Frequently Asked Questions

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How to Import Program Logs

<u>Considerations</u>
All scheduling software exports either a character delimited or position dependent text file regardless of the three-character filename extension.

Simian simply reads these files to find the columns and then rearranges the columns.

<u>Let's talk about text…</u>
Text files are very simple containers that hold characters. Characters are letters, numbers, punctuation marks, Symbols, etc. Basically, characters are anything that take up one "placeholder" in a text file such as "A", "8", "#", "+", or " ".

Program Logs are saved as text files, but with a special character to represent the separation between the different 'pieces' of data. There aren't really any scheduling programs out there that export "smiley delimited" text files, but the point is that the delimiting character is a unique character that separates the information and that won't be used within the text (this means that comma or apostrophe delimited might not be a good choice if you use those characters in your Artist Names and Titles. Also note that "#" or "+" delimited would be a bad choice of delimiting character because those characters are both used to represent cue types in Simian. Most commonly used delimiting characters are "|" or the [tab] key).

So, we've got our text file with a bunch of characters all in rows. Now it's time to talk about a couple other terms; Records and Columns. For our use, records are individual horizontal lines in the text file. Columns, however are a little more complicated. In its simplest form, column means information in a stack, but how do we split up groups of records into columns?

There are two different ways; Character Delimitation and Position Dependence. We'll examine each one individually.

In a character delimited text file, the individual record has a particular character inserted into it to delimit it into columns.

Here's an example of a comma delimited text file:

```
Column1,Column2,Column3,Column4
Column1,Column2,Column3,Column4
```

In a position dependent text file, the records are split into columns based on the number of character placeholders (counted from the left). Any information that falls within the number of placeholders belongs in that column. Here's an example of a position dependent text file where each column is ten characters wide:

```
Column1 Column2 Column3 Column4
Column1 Column2 Column3 Column4
[ 4 Columns = 40 placeholders ]
```
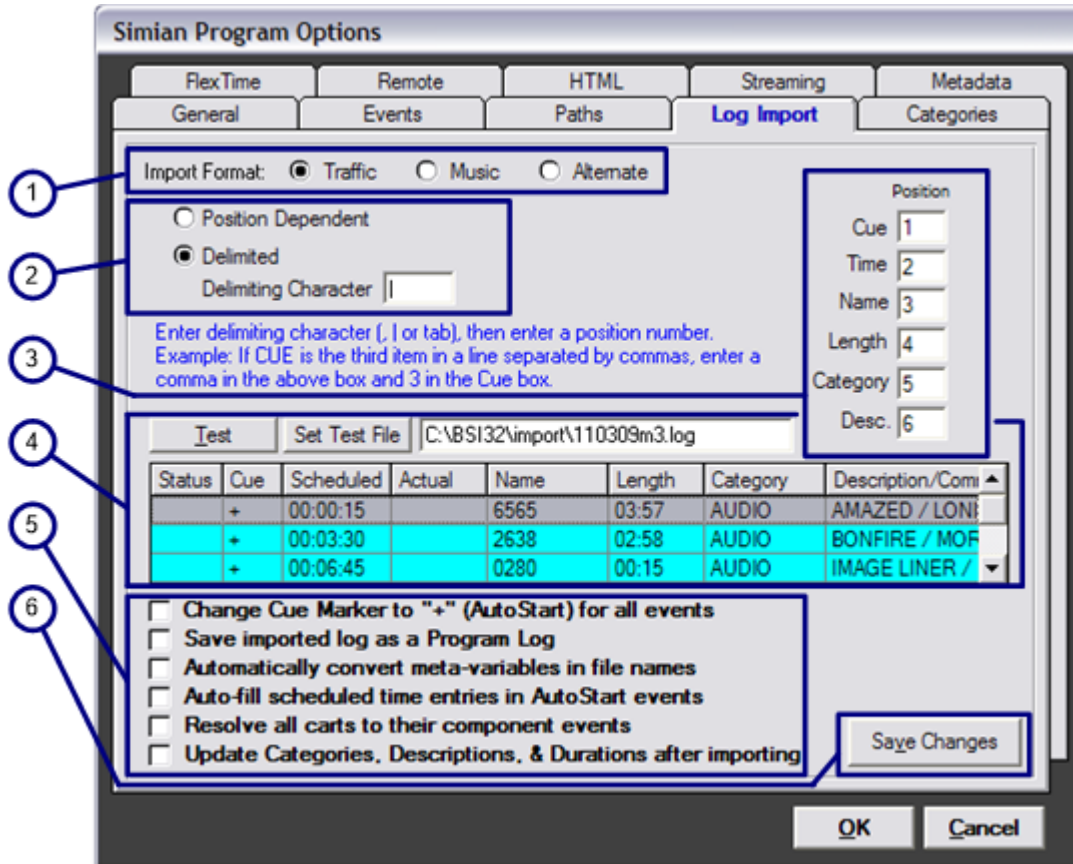
In a position dependent text file, each column can be a different length or number of characters. Here's an example of four columns that have lengths of 3, 5, 7, and 9 characters:

```
 + info name address
[3][ 5 ][ 7 ][  9  ]
```

<u>Let's Tie It In:</u>
Now that we understand the difference between a character delimited and position dependent text files, let's look at the process for setting up the import filters for each type of text file. The first thing that we need to find out is what kind of text file your individual scheduling software creates. There are two ways to do this. You can call up the manufacturer of the scheduling software and ask (if you do, and if it's character delimited, make sure that you find out the delimiting character as well) or you can simply open the file in a text editor such as WordPad and use your newfound knowledge to discern the nature of the file yourself! Once you know, you can move down to the appropriate section of this area and continue from there…

Character Delimited:

So, you've ferreted out the nature of your text file, but after analyzing it with the previous instructions, it looks like it is bar delimited (the character "|"). Now we can go about setting up the filter appropriately. When you open the Log Import tab under Tools/Program Options in Simian, it looks like this:

Let's look at each section of the Log Import tab one at a time:

1. Import Format: These three radio buttons allow you to choose between three completely different import formats. All of the other import settings change based on which format you choose here.

2. This section allows you to set up the import filter to accept either a Position Dependent or character Delimited text file. If you choose Delimited, it will also allow you to choose the delimiting character.

3. This is where the rubber meets the road. If we look at the Simian interface, then your text file, it will become very apparent that our columns are probably not in the same order. Let's look at an example of a "real life" scheduler log:

```
00:03:00|+|1460|FORTUNATE SON|CREEDENCE|AUDIO|00:00
00:06:00|+|1266|TAKE IT EASY|EAGLES|AUDIO|03:25
00:09:00|+|8030|JUST LIKE STARTING OVER|JOHN LENNON|AUDIO|04:50
00:12:00|+|1083|BROWN SUGAR|ROLLING STON|AUDIO|03:44
00:15:00|+|1172|I SHOT THE SHERIFF|ERIC CLAPTON|AUDIO|00:00
00:18:00|+|1318|AINT THAT PECULIAR|MARVIN GAYE|AUDIO|03:57
00:21:00|+|1634|BOOGIE SHOES|K C AND THE|AUDIO| 02:09
00:24:00|+|1213|SUPERSTITION|STEVIE WONDE|AUDIO|04:22
```

Now, let's have a look at this… Sure looks like the Cue information is in the second column. In this case, we'd put a "2" in the Cue text box. It's that simple! If there's information in the text file that Simian doesn't ask for, feel free to omit it. If there's information that Simian asks for, but the text file doesn't have it, don't worry, Simian doesn't always need all of the information that it asks for. Here are a couple common examples:

The log doesn't include information for the Category for all or some of the records. If the information in the Category field is missing, Simian will automatically assume that the Category is "Audio". In this situation, if the Event is not an audio file it will error.

Length is used only for log verification, and is unimportant during actual playback.

Description is optional for all events other than Macros.

Time is only important for sorting and for Timed Events.

4. This ominous looking little area is there to keep you from having to go back and forth between the main Simian interface and the Log Import tab. You'll notice that the columns correspond to those in the main Simian Program Log. The reason for this is that you use this area to open and test a text file to make sure that the settings in section 3 are correct. Once they line up properly here, you'll never need to use this section again. Simply use the Set Test File button to open the text file, and then use the Test button to test the file as you make changes to section 3. Once you have things the way that you want them, just click the Save Changes button to save the import format.
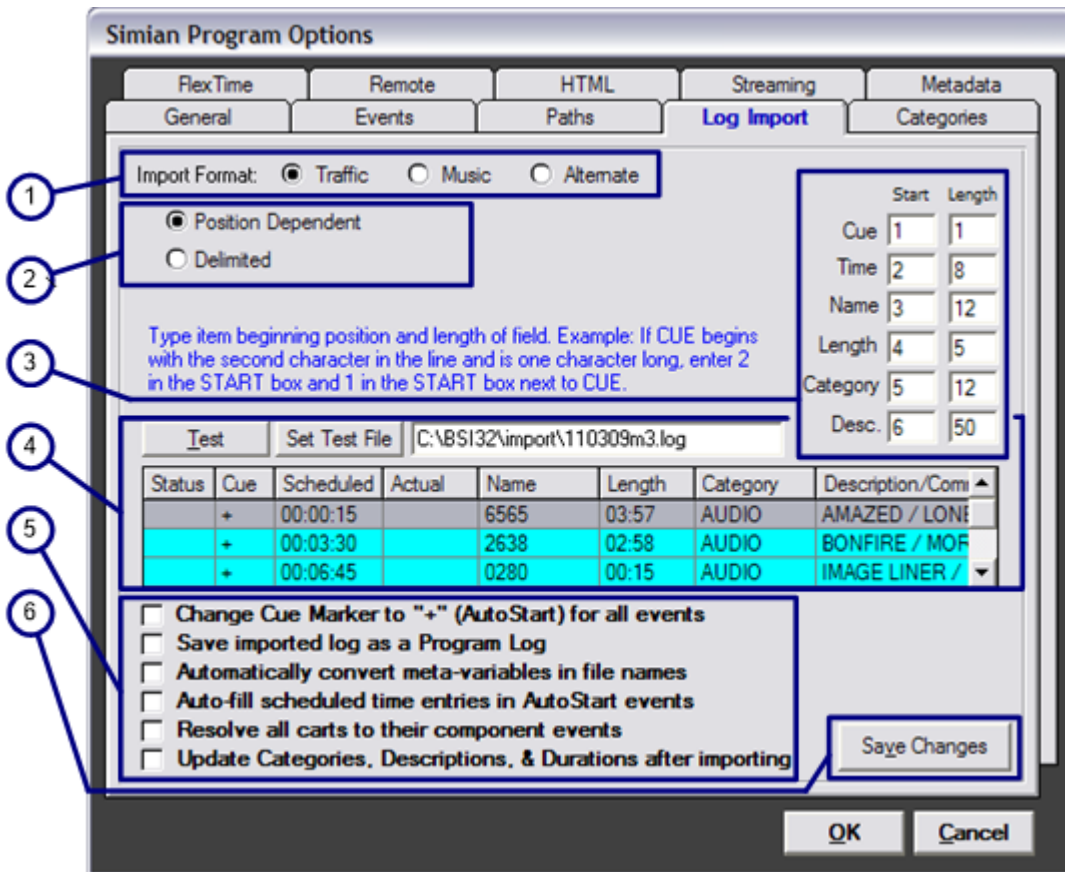
5. Section Five contains several optional check box options to automatically perform several tasks at the end of the import process. They include:

  a. Change Cue Marker to "+" (AutoStart) for all events – Puts a "+" in the cue column for every Event (replacing any other cue that may or may not have been in the original import file). This is used mostly by music-on-hard drive stations whose scheduler logs don't include cue information.
  b. Save imported log as a Program Log – Saves the imported file as a program log using the same name as the original import file.
  c. Automatically convert meta-variables in file names – Converts date meta variables contained in the Filename column to today's date.
  d. Auto-fill scheduled time entries in AutoStart events – Rebuilds scheduled time entries in the Scheduled column for all AutoStart cued events based on the timed events' and manual start events' scheduled times.
  e. Resolve all carts to their component events – Removes carts from the program log and replaces them with their component events (e.g. if a cart is specified in your program log which contains three AutoStart events, that cart will be replaced by the three events in the program log).
  f. Update Categories, Descriptions, & Durations after importing – Refreshes the named columns with the current data obtained from your audio database.

6. The Save Changes button simply saves the changes that you've made to this particular Import Format.

Position Dependent
Well, now. You've looked at your text file and found that it's position dependent. In this case, when you go to Tools/Program Options and select the Log Import tab, you'll want to select Position Dependent (in box 2) right away. Once you have, the interface will look like this:

Let's look at each section of the Log Import tab one at a time:

1. Import Format: These three radio buttons allow you to choose between three completely different import formats. All of the other import settings change based on which format you choose here.

2. This section allows you to set up the import filter to accept either a Position Dependent or Character Delimited text file. If you choose Delimited, it will also allow you to choose the delimiting character.

3. Here's the heart and soul of this dialog box. If we look at the Simian interface, then at your text file, it will become very apparent that our columns are probably not in the same order. Let's look at an example of a "real life" log:

```
00:09:00+8030 JUST LIKE STARTING OVERJOHN LENNON AUDIO 04:50
00:12:00+1083 BROWN SUGAR ROLLING STONAUDIO 03:44
00:15:00+1172 I SHOT THE SHERIFF ERIC CLAPTONAUDIO 00:00
00:18:00+1318 AINT THAT PECULIAR MARVIN GAYE AUDIO 03:57
00:21:00+1634 BOOGIE SHOES K C AND THE AUDIO 02:09
00:24:00+1213 SUPERSTITION STEVIE WONDEAUDIO 04:22
00:27:00+1015 SON OF A SON OF A SA JIMMY BUFFETAUDIO 03:17
[ 8 ]1[ 8 ][ 23 ][ 12 ][ 6 ][ 5 ]
[----------------------63 Placeholders--------------------]
```

Let's have a look at this. Using the knowledge that we picked up earlier, it looks like the cue starts on placeholder 9 and is one character long. Therefore, we enter a 9 and a 1 (respectively) in the boxes after Cue. It's really that simple! If there's

information in the text file that Simian doesn't ask for, feel free to omit it. If there's information that Simian asks for, but the text file doesn't have it, don't worry, Simian doesn't always need all of the information that it asks for. Here are a couple common examples:

The log doesn't include information for the Category for all or some of the records. If the information in the Category field is missing, Simian will automatically assume that the Category is "Audio".

Length is used only for log verification and is unimportant during actual playback.

Description is optional for all events other than Macros.

Time is only important for sorting and for Timed Events.

4. This area is there to keep you from having to go back and forth between the main Simian interface and the Log Import tab. You'll notice that the columns correspond to those in the Program Log. The reason for this is that you use this area to open and test a text file to make sure that the settings in section 3 are correct. Once they line up properly here, you'll never need to use this section again. Simply use the Set Test File button to open the text file, then use the Test button to test the file as you make changes to section 3. Once you're done, use the Save Changes button to save your import format.

5. Section Five contains several optional check box options to automatically perform several tasks at the end of the import process. They include:

a. Change Cue Marker to "+" (AutoStart) for all events – Puts a "+" in the cue column for every Event (replacing any other cue that may or may not have been in the original import file). This is used mostly by music-on-hard drive stations whose scheduler logs don't include cue information.
b. Save imported log as a Program Log – Saves the imported file as a program log using the same name as the original import file.
c. Automatically convert meta-variables in file names – Converts date meta variables contained in the Filename column to today's date.
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e. Resolve all carts to their component events – Removes carts from the program log and replaces them with their component events (e.g. if a cart is specified in your program log which contains three AutoStart events, that cart will be replaced by the three events in the program log).
f. Update Categories, Descriptions, & Durations after importing – Refreshes the named columns with the current data obtained from your audio database.

6. The Save Changes button simply saves the changes that you've made to this particular Import Format.

Implementation:

So, once you've got your filters set up, how do you use them? Just go under the File menu in the main Simian interface and select Import, then select the format that you want to use (remember area 1?).

Where'd the file go? For Simian to see the files, they need to be put in the folder that you designate under Tools/Program Options/Paths. You can designate the location for the Log Import folder (the folder where the "raw" text files go) and the

Program Logs folder (the folder where the .bsi logs are created when you import your log) under the Other Paths drop-down list.

So, why the two folders? When you import your file, Simian reads the "raw" text file from the Log import folder and uses that information to create the .bsi file in the Program Logs folder.

Help Topics:

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Please wait... it will take a second!