



KICKING THE TIRES

by Frank Petrie



Review

Product: Detour v1.2.3

Company: Rogue Amoeba <<http://www.rogueamoeba.com/detour/>>

Requirements: OS X.1.x – X.3.3

Price: (US) \$12.00

Test Rig: iBook G4/933/640 MB RAM

Review Date: 21 April 2004

The Digital Lifestyle. The joy of all that media. Aahh ... the pain of all that media. Yeah, iPhoto 4 can now handle around 25,000 photos without heavy breathing. Smart Albums and such give me more control over my stills. That takes care of my visuals but what about my audio requirements?

iTunes 4 plus Radio365 and any other streaming media that I should happen onto allows me to remain at my desk as if I were confined inside the Space Shuttle. But add that to all my alert sounds and you have the din of Times Square at five o'clock on a Friday afternoon. How do I control all of that? Rogue Amoeba (who gets my vote for best name and icon for a software company – EVER!) recommends their offering – 'Detour.'

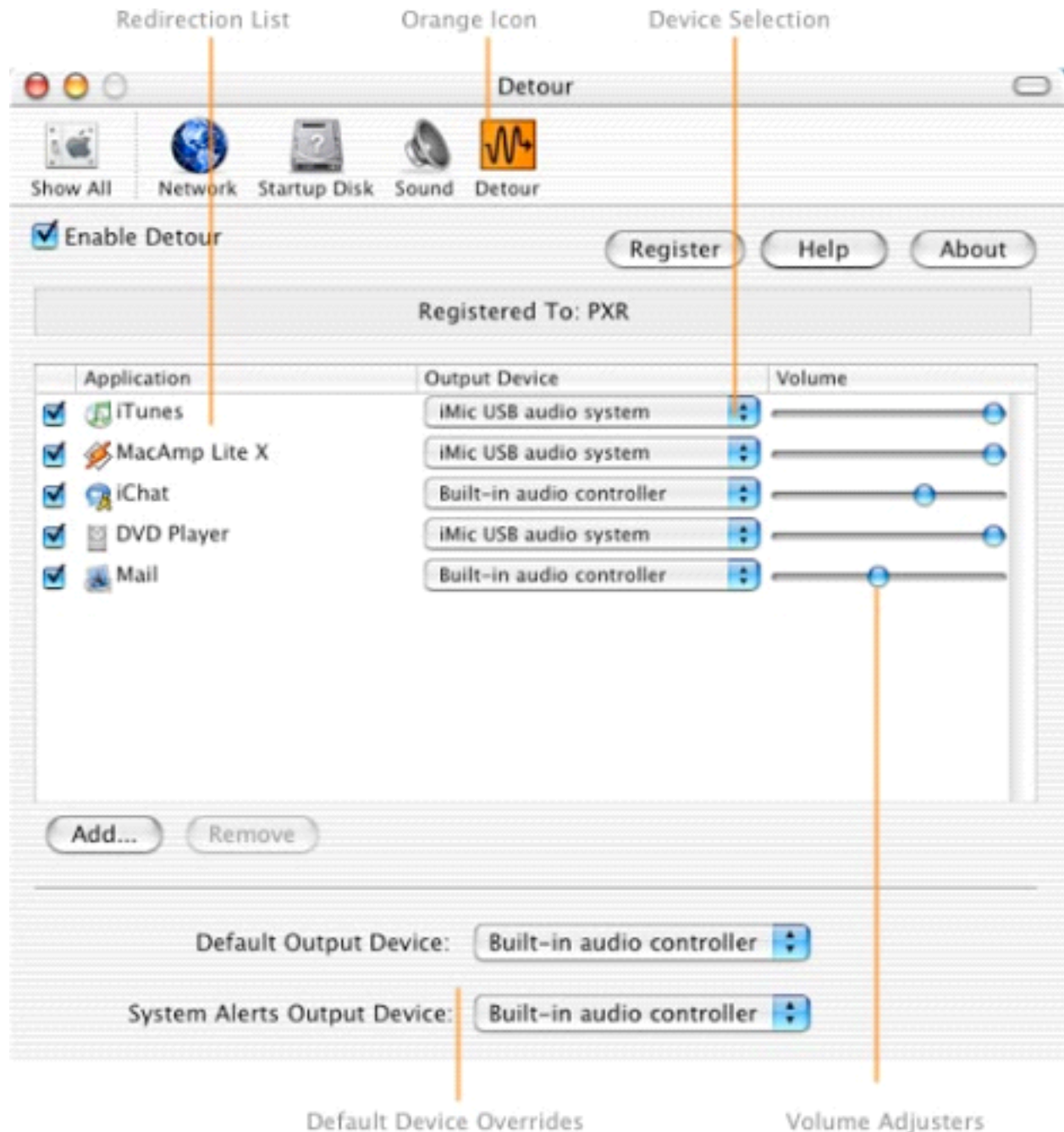
"Why do I want it?"

Because you want to send some audio (such as iTunes music) through a high-quality set of speakers and other audio (such as system beeps and iChat blips) through the built-in speaker. Or because you want to mute whole applications.

Or because you want to record one application to your MiniDisc Player.."

I'm game. (Not that I need a bath or anything – I mean I'm ready to give it a whirl. Ooops, another sound!)

THE GOOD



Installation is a pleasure. Double click the RA installer (did i mention that I love that graphic) and follow the directions of the six screens. A Preference Pane is installed and I opted for it to open to that pane after my restart.

The set up is straight forward. Pick an application (any application) and assign to it any Output Device (which is automatically detected by 'Detour'). Once you have done that, set the Volume slider to the level you would like that particular application to playback at.

For example, I can set Mail to notify of any incoming Mail through my iBook's speakers that won't interfere with my enjoyment of my 'Afro Celt Sound System' collection (you can find it at iTMS), which I can send to my higher end audio system at a louder volume than the Mail alert sound.

But suppose I'm expecting a timely email from Steve Jobs (as if). Then I just go into my 'Detour' preferences pane and set the Mail sound a little louder so I don't miss it. And you can disable any of the application assignments or the whole shebang (is that a sound?) with one click of the checkbox.

As an added bonus: "MiniDisc owners will love Detour, as it will enable them to send just the audio they want (such as iTunes or RealOne Player audio) to their MiniDisc player for recording, instead of all applications – no more email noises on your recordings." I imagine that this would include just about any external recording source that you can add.

Even if you're using just one pair of speakers, be they internal or external, just being able to balance out the volumes of various apps is worth the price of admission.

The 'Help' section is as equally straightforward as the application. It includes a troubleshooting section, as well. Pure geek joy.

THE BAD

To use the separate outputs feature There is an hardware issue. From 'Detours' FAQ (located on their website):

"Why can't I send some audio to headphones or speakers plugged in to the Sound Out jack and the rest to my built-in speaker?

It is not possible to distinguish between the built-in speaker (on the front of the machine) and the headphone jack(s) on any Macintosh. Likewise, the S/PDIF

jack and the speaker and headphone jack on G5 PowerMacs can't be differentiated. Unfortunately, this is a hardware issue as these outputs share one audio line. If you purchase the Griffin iMic, you can add a Sound Out Port via USB."

Still, I find that using it solely as an audio mixer for all my system's and application's various sounds is worth the purchase, IMO.

THE UGLY

Nada.

THE CLOSE

'Detour' is just one of several audio products from Rogue Amoeba that I will be reviewing over the course of the next several weeks. Regardless of the hardware issue, 'Detour' is simple to use, a necessity and a steal at this price. And I recommend that you to buy this program if you have ever cranked up your system to listen to a quiet musical passage, only to be blown out of your chair by some Alert Sound.

Rogue Amoeba will thank you. As will your ears and speakers.

=====

©2004 Frank Petrie, Technologies & Products Specialist
The Mid-Atlantic Macintosh User Groups Team (MaMUGs)
Member, The Apple Groups Team (TAGteam)

<http://www.mamugs.org>

Email: phranky@mamugs.com

iChat: phranky

Providing camaraderie, cooperative programs, events, training and knowledge sharing for Apple/Macintosh User Groups free of charge.

The Mid-Atlantic Macintosh User Groups Team (MaMUGs) employs anti-virus protection, however, given that messages and/or attachments can be altered, modified and/or fabricated by outside parties, we cannot guarantee that any communications are "virus-free." We recommend testing any e-mail, attachment, image and/or other types of messages prior to opening and/or viewing.

ATTRIBUTION INFORMATION: This article may be reprinted by any Macintosh User Group in their newsletter/publication distributed on paper or online, so long as credit is given to the author and publisher (Frank Petrie, MaMUGs/Mid-Atlantic Users Group Team). Commercial or other publication is prohibited unless specific permission is granted by the author. Please notify author of placement and provide a copy/URL for reference. All trademarks are property of their respective owners.

Thank you.