

MIXDOWN

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SW8-USB

AMBER TECHNOLOGY, Australia



The Radial SW8-USB is a genius solution to an ever increasing problem for musicians performing live. Increased accessibility and ease-of-use of backing tracks makes it possible for bands to replicate albums perfectly in a live environment, performing with tracks filled with extra layers to make for an incredible performance. An increased reliance on backing tracks introduces an extra variable, bands often relying on a laptop to play back extra tracks and cues for the performance. Hidden behind some of the more professional bands will be at least one Radial SW8-USB, an eight channel USB audio interface and auto-switcher for multiple laptops should one fail. The front panel features multiple bright LEDs to signify signal to and from the unit, whether some of the universal features are engaged or not, and which laptop is being used, but also which power supplies are active and engaged.

In use, the SW8-USB is a breeze. It features two USB inputs for laptops, and keeping the connections USB is actually a handy feature to make older laptops accessible. While other companies do away with USB, they make every piece of equipment that isn't the latest model redundant, either removing themselves from the market or forcing their users to upgrade. The inputs can be easily switched via the front panel, and automatically switch should one laptop fail and the Radial receives an interrupted signal via USB. Multiple USB inputs also eliminates the need for multiple playback units, although the SW8-USB can also be combined with multiple units for more outputs. The unit can be remotely controlled via the Radial JS2 Footswitch to toggle between mute on/off and inputs A/B.

The Radial is quite a simple unit to set-up and use. It features eight line outputs or a D-Sub to make things easier with a snake. There's MIDI in/out to sync with your playback/switching systems, and slots to lock

your SW8-USB down. Each of the eight outputs feature an independent ground lift to keep signal consistently and clean, as well as a universal mute switch and standby clearly labelled on the front panel, and can be linked via TRS cable or Thunderbolt hubs between units to ensure maximum data transfer speeds. Each of the channels offers a frequency response of 20Hz-20kHz, so your pets may be missing some frequencies, but your audience won't. The USBs are Type-B USB 2.0, and the unit can be powered from 100V-240V so it'll work anywhere in the world you're gigging. Not only is the unit easy to power, but bright LEDs on the front of the unit signify the laptop/s are still powered and sending signal for simple signal chain checking if (and when) something goes wrong. Beside the USB signal lights, the eight outputs can also send mic or line level output, which is also displayed via an LED.

All in all, Radial have created a solution to an issue that other companies are creating for bands, musicians and performers; they're being phased out. The SW8-USB is a simply, one rack solution that offers dual USB inputs for a main laptop and a back-up, that'll automatically switch if there's an issue. There's MIDI in and out, as well as clearly labelled universal switching, mute and standby modes, or ground lifts for each channel if you need it. If eight channels aren't enough, units can be chained together for more entirely usable channels and features.

BY LEWIS NOKE EDWARDS