V4.7 Software Quick Start Guide

Soundcraft

Vi SERIES

INTRODUCTION TO V4.7

The 4.7 software update for the Vi Series includes a major update to the functionality of the Vi4 console in particular, bringing a new level of power to this console with an input channel-to-mix upgrade as well as complete bi-directional compatibility with Vi6 show files.

Also included is the long-awaited offline editor for Vi1 users, and a number of other user interface enhancements for all Vi consoles.

In this guide:

- **Vi4 Channel upgrade to 64 or 96 Channels to Mix**
- **Show Compatibility with pre-4.7 Vi4 shows and other Vi types**
- **V4.7 User Interface Enhancements**
  - **New EQ units control**
  - **New Delay units control**
  - **New Scroll encoders in Show list**
  - **New Sort button in Show list**
  - **New highlight on channel strip when Oscillator enabled**
  - **INV button in Noise Gate renamed to 'DUCK'**
  - **'Global Pre/post' button in Vi1 renamed to 'Set Pre/post'**
- **Virtual Vi1 Offline Editor**
- **Miscellaneous Bug Fixes and Improvements**

Vi4 Channel Upgrade to 96chs to Mix

Up until V4.7 software, the Vi4 console model was restricted to 48 channels to mix with 2 DSP cards fitted to the Local Rack, or 72 channels to mix with 3 DSP cards fitted. This restriction was originally built-in because the control surface, only having 24 input faders, was unable to access more than 72 channels using the original 3x 24 layer input channel access philosophy.

Since the Vi4 Local Rack is in fact identical to that of the Vi6, it has always had the DSP capability to mix the same number of channels as the Vi6. Advances in the Vi software, such as the addition of the User Fader pages, now make it possible to unlock the full potential of the Vi4's DSP power.

V4.7 therefore allows the Vi4 to mix 24 more channels than with previous software releases, (or 16 more if the Local Rack only has 2 DSP cards) and now has almost identical audio capabilities to its bigger brother the Vi6.
The only difference between the two models will now be the number of Matrix contributions, which will remain as 24 on the Vi4 and 32 on the Vi6.

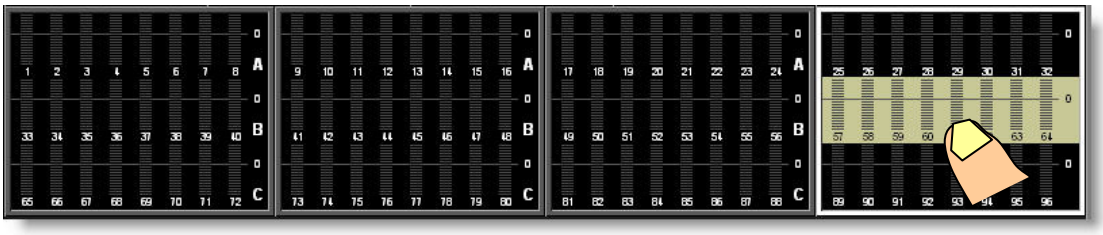
Key Features of the Vi4 channel upgrade

- Vi4 48ch (2x DSP cards) version is expanded to 64 channels to mix
- Vi4 72ch (3x DSP cards) version is expanded to 96 channels to mix
- Matrix size remains at 24 x16 maximum (with either 2 or 3 DSP cards)
- Bus count remains at 32 Mono or 16 Stereo plus LRC Masters
- Show files including Pairing are now fully compatible between Vi2, Vi4 and Vi6
- Note! Vi4 Show files saved on pre-4.7 software which include Vertically paired channels will need to be re-formatted to restore vertical pairing, even when loading on a Vi4 that is running 4.7 or later software.
- Some Vi4 consoles were sold with a reduced configuration of Stagebox. This had only 48 mic inputs. These Stageboxes may be easily expanded to 64 mic inputs by purchasing 2 additional mic input modules.
- If more than 64 mic inputs are needed from stage, a second Stagebox may be added. There are three options for this depending on how many more mic inputs are required and whether compatibility with existing rental stock is a priority: Add a fully configured 64ch Vi4/6 Stagebox; add a partly configured 32ch Vi4/6 Stagebox; add a 32 input Compact Stagebox.
  In each case there will already be a second MADI card in the Local Rack which can be used for connection of the second Stagebox, but the suitability of this will depend on whether the card is Optical or Cat 5, and what type of Stagebox cabling system is already being used.
  Contact your Soundcraft distributor for assistance with adding Stageboxes.
- A new version of ViSi Remote (V1.1.8 or later) will be required in order to control channels above 72 from an iPad. V1.1.8 is expected to be available in the App Store late September/early October 2012.

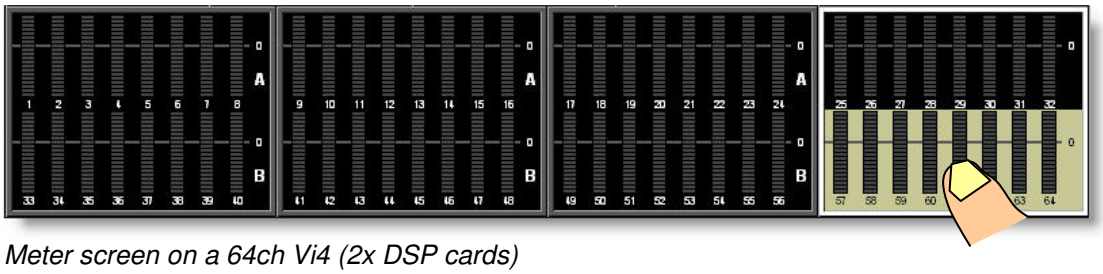
Accessing the additional Channels on Vi4

The Vi4 control surface contains only 24 input faders, and only 3 Fixed Fader pages for input channels, so in order to allow it to access the same number of channels as the Vi6 (64 or 96, depending on number of DSP cards fitted), it is necessary to use one of the following methods:

Method 1: Use the Input Meter display on the touchscreen in the Control Bay to select the additional channels in groups of 8, and assign them temporarily to the right-hand 8 input faders. Note that the input channels that cannot be seen on the fixed layers A/B/C are indicated by a white box around these input meters.
This method is good for quickly accessing any of the 96 channels in the default channel order (25-32, 57-64, 89-96), but has the disadvantage that changing to a different main Input Fader page will cancel these temporarily assigned channel assignments.



Meter screen on 96ch Vi4 (3x DSP cards)



Meter screen on a 64ch Vi4 (2x DSP cards)

Method 2: Assign the channels within the white box to a User Fader page.

Using this method, the new channels can be placed anywhere within any of the User Input layers, and Method 1 can still be used in combination with this as an additional way of grabbing blocks of 8 channels.

Show File Compatibility Warning for existing Vi4 Users

Because of the upgrade of Vi4 mixing capacity, and to follow the market demand for better compatibility with Vi6, the layout of the channels on Vi4 has changed.

This means that input channels that were vertically paired in a Vi4 show made on the pre-4.7 software will be split apart and not be vertically aligned any more when this show is loaded on a V4.7 console. This means some work will be needed to reorganise channel layouts where vertical pairs have been used. This also means that the work would have to be repeated for each snapshot, if individual snapshots exist within the show. The most significant effect of this change will be on Theatre users, who are likely to have a large number of snapshots. The Apply Changes function in the snapshot automation section can be used to speed up the process of changing multiple snapshots, but in cases where vertical pairs have been used and there are large numbers of snapshots, it may be better to start from scratch, or use channel libraries to help recreate the show in the new software.

Likewise if a show that was made on the new software is loaded onto a pre-4.7 Vi4 console, the same issue will occur, but in this case the recommended solution is to update the console to V4.7.

This issue is no different to the one that used to exist with pre-4.7 software when shows were transferred between a Vi4 and a Vi6 or vice versa, except that it will now affect Vi4 users with their own shows made on the older software.
With horizontally paired channels, there is only the minor inconvenience that the pairing between the two channels will be removed when an old show is loaded on a 4.7 desk, in this case the pairing simply needs to be re-engaged and the show saved again. Snapshots will not be affected.

In the case of Vi1, 2 or 6 Shows, there will be no compatibility issues with shows saved on earlier versions of the software.
The vertical pairing compatibility issue still applies to shows being transferred to/from a Vi1 console from/to any other Vi model.

V4.7 User Interface Enhancements

The following new features have been added to all Vi consoles with the 4.7 update:

EQ UNIT control for bandwidth

A new control is added to the Menu-Settings page, allowing the operation of the bandwidth controls in the EQ sections throughout the console to be selected as either Octaves or Q-factor (defined as the ratio of frequency to bandwidth, both in Hertz). Until now this has been fixed as Q-factor.
The direction of the control is reversed between the two settings: In Q mode, clockwise narrows bandwidth, in Octaves mode, clockwise widens bandwidth.

- Allows an operator to choose which method of bandwidth display is preferred
- New Octaves setting provides a more intuitive control in a musical context
- The setting of the control is saved in the Show file

DELAY UNIT control

A new control is added in the Menu-Settings page allowing the current delay time value on inputs, outputs and monitors to be displayed as milliseconds, metres or feet & inches.

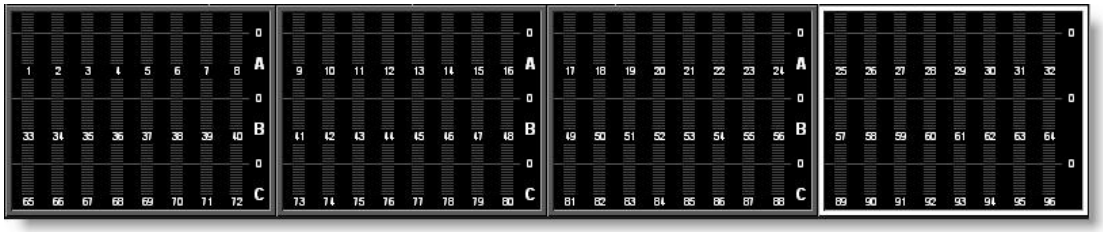
- Allows operator to choose the most appropriate unit for setting up delay
  .
- Previous software only allowed millisecond display, whereas equivalent distance is often more useful
- Distance conversion assumes fixed temperature of 20°C/68F
- Delay unit setting is saved in Show file

Note: Changing the EQ or DELAY UNIT controls does not affect the current bandwidth or Delay setting and therefore will not affect audio.

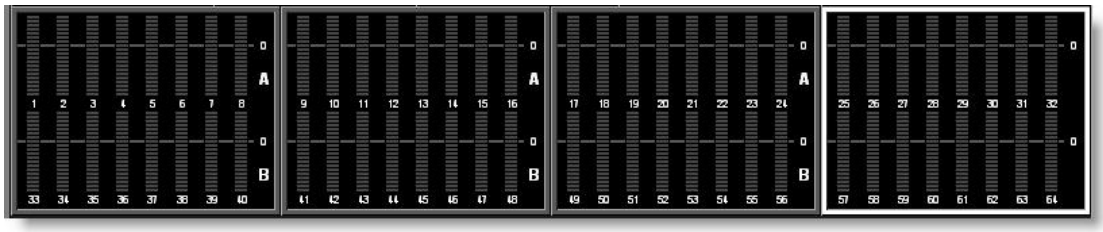
REDUCE CHANNEL COUNT control in Settings Page

When a third DSP card is fitted to Vi2, 4 or 6 consoles, the input channel count is increased from 64 to 96 channels. There may be occasions where even on a fully expanded console, more than 64chs are not needed and in this case the channel count may be reduced back to 64 using a new control in the Settings page. The main benefit of this is to give easier handling of the touch-selection of blocks of inputs using the meter overview screen.

Input meter screen with REDUCE CH COUNT control OFF - 96 inputs, smaller meters



Input meter screen with REDUCE CH COUNT control ON - 64 inputs, larger meters

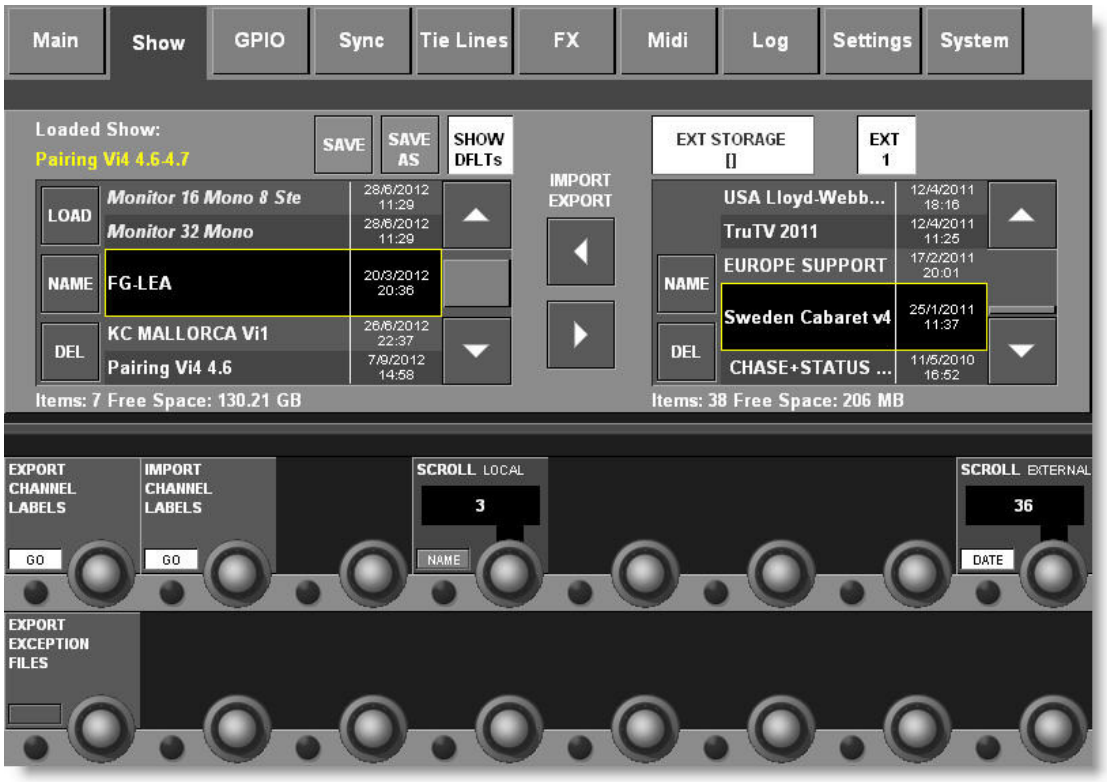


The Menu-Settings page, illustrating the locations of the new DELAY UNIT, EQ UNIT and REDUCE CH COUNT controls

SCROLL encoders for Show page lists

On the Show page there are two lists of files – one for internal 'Local' storage and one for the external USB storage.
These lists now have rotary SCROLL controls to allow more comfortable browsing of Show lists.

- Allows easier scrolling of Show lists, previously only possible using touchscreen up/down arrow scrolling
- New sort buttons within the SCROLL controls allow the show lists to be sorted by DATE or NAME (previously the sorting was only by name)
- Most recent file is seen at top of list in DATE mode.

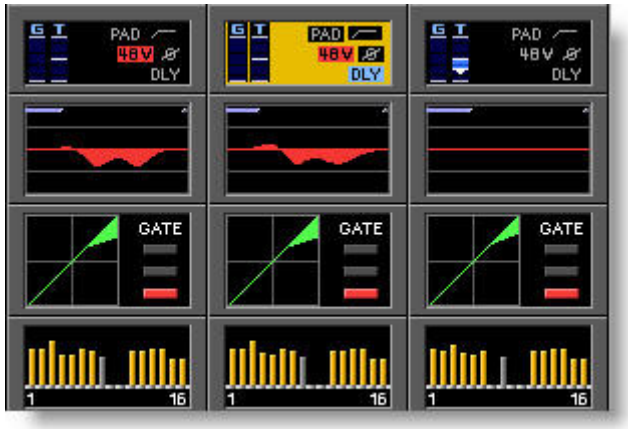


The Menu-Show page illustrating the positions of the new Scroll encoders with integral Sort buttons

Warning Highlight for Oscillator ON state

On each input channel it is possible to patch the desk Oscillator in place of the normal indicated audio source. The fact that the oscillator was assigned to an input in this way was previously invisible once the Input touch field had been closed.

- The assigned oscillator state is now indicated by a very visible orange background to the Input Touch field
- The highlight appears whenever the OSC button in the channel's input section is enabled, regardless of whether the Oscillator is actually switched on in the TB/Osc master section



DUCKER function improvement

The Ducking function within the Noise Gate on all Vi consoles has been made more obvious by changing the name of the mode button to 'DUCK'. This was previously named 'INV'. Engaging this button inverts the gain control function of the Gate and allows an external sidechain signal to be used to reduce the level of the main channel signal, by the amount set using the RNG control, and with the time constants set with the ATK, HOLD and REL controls.

Vi1 Aux Pre/post Setup function improvement

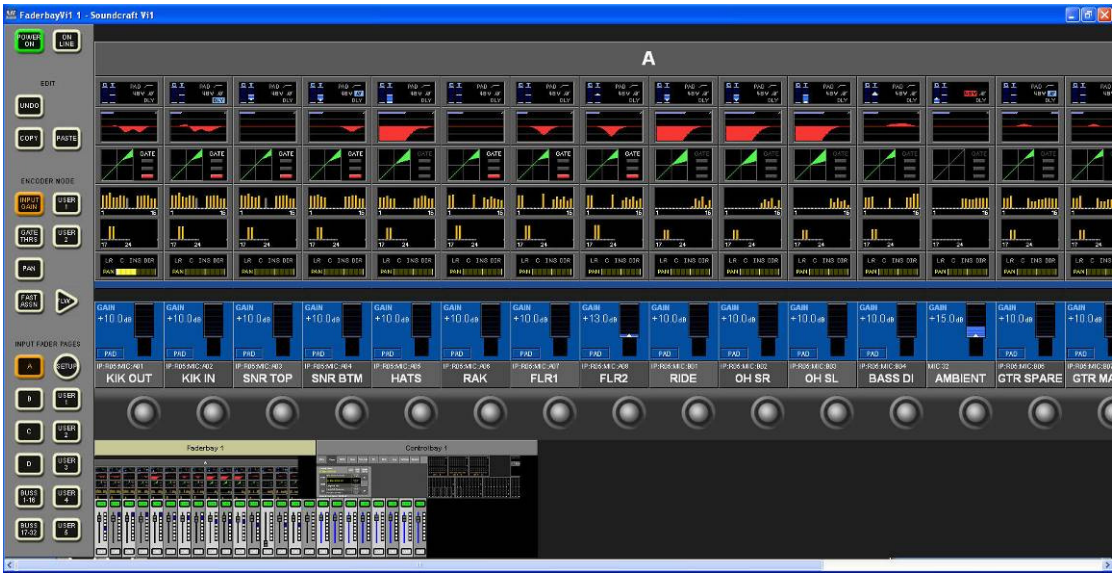
The name of the Setup button for pre/post fader selection for Aux sends has been changed to SET PRE/PST from GLOBAL PRE/PST, in order to more accurately describe its function.

This button is located to the immediate right of the Dynamics section of channel strip 16.

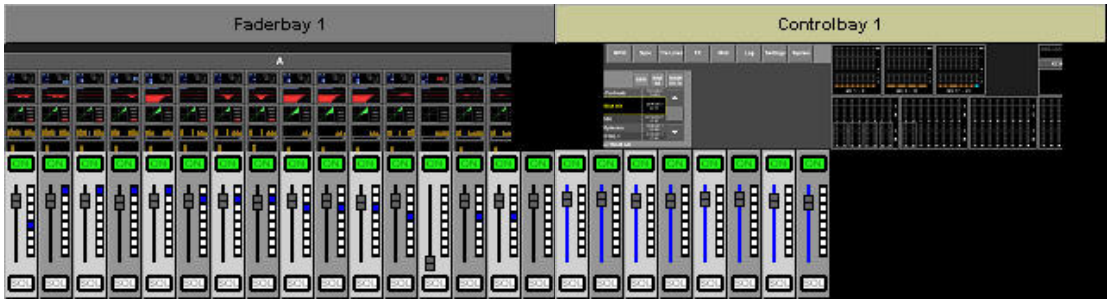
Virtual Vi1 Offline Editor

With V4.7 software onwards, the Virtual Vi installation package includes a **Virtual Vi1** emulation which runs the actual Vi1 console software on any Windows-XP equipped computer and allows the set up and editing of Show files which can be loaded directly onto a Vi1 console. In the past, Vi1 Show files have had to be edited using the Vi4 or Vi6 versions of the editor, and this resulted in difficulties with the fader page layout and channel pairing, as well as an inability to set up User fader pages correctly.

Because the Virtual Vi software is identical to that used in the console itself, the width of the Vi1's Vistonics channel strip cannot be accommodated on a typical laptop monitor, therefore it has been necessary to incorporate a horizontal scroll bar in order to reach parameters that are on the right-hand side of the screen. Certain functions controlled from hard buttons on the right hand side of the console surface are also reached by scrolling to the right, such as snapshot, monitoring and talkback controls.



As with the other Virtual Vi models, the mini navigation panel at the bottom of the screen is used to select which bay (Input Bay or Master Control Bay) is visible, and whether the fader panels or the touch-screen controls are being viewed. The required area is selected by clicking on the general area, but individual faders, mutes and solo buttons can also be controlled directly on the navigation panel by CTRL+Clicking on them.



Enlarged view of Desk navigation section

Virtual Vi1 Key Facts

- Unlike the other models of Virtual Vi, Online control of the console is not possible with Virtual Vi1. This is because the audio processing is built into the Vi1 surface and has no external network control, unlike the Vi2/4/6.

- Note that the Input Fader panel of Virtual Vi1 includes short label displays and rotary encoders which do not exist on the actual product. These have no function in the offline version. It is still recommended to set up short labels within the Vi1's channel label editing screen, as these are still used to label channels within the Fader page setup screens.

- The input patch available using the Default Shows within the Virtual Vi1 is limited to the local I/O only. It is not possible to select other I/O options such as Stagebox or D21m Optional expansion cards with the current version. (This capability will be added in a future release).

- If creating a Show with Vi6 Stagebox patching is required, a Default Show can be copied from Virtual Vi6 and imported to Virtual Vi1 using a USB stick, this will give the basic Stagebox patch.

- If a Show that was made on a Vi1 console which has a Stagebox attached is loaded into Virtual Vi1, the Stagebox I/O patch will be visible and can be edited.

- Note that many functions within Virtual Vi have keyboard shortcuts to speed up operation – these can be discovered by either hovering with the mouse over various buttons on the display, or consulting the text file 'All About Soundcraft Virtual Vi' that will be copied to the windows desktop after installation.

Miscellaneous Bug Fixes and Improvements

In the 4.7 software release, the following bugs affecting Vi1, 2, 4 and 6 have been fixed:

- Time/date stamp of Show file was not updated when saving show

- Manual IP addresses in 192.168.1 subnet could not be selected

- Using a wireless router with IP address in 192.168.1 subnet could stop connection to DSP core

- Console could restart when HiQnet connection unplugged

- Error messages generated if surface started up without Local Rack on-line

- Screen lock & restart when using GEQ from control bay screen.

These bug fixes apply equally to the consoles themselves and to the Virtual Vi offline software.