

## Using your Edirol PCR Controller in SONAR

Using an Edirol PCR Controller Keyboard can substantially improve your workflow and enjoyment in using SONAR software. Not only will the knobs and faders increase your creativity with regard to using software instruments and effects, also having 21 buttons means that you can have your most used SONAR commands at your fingertips. In my experience, I find that the less I use the mouse to operate SONAR, the happier I become. Please note, this tutorial assumes you have a PCR-300, PCR-500 or PCR-800 and a SONAR program installed that supports the ACT technology.

It is Cakewalk's ACT technology that makes this happen. In this tutorial we shall learn how to;

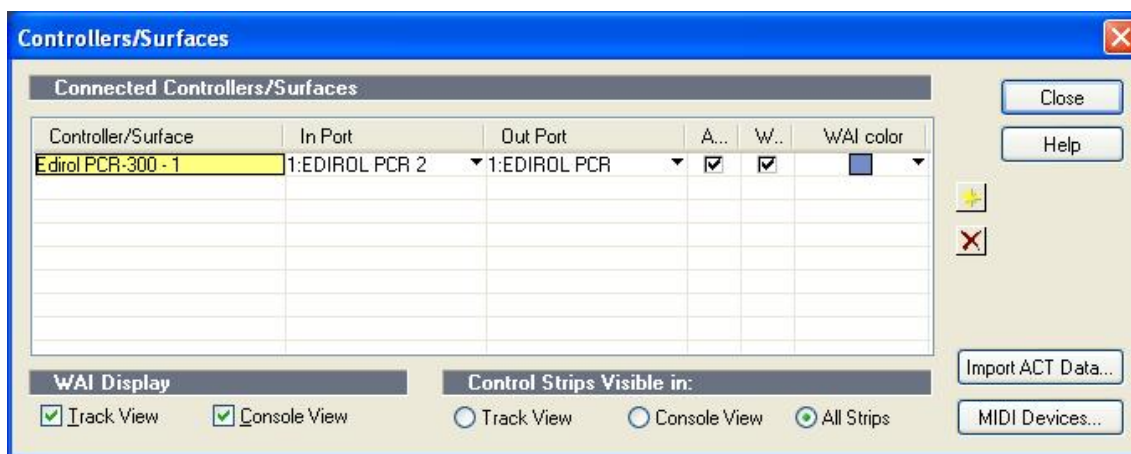
- Set up your PCR controller
- Activate ACT
- Use ACT and WAI
- Program the buttons

### Setting up your PCR Controller

Make sure that you are ready to use your PCR on your computer (See your Edirol PCR Instruction Manual for details). Start up your SONAR program and load up your favourite template.

From the menu, select Options / MIDI Devices and from the resulting pop-up window check to see that all your Edirol PCR options are ticked.

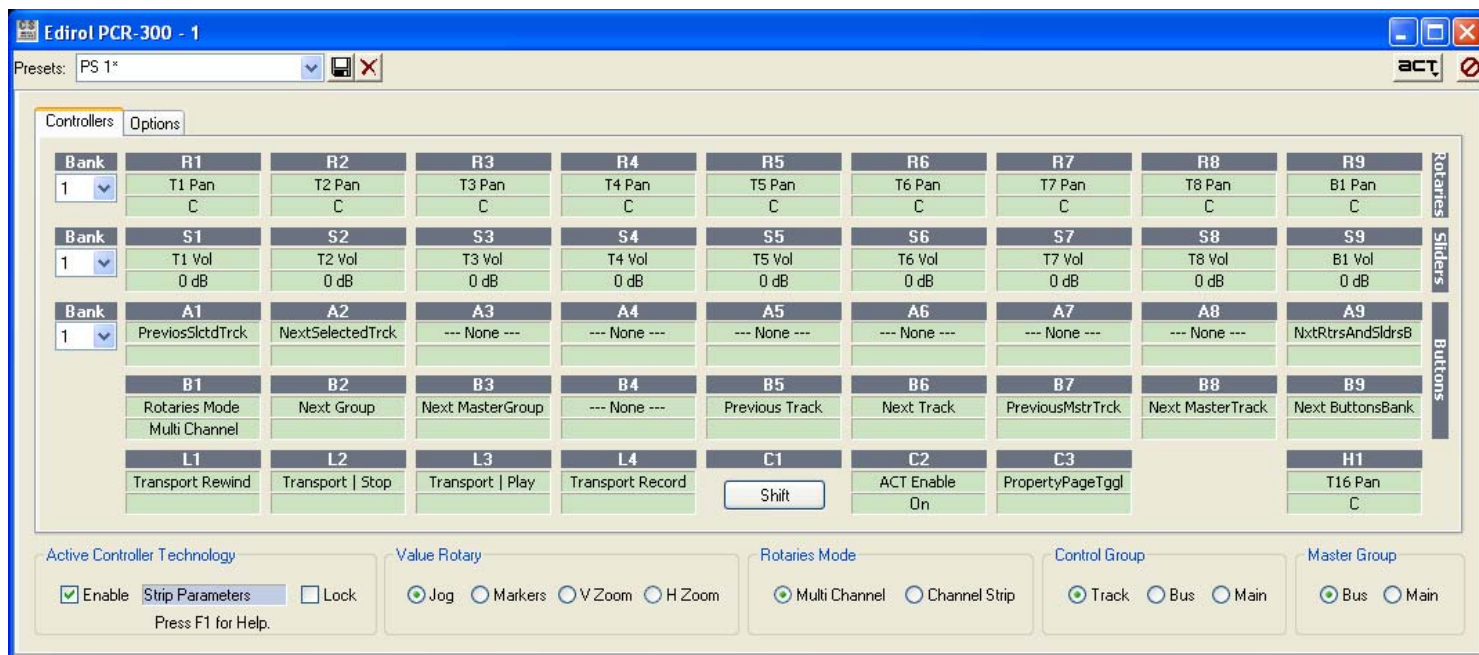
From the menu, select Options / Controller Surfaces and click the Add new Controller Surface button. From the resulting pop-up window select the PCR-300 from the Controller/Surface drop down menu, select Edirol PCR 2 from the Input Port drop down menu and Edirol PCR from the Output Port drop down menu. Click OK when you are done. Make sure the Track View and the Console View are ticked in WAI Display and All Strips is selected in Control Strips Visible in on the Controllers/Surfaces window before you click Close on that window.



That's it. You are ready to go.

### Activating ACT

Go to the Tracks Page and create 16 audio tracks (From the menu, select Insert / Multiple Tracks for the quick way). Press the Dynamic Mapping button on your PCR Controller and the PCR-300 ACT Properties screen will pop up. First of all, click the Options tab and then click the Defaults button near the bottom left side of the window then click the Controllers tab again.



Default settings for the PCR-300

Make sure that Enable is ticked in the bottom left hand corner of the window. The little window beside it should read Strip Parameters. Select the first audio track you created and make sure the Inspector is open (press the "I" key to open or close the Inspector). Move the slider marked S1 on your PCR and the fader in the Inspector should move accordingly (The fader may not move until you move the PCR slider past the fader setting. This is a good thing because the audio won't jump causing corresponding jumps in volume). Move the R1 knob on your PCR and the Pan value will change accordingly too.

### Using WAI

You will notice that there is a coloured vertical strip (probably blue) to the left of the track numbers and it is numbered 1 to 8. This is ACT telling you what tracks your PCR is controlling. It is called the WAI (Where Am I) display and it allows you to decide which 8 tracks you can control at any time. If you click on the WAI strip and drag it down / up you can choose which 8 tracks you have control of from your PCR (Hold on here, that's using a mouse I hear you say – don't worry, we will be programming a couple of buttons on your PCR to do this a little later). If you go to the Console screen, you will see the same coloured strip but it is laying horizontally below the track numbers and a similar dragging of the mouse on the strip will dictate which 8 channels you control. Go crazy, move a bunch of sliders on your PCR and see how nicely the console responds. Isn't that better than using a mouse?



By the way, If you turn the Value knob on your PCR in Track View the Now Marker moves accordingly – cool!

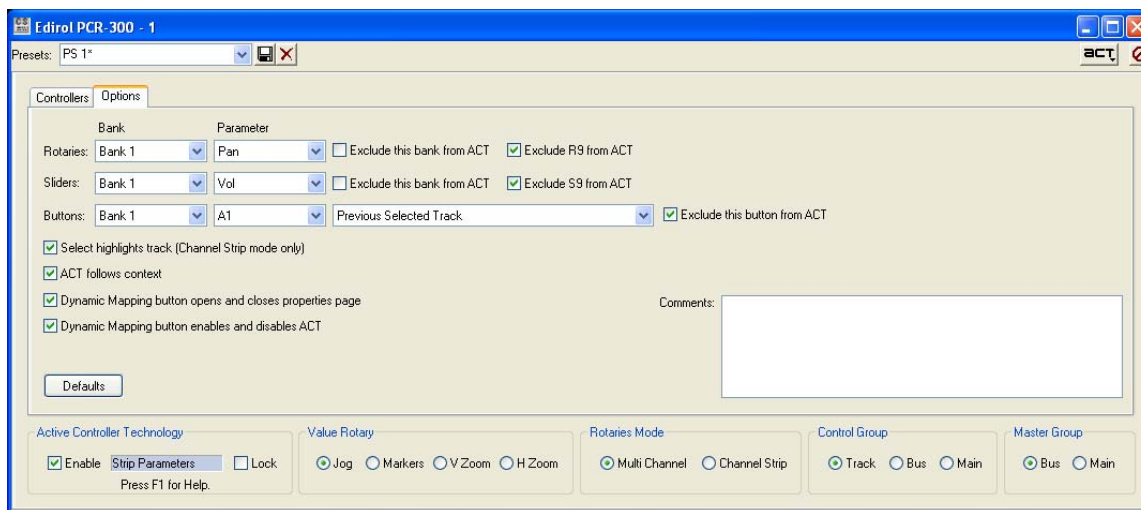
## Using ACT to control soft synths and effects

Let's move on. Now we are going to learn how we can control our ACT compatible synths and effects quickly and easily. Select a track in the Tracks Screen and insert the Boost11 mastering tool in the Effects Bin. If you check back to the ACT Properties page you will see that assignments for the rotaries and sliders have changed from the Strip Parameters to the parameters in the Boost11 effect.

Now let's open Dimension Pro (or LE if you are a Home Studio XL or Studio user) from the Synth Rack. Now the parameters in the ACT Properties page are assigned to the Dimension Synth. If you click both the Boost11 and Dimension windows you will see that the ACT Properties page will change accordingly. It's worth pointing out here that there is four Banks of Controllers that you can access. Select the Dimension soft synth and press the A9 key on your PCR repeatedly whilst observing the ACT Properties page you will notice that you the Rotary and Slider parameters change. While you're at it, press the B9 button and watch the Button settings change.

## Programming the Buttons

I really like having my most often SONAR commands at my fingertips. For example, it's nice (and it feels quicker) to be able to flick between the Console and Track screens with a press of a button. In general, I like to use the first bank of buttons to navigate SONAR and the second bank to mute / solo the current track bank. Banks 3 and 4 can be more specialised depending on what you use more often (ie, automation tools or AudioSnap). With this in mind, let's set up our first bank.

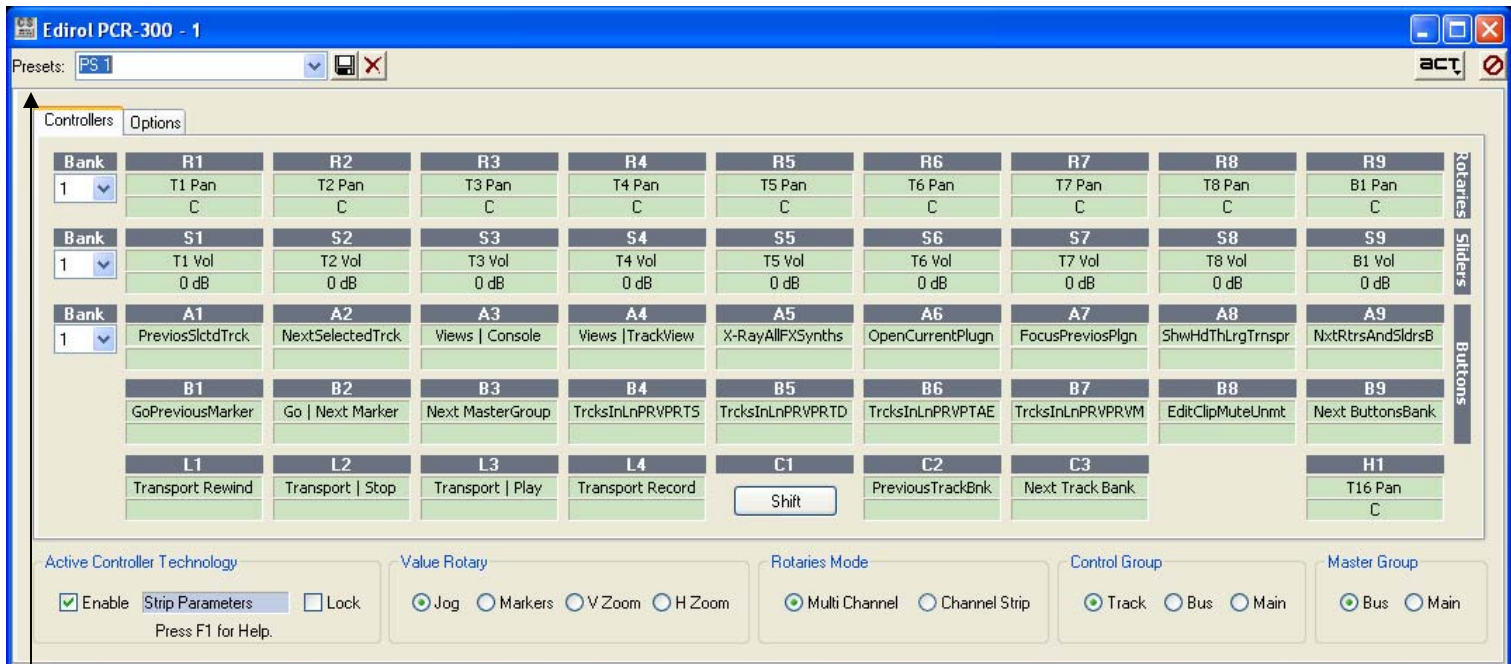


First of all, open up the ACT Properties screen and click the Options tab. If you look at the Buttons row you will see a drop down menu for Bank, Parameter (or Button number) and an associated command. Select Bank 1 and we will leave Buttons A1 and A2, as their default settings are ideal. For Button A3 we will add Console View so select A3 from the Parameter drop down list and then select Views | Console from the Commands drop down list. Always make sure the Exclude this button from ACT is ticked. This will ensure that this set of buttons will always have the same command no matter what the Active instrument / screen is.

So with this method in place we shall continue programming our Buttons. This is a list of how I have programmed my Buttons in Bank 1. Tip: C1 is the Shift Key so to program the shift variant look down the Parameter drop down list until you see C1 + (the Button Number).

Button	A	Shift A	B	Shift B
1	Previous Selected Track	Go   Previous Marker	Mute Selected Track	Solo Selected Track
2	Next Selected Track	Go   Next Marker	Arm Track for Recording	Input Monitor Echo
3	Views   Console	Views   Synth Rack	Loop On / Off	Loop Selection
4	Views   Track View	Views   Loop Explorer		
5	X Ray All FX/Synths	X Ray		
6	Open Current Plugin	Close Current Plugin		
7	Focus Previous Plugin	Focus Next Plugin		
8	Show/Hide the Large Transport	Show/Hide Track Navigator	Edit   Clip Mute/Unmute	Views   Video
9	<i>Do not change</i>	<i>Do not change</i>	<i>Do not change</i>	<i>Do not change</i>

You will notice that there are some blank spaces in the B row of buttons. Feel free to add more specific commands that you often use, for example, you may want to add a set of PRV Tools if you do a lot of MIDI editing. By the way, I said earlier that you could operate WAI without resorting to your mouse. Using the above method, I assigned Buttons C2 and C3 to operate the commands “Previous Track Bank” and “Next Track Bank”. I chose to put those commands there so that I could fully utilize the Mute and Solo functions found on Button Bank 2.



The customized ACT Properties Screen with PRV Tools added

**Make sure you save what you have done by typing a name in the Presets: box and clicking on the floppy disk icon.**

Now you have created an environment where you can physically interact with your SONAR environment. Once you become familiar as to where you have assigned your SONAR commands and your favourite synth and effect plugin parameters you will be able to work quicker and more effectively and that can only lead to a better SONAR creative experience.