Flash Function Key

Plugin Guide
v 2.0.0

GIAFFO DESIGNS

Contents

Plugin Overview

The Flash Function Key Plugin package is a set of two GrandMA2 plugins that will handle everything surrounding a "flash-function" key, which allows the user to have separate sets of commands executed on both the press and the release of a flash button. This allows the user to have options including:
- Quick access to specific views, pages, and surfaces
- Creating non-latching MIDI controls for peripheral devices (like audio interfaces)
- Flashing your programming buddy's desk lights until they're ready to punch you!

System Requirements

- This plugin is compatible with GrandMA2 versions 3.3.4.3 or later.
- The Flash Function Key Plugin must be imported into the Plugins pool in the show file.
- The Flash Function Key Plugin is a two-part plugin. When imported, it will use the Plugin Pool slot that it was imported into, as well as the slot immediately following it in the pool. Be sure both pool slots are empty when importing, or else it will overwrite anything in the second slot.

For assistance with these requirements, please refer to the GrandMA2 User Manual or visit the Tutorials page of GiaffoDesigns.com.

DISCLAIMER

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BY USING THIS PLUGIN YOU AGREE THAT GIAFFODESIGNS IS NOT TO BE HELD LIABLE FOR DAMAGES RESULTING FROM ANY PLUGIN MALFUNCTIONS. ALWAYS CREATE A BACKUP OF A SHOW FILE BEFORE INSTALLING PLUGINS. ALWAYS TEST PLUGINS BEFORE USING THEM IN A LIVE SETTING.

Plugin Use Tutorial
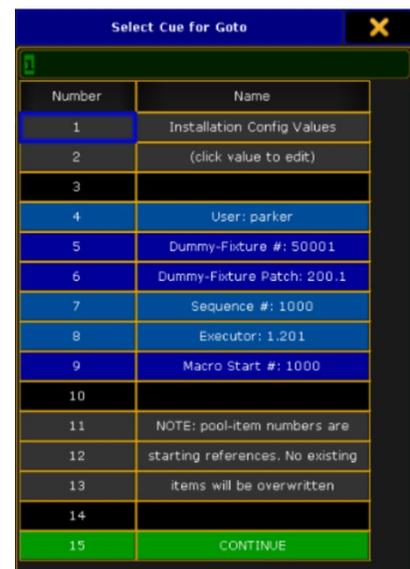
Part 1: Installing a Flash Function Key

Before installing any Flash Function keys, be sure to `Reload` the plugin engine. This allows the UserCmd plugin to function, which is needed for installed Flash Function keys to work. To reload the plugin engine, `[Edit]` the UserCmd plugin (or any plugin) in the plugins pool and press the Reload button at the bottom of the plugin edit window.
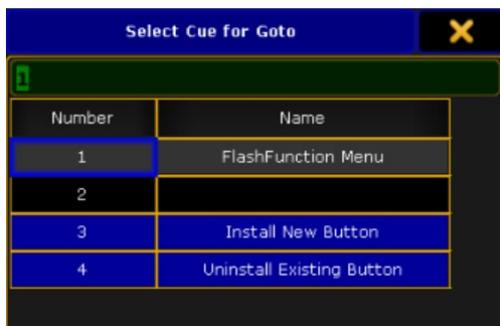
To install a Flash Function key, begin by clicking the Flash Function Plugin. A menu will appear with the option to "`Install New Button`" or "`Uninstall Existing Button`." Click "`Install New Button`" to continue.

The menu will show a list of User Config Variables in blue. The values shown are defaults and can be changed by clicking on them and entering (or selecting, in the case of User) the desired value. Refer to the User Config Variables chart for an explanation of each variable. Click `Continue` when all variables are set as desired.

To change the default values themselves, `[Edit]` the plugin script and change the "install.*" user-config variables at the top of the script. *Default values are just starting values, and the plugin will always find the first available value if the default is already in use in the show file.*


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Variable	Description	Example	Result
User	The user whose view or page will be changed when the Flash Function key is pressed *This cannot be changed from the menu, and will match the current user*	"giaffo"	The Flash Function key will affect any stations logged in as "giaffo" including the current station
Dummy-Fixture #	Fixture ID for a dummy fixture that is used as a DMX Remote to run the Flash Function key	50001	A fixture will be created with a Fixture ID of 500001, or the next available Fixture number
Dummy-Fixture Patch	DMX Address that will be used to patch the Dummy-Fixture	1000.1	The dummy fixture will be patched at Universe 1000, Address 1, or the next available address.
Sequence #	Sequence pool number where the generated sequence for the Flash Function key will be stored	1000	The Flash Function key will be stored to sequence 1000, or the next available sequence
Executor	Executor where the Flash Function key will be assigned; must include page and executor number *Note that the Flash Function key will still be Fixed to all pages*	1.201	The Flash Function key will be assigned to Executor 201 on Page 1, or the next available executor
Macro Start	The Macros Pool slot that will be used as the starting point for the two generated macros that run the Flash Function key	1000	The generated macros will be stored to slots 1000 and 1001 in the macros pool, or the next available slots

The menu will show three more variables in blue to customize the Flash Function key that will be created as a fixed executor in the current user's set up. Neither Page nor View are required to have values for the installation. Click each line to set each variable. If you wish to remove an entry you have already edited, click the line to edit, delete the text, and press [PLEASE]. Click **Continue** when all variables are set as desired.

The plugin will install the new Flash Function key, and a confirmation window will appear when it has installed successfully. This window will list the location of all created content. The Macros Pool will also appear on Screen 2, showing the "On" and "Off" macros that were created to trigger commands when the new Flash Function key is pressed and released.
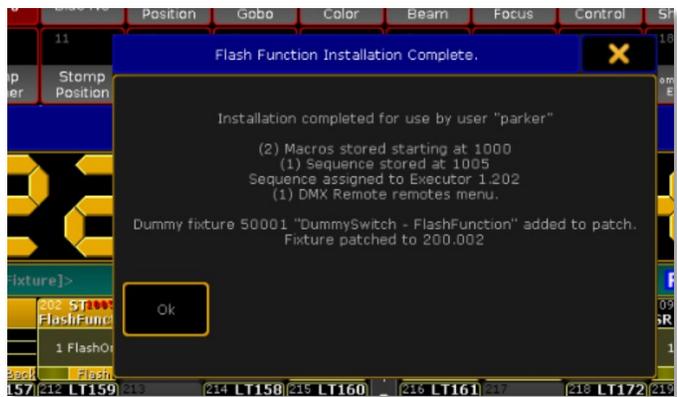
Note: The elements that were created by the Flash Function key installer will have Info attached to them. This Info is used to uninstall the Flash Function key and should not be altered.

Part 2: Using a Flash Function Key

To use the newly installed Flash Function key, simply hold down the button to change views, and release the button to return to the previous view.

The newly installed Flash Function key button works together with the UserCmd plugin that is the first of the two plugins in the Flash Function Key plugin package. The UserCmd plugin must be running (there will be a yellow triangle "play" icon in the top right corner of the plugin in the Plugins Pool) for the flash button to work.

Additional Plugin Operation Details

The below information isn't necessary for the plugin to function, but can be useful when troubleshooting in a show file or augmenting the original Flash Function button:

"On" and "Off" macros

Flash Function keys trigger an "On" and "Off" macro when pressed and un-pressed, respectively. These macros are what change the user's Page or View. New lines can be added to these macros to do other things in the show file if desired, for example it can be used to send MIDI commands to an external device or program or flash another user's desk lights to get their attention. Take caution when adjusting these macros in a multi-user setup, as this can have unexpected effects when users join or leave the session as stated in the Joining/Leaving a Session section below.

UserCmd Module

The UserCmd plugin is set to run every time the show file is loaded. Part of its function is to send out a signal to all consoles on the network every five seconds to indicate which stations and users are on the network, as well as sending commands to the consoles they are intended for. The generated network traffic is negligible and will not affect any networking speed or console performance. For any specific needs, settings are provided in the userconfig portion of the plugin with explanations. Documentation will be provided upon the independent release of the UserCmd plugin.

Joining/Leaving a Session

Any time a new console joins or leaves the session, all of the "Off" macros from installed Flash Function keys will be triggered. This is a result of MA2 re-evaluating values provided to all DMX remotes during session changes, and as a result, the plugin cannot prevent this behavior. If the originally installed macros have not been altered, this will not affect functionality. However, this could cause issues if the user has altered any "Off" macros for custom functions. Please keep this in mind when adding custom commands.

Part 3: Uninstalling a Flash Function Key

To uninstall a Flash Function key, start by clicking the Flash Function plugin. In the pop-up menu, click "`Uninstall Existing Button`."

Select the button being removed from the list of options in blue.

A confirmation window will appear. Press **Ok** to continue with the uninstallation or `Cancel` to abort.

A final pop-up will appear to confirm that all elements related to the Flash Function key were successfully removed from the show file.

FAQ

I received an error message during plugin installation.
Check that all User Config Variables were acceptable values (for example, all pool numbers were within an acceptable range for an MA file. Sequence 10,000,000,000 cannot be created.).

I installed a Flash Function key but it is not changing my views!
Ensure that:
a) You are logged in as the same user as was selected during installation
b) The UserCmd plugin is running (there will be a yellow arrow in the top right corner of the plugin in the Plugins Pool; if there is not, click the plugin to start)

For additional help and resources, please visit GiaffoDesigns.com.

Release Notes

Current Version: 2.0.0
- Upgraded features including:
  - Multi-user session support (making sure the right desk executes the intended commands)
  - Custom commands by giving the press and the release their own macros the user can edit
  - Lua-controlled queueing that ensures the user doesn't get stuck in unintended pages/views due to command timing discrepancies
  - Installation and uninstallation via a streamlined GUI system all in the same plugin
  - An additional, entirely self-managed network plugin to allow passing commands to other stations by the logged in user rather than by IP.

Version 1.1
- Original Plugin Release

To report any potential plugin bugs, please visit GiaffoDesigns.com/contact.