is selected in this Playout System then the schedule will not be 'pushed' anywhere.

Allow Any Songs To Be Dropped: If this option is ticked then all Songs that are scheduled with AutoTrack Pro will be marked as droppable in Myriad which means that Myriad may drop them (subject to certain rules in Myriad) in order to make sure the hour 'runs to time'.

Allow Any Song To Be Faded: If this option is set, all Songs scheduled by AutoTrack will be set to fadeable which means that Myriad will fade them out early if it needs to, when running to time. This is normally determined by the End Type setting on the Song Record card in AutoTrack Pro but if this option is checked then the Song Card settings are overridden.

Before Sending New Logs, Remove Expired Logs: The Q-NXT Log in Myriad is a continuous log of scheduled music and programming. When you schedule additional hours and days, they are inserted in to the log at the appropriate place but unless this option is ticked, nothing is removed from the log unless it is done manually. This option allows you to set a maximum number of past days to be stored in the Q-NXT log. Whenever AutoTrack Pro schedules, it checks the Q-NXT log and automatically removes any logs older then the specified period. If this option is not ticked and you do not manually remove older logs from Q-NXT, Myriad will eventually start to slow down when scrolling through the log.

Display Advanced Setting: This button opens the Q-NXT Database Settings window from Myriad which allows you to configure the way Myriad deal with the Q-NXT

Log. The options on this window are covered in detail in the Myriad documentation and are outside the scope of this document.

The Play Logs Tab
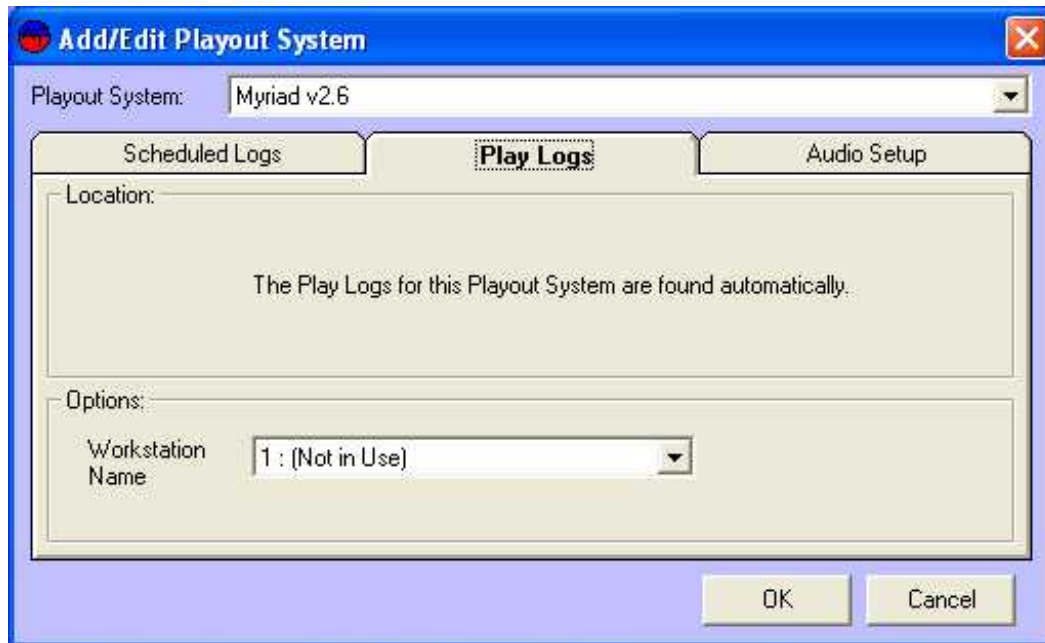
On Air Workstation: This option allows you to specify the name of the Myriad workstation that is most commonly used as the main 'on air' playout system. AutoTrack Pro then asks this workstation when it is looking for play logs for reconciliation purposes.

The Audio Setup Tab
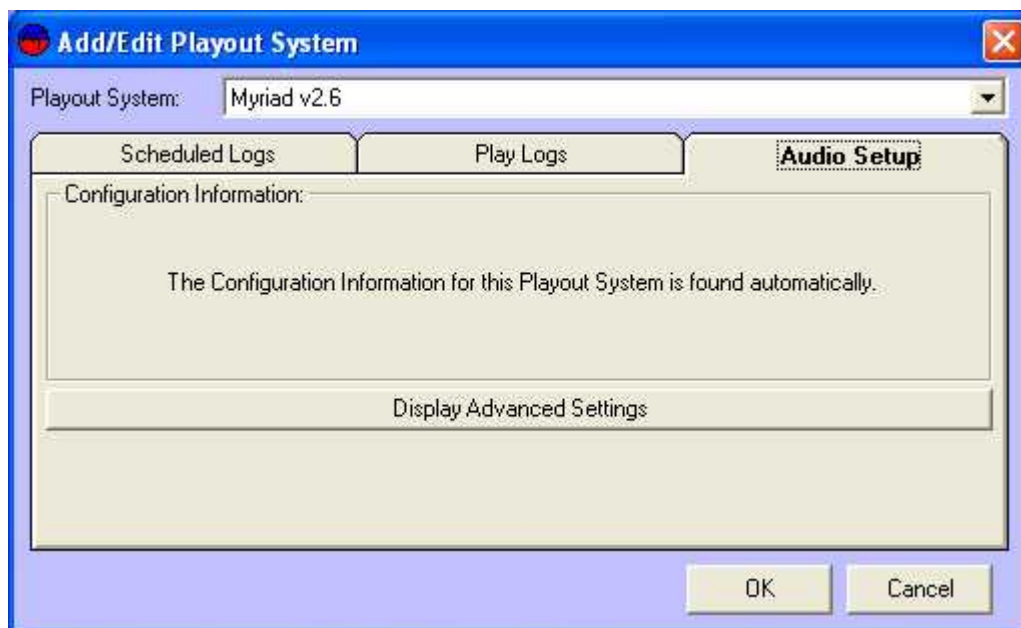
The final tab allows you to adjust setting concerned with Audio setup. In the case of Myriad, the only option is the Display Advanced Setting button.

Display Advanced Settings: Open the Audio Wall Settings window which allows you to 'map' what each Cart Description Line in Myriad is used for when the Carts are imported in to AutoTrack Pro.
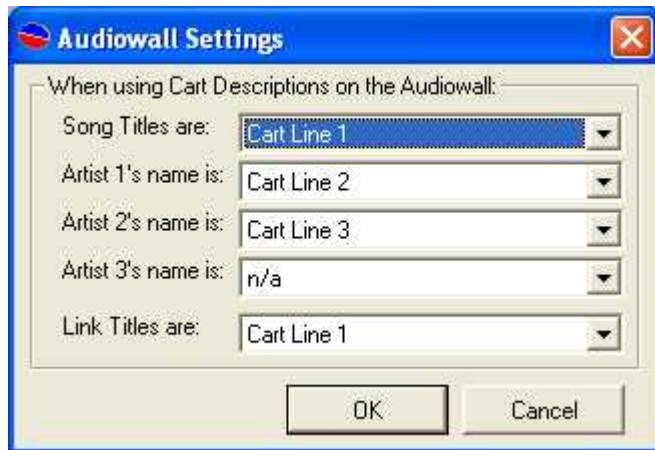
You can use the drop down list beside each AutoTrack Pro option (on the left) to select which Cart Description line should be used (on the right). This means that regardless of whether the Songs on your Audio Wall have the Artist on the top line or the bottom, you can still configure AutoTrack Pro to import them correctly.

Adding An Enco DADpro 32 System To AutoTrack Pro

If you want to add an ENCO DAD Pro output to AutoTrack Pro, click on the Settings menu option and select Database Settings. Switch to the Playout tab (fourth one along) and then click on the '+' button to add a new playout system.
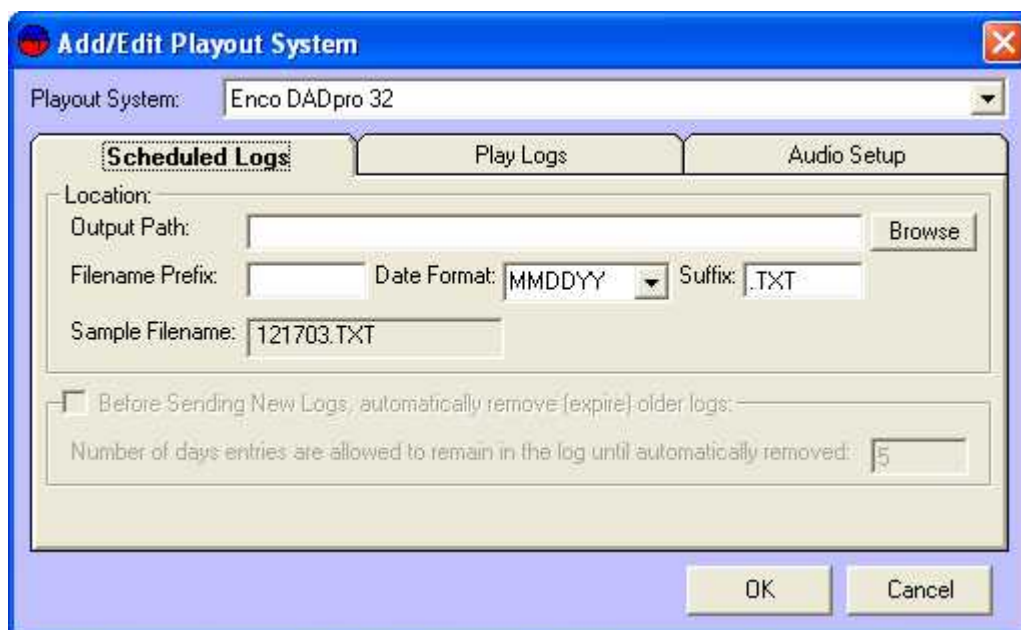
Select Enco DADpro 32 from the drop down Playout System drop down list, you then have to tell AutoTrack Pro a little more about your Enco system in order to allow the two to interact.

The Schedule Logs Tab

Output Path: This is the path that you want AutoTrack Pro to put the finished log fine in once scheduling is complete. You can use the Browse button to set the location by browsing the network.

N.B. You may have to consult your Enco documentation in order to determine this location

Filename Prefix: You may need to set a filename prefix for the log file depending on how your Enco system is configured. Lets say for example, the file format that we need to get for a log for the 17th of December 2003 was HOT121703.xml. In this case the Filename Prefix would be HOT.

Date Format: This allows you to set the date format that determines the date that the log file is for. In our example, we want the file for the 17 of December 2003 to be HOT121703.xml then we would need to set the Date Format to MMDDYY (12-17-03) using the drop down list.

Suffix: The Suffix section allows you to set the filename extension that the file will have. In our example, we want the end file to have an .XML file extension so that is what goes in to the Suffix section of the window.

The Play Logs Tab
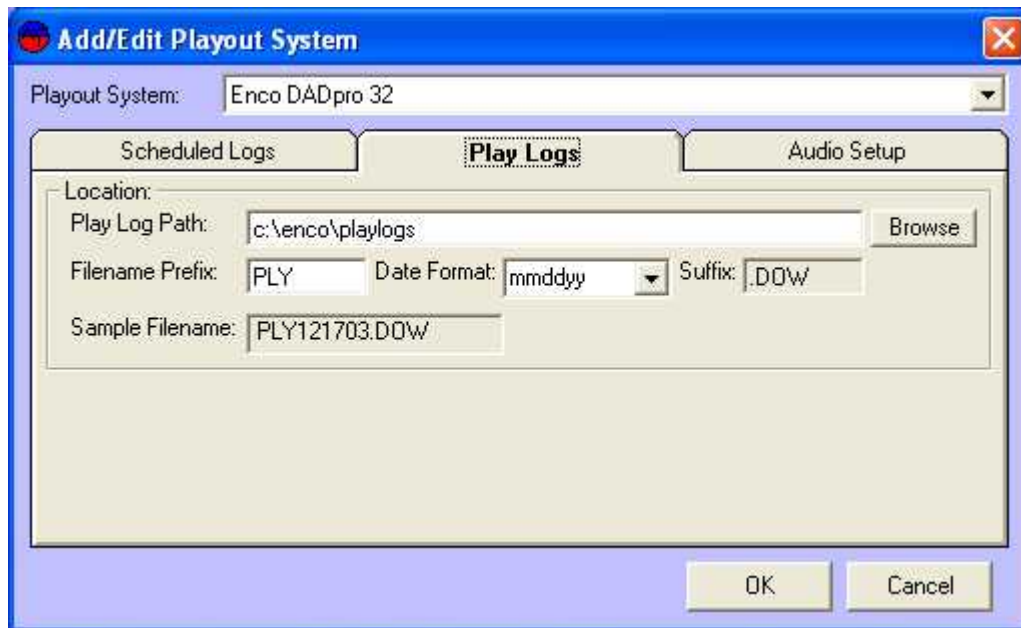
Play Log Path: This is the location of the logs that are generated by Enco DadPro 32 about what has been played on a given day. These can be imported back in to AutoTrack Pro to allow you to reconcile what was scheduled to be played with what was really played. You can use the Browse button to locate the folder that the log files are saved in.

N.B. Please refer to your Enco documentation to find where this location should be set to.

Filename Prefix: Just as with the schedule log, this allows you to set a prefix to the filename format that AutoTrack Pro will use when looking for the play logs. Lets say that just like before, we need AutoTrack Pro to recognise play log files for the 17th of December 2003 in the format PLY121703.DOW. In this case, the File Prefix would be set at PLY.

Date Format: Allows you to set the format for the date section of the filename. You can use the drop down list to select the format that you want to use. In our example, we need to set it to MMDDYY to give us 12-17-03 in the filename.

Suffix: This allows you to set the filename extension that AutoTrack Pro will use the when importing play logs. In this example, we need to set it to .DOW.

The Audio Setup Tab
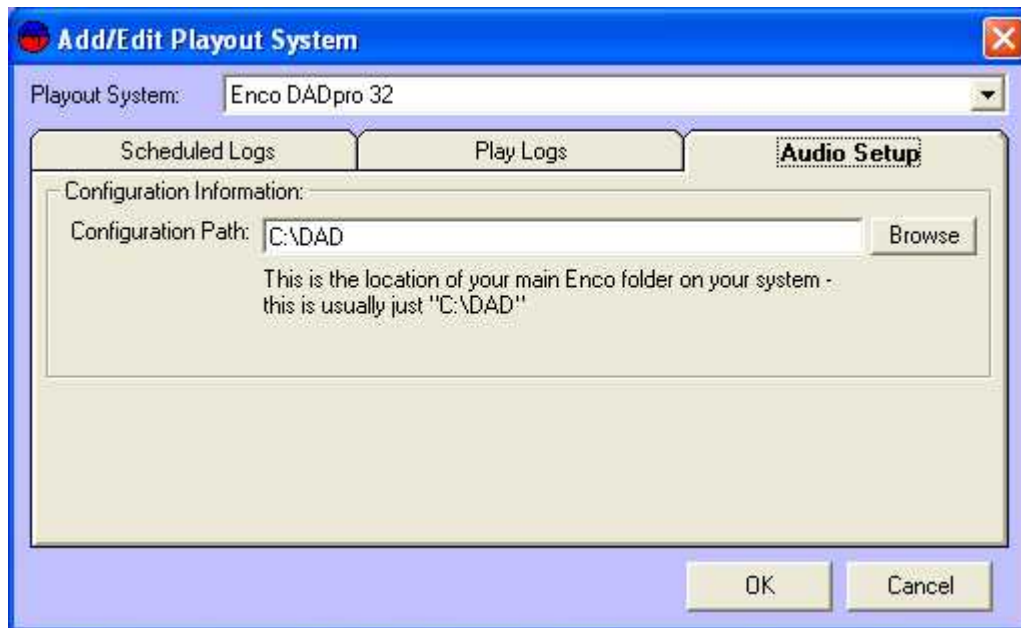
The final tab is the Audio Setup tab which allows you to specify where the data for your Enco DADpro 32 system is stored.

Configuration Path: This the location of the main Enco folder on your system. This is usually c:\dad but may be different in some cases.

N.B. You may have to consult the Enco documentation to find where this folder is located.

Adding Other Playout Systems

As AutoTrack Pro develops and evolves, additional playout systems will be added to the list and whilst they are all different, most will follow the same rough settings as EncoDAD Pro (see above). Not all the settings are necessary for all playout systems and whenever possible, we have masked off settings that are not used but if you do have a question about setting up an alternative playout system output, please feel free to contact support@psquared.net.

Chapter Summary

In this Chapter, we have covered the basics of getting AutoTrack Pro up and running and configuring the most commonly used elements used in basic scheduling.

We have seen how to add Song and Link Categories to the system, examined how Types fit in to the equation and touched on how Styles can help to sculpt the system output for your stations needs.

Also covered in this Chapter is setting up many of the other elements that you will use in AutoTrack Pro, which while not essential to set up first, can save us a lot of time and effort later on.

There are many other settings and configuration options available in AutoTrack Pro but these are all covered in subsequent Chapters. AutoTrack Pro comes pre configured so many of the settings we have already looked at will already be set when you install AutoTrack Pro.

If you have been working through all the examples in this section then your AutoTrack Pro system should be just about ready for you to start to use it.

AutoTrack Pro includes an comprehensive 'on-line' help system that will walk you through adding Songs and Links to your system, setting up the Clocks and Rules and Scheduling for the first time. To access the main help in AutoTrack Pro, either press F1 on your keyboard or go to the Help menu and selecting Contents.