

COLLAB

readme

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DISCLAIMER: this file was **not** written by a member of the Image-Line company. I wrote this file for the sole purpose of helping people out during the betatesting phase of the Collab software.

Image-Line has full rights to edit/update this file. (with or without notice... ;-))

The info contained herein is valid for version 1.0 of the Collab software, and *may* be valid for future versions...

Not being a member of Image-Line, and not knowing how this software works in its entirety, there are a few aspects of the program that I am unaware of. But that shouldn't stop you from using the program.

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome!

On behalf of the Image-Line team, thank you for installing the Collab software!

As you can (and will) see, there are many changes that have been made to this file. (mainly for those of you who have used older versions of Collab)

First off, and most obvious, a better layout and new sections.

Speaking of which, I've added a quick start section. I'm aware that some of you don't like reading long help files, so I decided to write a brief and simple section on how to use Collab and what it is.

Hopefully, the wizard will have helped you set up the basics for the software.

2. Quick Start

2.1 Purpose

OK, it's simple: Collab is a program designed to allow users worldwide to work on a same project.

Great, you say, and how is it different from uploading a file to the LoopTalk forum?

Easy: via the LoopTalk forum, you upload the file, then you've got to wait for a person to download the file edit it, and upload again.

That method presents problems:

- the thread will get horribly long with the replies and new updates of the track,

- you'd get lost very quickly with all the versions of the track (despite saying that the top-most thread has to have the latest version),
- anybody can edit your song, or worse, steal it and use it their own tracks... (although admittedly, as a music composer, you wouldn't want your work abused of, so why abuse of someone else's? So set a good example for others to follow, thanks! 🙏)

With Collab, you can decide who you work with, and nobody else will be able to interfere. Also, you'll be able to keep your projects organised, usefull if you decide to work on multiple songs.

2.2 How it works

Collab is like a chat program, only it's main goal – this is where it's different - is to allow users to work on projects together in a easy and more organized fashion.

To work on a project, you first need to create a group. Then, people can ask to join your group or you can invite them; you ultimately decide who can cooperate.

Of course, you can create multiple groups, and have different members in each one.

Nothing stops a user from being a member of multiple groups, either.

You can also create groups where anybody can join... More about that later (you can create 4 types of groups).

You **must** open FL using the [Edit] button or FL Studio > Show window (more info in next section below)

Collab has "inherited" FL Studio's intuitiveness, so you should be able to figure out the rest yourself.

If you still have trouble, read the next section(s) below, and if you still have trouble, don't hesitate to ask either in the LoopTalk forum, or even using Collab. (you can use it like any other chat program)

3. Detailed Explanations

Just so that you understand, here's an overview of the formatting I use below :

Text of message dialogs, etc... will be indicated like this : **'text'**

Buttons (including check boxes) will be indicated like this : [button_name]

Tabs will be indicated like this : <tab_name>

Keyboard commands/combinations will be indicated like this : {keyboard_command}

3.1 View panes

There are 2 major windows in Collab:

- a column on the left, split into 3 views :
 - . the **'invitations'** list,
 - . the **'Your groups'** list,
 - . and the **'File transfers'** list;
- a central view with :
 - . at the top, tabs, where you can cycle through the windows, (so if you have LoopTalk

open and 4 other

groups, you'll have five tabs, but you can only view one tab at any one time)

tip : you can use {ctrl+tab} and {ctrl+shift+tab} to cycle through the tabs

. a column on the right, which shows :

the list of currently connected users, if you have the LoopTalk tab selected, or

if you're in a group, the list of members, and those that aren't connected will have their

names in grey

with '(offline)' next to their nickname; example : MyBestFriend1 (offline)'

. if you've joined a group, there will be an extra view at the bottom displaying various info; more about

that below.

1. Left column :

It can be hidden by clicking the [<<] button. You will then have a [>>] button : that will show the left column when you click on it.

- '**Invitations**'

When someone invites you to a group, that invitation will show up here. To respond to an invitation, right-click on it and you'll be given the option to either accept or reject it.

- '**Your groups**'

Groups you've created or have joined appear here.

When you first use Collab, you won't be in any group, so it's normal that the list is blank at first. (but if it stays blank then either you're not good at collabing or you've mistaken this software for yet another online chat service...)

To see the list of created groups, click the [**More>>**] button.

If you join a group, that group's name will appear in black in the list and a new tab will be created with that group name. If you created that group, then the group name will be displayed in bold dark red instead.

If you're a member of a group, but haven't joined it, then the name will be displayed in light grey, and there won't be any tab, obviously. If you created that group, the name will be the same color, but in bold.

Note: It can happen that sometimes a group creator quits his group, and if leadership has been transferred to you, that group name will be displayed in bold dark red if you join it or bold light grey if you haven't joined.

Example : if UserA creates a group UserAgroup, and users UserB is the only other member, UserA will see his group name in bold (but not UserB). When UserA quits that group, UserB will now see the UserAgroup in bold in his group list. (the color depends on whether his joined it or not, as always)

Right-clicking on a group brings up 4 options: [join], [leave], [invite] and [quit group].

[join] : simply connects you to the group and opens a tab with the group name.

[leave] : this disconnects you from the group by closing that group's tab, so you won't lose group membership by selecting that option.

[Invite] : let me see, I think it invites the user... :)

[quit group] has one of three effects.

If you create a group, then decide to quit it, one of two things can happen :

- if you're the only member, then you delete that group from your list of groups.
- if there's at least one other member, then group leadership will be transferred

If you're a member of the group, selecting this option terminates your membership. You'll have to request another invite. (or hope that someone kindly invites you back...)

Note : the only time files will be deleted – and even then, it will only be from the Collab server – is if someone creates a group, the creator and/or other members upload files, and then if everyone quits that group. Unless a file is deleted by the person who uploaded it, of course.

- **'Buddies'**

Right-click to bring up two options:

- talk to: opens up a new tab with your buddy's nickname. You can now chat with him or her privately.
- delete: do I really need to explain? ;-) But no, it doesn't ban/kick a user for any length of time from Collab. :)

- **'File transfers'**

Clicking on the options button brings up a list of, well, options. Should be easy to understand. :)

The 'show p2p transfers' is disabled because this isn't implemented yet. It will be in some future version.

[Show all] shows group and p2p (peer-to-peer) transfers.

2. *The central view*

This is where the actual chatting takes place.

If you've got the <LoopTalk> tab open, you'll just have a big central window, which displays all replies, warnings and any other types of messages, with the list of connected users on the right, and an edit bar at the bottom where you type.

If you join a group, that window will be shrunk, and you'll have a new section with the list of all songs that have been uploaded. (that you can hide it using the [<<] button)

The [Options] button has various possibilities such as setting a welcome message when someone joins your group, inviting people, and changing the parameters of your group (name, comment, group type...).

The [Lock] button prevents people from working on the song, so don't forget to unlock it once you are done with your modifications.

All tabs except the <Groups> tab have a [x] that closes that tab.

- The list on the right displays the currently connected users :
 - right-clicking *your* nickname brings up options:
 - changing your nickname
 - setting your status: any other setting other than 'available' is displayed in brackets next to your nick
 - right-clicking someone else's username brings up options, too :
 - their nickname will displayed in bold (although I admit I don't know why)
 - [Talk to] allows you to talk privately to that person

- [Invite] well, invites that user to a group
- [Add to buddy list] does what it says

Note : staff members have the word 'staff' between brackets, so reflex would appear as 'reflex (staff)'. Staff member names are also shown in bold red.

3.2 Menu bar

3.2.1. [File] Edit FL Studio Help

There's 4 options :

- [Download latest version]
- [Reply to invitation...]
- [Preferences]
- [Exit]

The first, second and last options do what they say.

So we'll start with <Preferences>. Clicking on it shows... the *Preferences* window. (what a surprise!)

<User>

As indicated, only the **'real name'** and the **'preferred'** fields are necessary.

<Connection>

Leave everything at their default settings. You would need to change the info if, for example, there was a problem with the collab server; so Image-Line would instruct users to change that information to use a back-up server, for example.

<FL Studio>

Normally Collab should correctly locate and use your most recent version of FL Studio.

However, if you have multiple versions of FL, you will need to uncheck 'find automatically'.

That will allow you to select the path of the version of FL you wish to use.

Notice how it's pointing to *FLEngine.dll*. There's a reason, that I mentioned and high-lighted in the Quick Start section, and below.

<Groups>

By default, if you use the default setting above, all files you download will be placed in a new folder under the currently selected FL Studio installation directory.

Here, you can have Collab prompt you for a folder each time (personally wouldn't recommend it as you could end up with folders all over the place...) or you can set your own folder that will be used once and for all. (unless of course you come back to the 'preference's dialog and rechange this setting)

The last two settings can also be left at their defaults.

<Chat>

Various parameters that allow you to "tweak" how Collab behaves, such as playing a sound when someone posts a message..

'show group list when connected' : you'll have a button on the software's main interface to show/hide the <Groups> tab, so this option simply tells Collab whether or not to display that tab on start-up

'Join all subscribed groups when connected' : whichever groups you're a member of, they

will be opened (as tabs) when you launch Collab. You can select the groups you want to have opened automatically in the Groups tab.
By the way, LoopTalk is mentioned in this tab : the main view pane where you chat is called LoopTalk, so it's not referring to the Looptalk forum at www.flstudio.com.

<Appearance>

Various parameters to weak how certain messages appear in Collab's main window. (but it doesn't have the flexibility of other chat programs where you can easily change fonts, colors, etc... to express your current feelings... oh, and there aren't any smilies, either. Sorry.)

3.2.2. File [Edit] FL Studio Help

You have 2 choices:

- changing your nickname, in which case, a dialog box comes up.

IMPORTANT : *you are limited to 15 characters! If you go beyond, you'll get an error message, and the dialog box will close!*

- setting your status: available, away, do not disturb, eating, sleeping and thinking.

Both of these actions can be done also by right-clicking on your username in the column on the right.

3.2.3. File Edit [FL Studio] Help

[Show window] will launch FL the first time you select that option.

Because of the way this software is designed, [show window] and [hide window] bascially toggle the views between Collab and FL. You won't be able to use the {alt+tab} combination.

Which leads me to this very important rule:

When working with Collab, you never launch FL via the shortcut on your desktop.

But, then you work with files the way you normally do.

You will also see that FL's close button now only iconizes FL, so to close it, you have'll to go to Collab, click [FL Studio], then click [Close FL].

3.2.4. File Edit FL Studio [Help]

This menu gives you access to Collab's help file (this document), Collab's hisstory, to the FL website, forums and FAQ.

[Run diagnostic]

Prompts you to download the FL Diagnostic tool. Choose open to run it directly without saving the file to disk.

[About]

Brings up the credits and version number of the program.

3.3 *Toolbar buttons*

3.3.1. **'Chat'**

- [LoopTalk]

The button is greyed out by default because that's the first window that opens when you launch the program. The button is there in case you close the looptalk tab. (to do so, click the [x] directly above the list of users).

- [Start group]

Clicking on that button simply creates a group. You'll be prompted for a group name. So type one in and click [OK].

There are five types of groups you can create :

'Free for all' : no invites are necessary, so anybody can join and do what they want with your track...

'Everyone can listen and talk' : anyone can listen to songs and chat in your group, but only group members can upload new versions

'Everyone can listen' : anyone can join your group and list to songs, but only group members can chat and upload new versions

'Everyone can talk' : anyone can join your group and chat, but only group members can listen to songs and upload new versions

'Members only' : this is the most restrictive option; you have to invite people or they must request an invitation for them to be able to collaborate on your project, but they will be able to edit your track.

Your new group should appear on the left.

- [Reply to e-mail invitation]

When you invite someone, in the dialog box that comes up, you'll have a field where you can put your friend's e-mail. He can then respond using this button.

3.3.2. **'Song'**

I'll start with [edit] because you can't click [play] until click [edit]. Basically, that opens up FL.

Now, in FL, if you load a song, when you click [play] inside Collab, it plays that currently loaded project.

Notice how you clicking the [iconise] button in FL doesn't work. To iconise, you have to click FL's close button. Since its taskbar icon is hidden, to maximize it again, you have to click the [edit] button in Collab. (or alternatively [Show window] under [FL Studio])

If you close Collab, and have made changes to your project, you WON'T be prompted to save any changes you have made!

That's it for the time being. Hope this helped. ;-)

Happy collaberating!

Secret bonus section for those of you who tool the time to read this file to the end :D

For all you command-line freaks (or if you simply prefer typing to clicking...), in the message bar, type /status followed by a space and then: 'available', 'away', 'extended' or 'dnd' (without single quotes) to change your status. Press {enter}.

There are other commands as well, such as :

/me %username%

/help (no parameters)

/quit (but don't do that, because you'll have to close and re-open Collab)

/nick %new_username%

/part closes the <LoopTalk> tab

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