Smart Keyframe Navigator - Manual

by Michael Helmrich, 20.01.2020

Version 1.1

Why?

Smart Keyframe Navigator for AE enables you to intuitively navigate keyframes with your keyboard.

It can be tedious to navigate keyframes with the default keyboard shortcuts. When the timeline is full of keyframes there's no way to quickly and accurately jump between them. This script gives finer nagivation controls than the default AE approach.

How it works

After installing the two-part script, bind the "next" and the "previous" scripts to a keyboard shortcut of your choice.
Shift + k and **Shift + j** are recommended.
The scripts will provide intuitive navigation control:
1. If nothing is selected, the scripts will work much like the default "k" and "j" keys, taking all keyframes into account.
2. If one or more layers are selected, the scripts will navigate the keyframes on these layers only.
3. If certain properties are selected, only those will be taken into account. This also works with properties on multiple layers.

Known issues

Unlike the default *k* and *j* behaviour, the timeline view won't follow the time cursor. If the keyframe you're jumping to is out of sight, just hit the *k* and *j* keys each in quick succession to update the timeline view.

Installation

Windows, AE CC2018 and up

- Unpack both script files to *Program Files / Adobe / YourVersionOfAfterEffects / Support Files / Scripts*
- Start AE
- Go to *Edit / Keyboard Shortcuts*
- In the search field type "Smart"
- In the *Shortcut* column next to *Smart Keyframe Navigator - Next* click twice to activate the key selection. Press the key combination of your choice. **Shift + k** is recommended
- Repeat the step for the "Previous" script. **Shift + j** is recommended
- Done!

Mac, AE CC2018 and up

- Same as with Windows, except the script files go to *Programs / YourVersionOfAfterEffects / Support Files / Scripts*

Windows, AE version older than CC2018

- Unpack both script files to *Program Files / Adobe / YourVersionOfAfterEffects / Support Files / Scripts*
- Start AE
- Find the scripts under *File / Scripts* and note its index in the menu (in my case "Next" is at 10 and "Previous" is at 11)
- Open your file explorer and go to *C:/ Users / YourUser / AppData / Roaming / Adobe / After Effects / YourVersionOfAfterEffects*
- Open the file that should be named something like *Adobe After Effects 10.5 Keyboard Shortcuts.txt* with Notepad
- Hit Ctrl + f and type "script". You should end up in line 617
- Navigate to the correct "ExecuteScriptMenuItem##" where ## are the indices you noted earlier
- In the brackets type your desired shortcuts. In my case the line "ExecuteScriptMenuItem10" = "()" is changed to **"ExecuteScriptMenuItem10" = "(Shift+K)"**. "ExecuteScriptMenuItem11" = "()" is changed to **"ExecuteScriptMenuItem11" = "(Shift+J)"**. Note the capital K and J
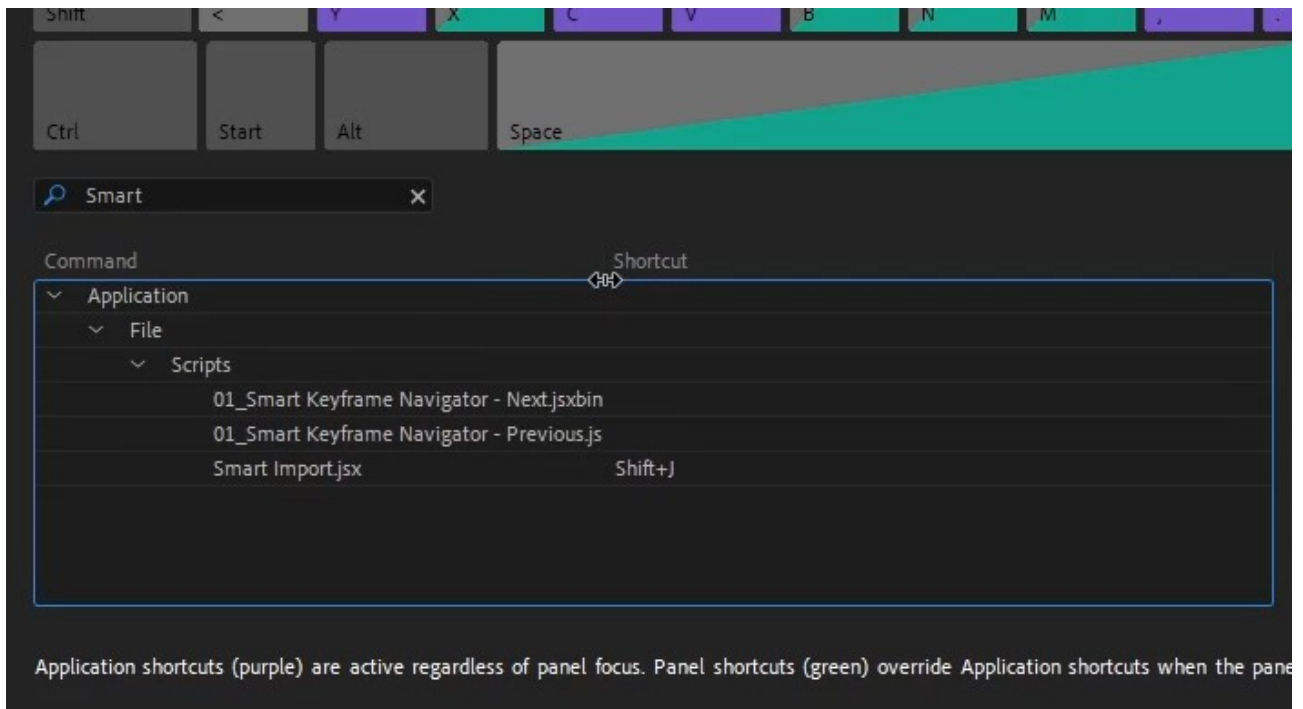- Save the txt and close Notepad

- Restart AE
- Done!
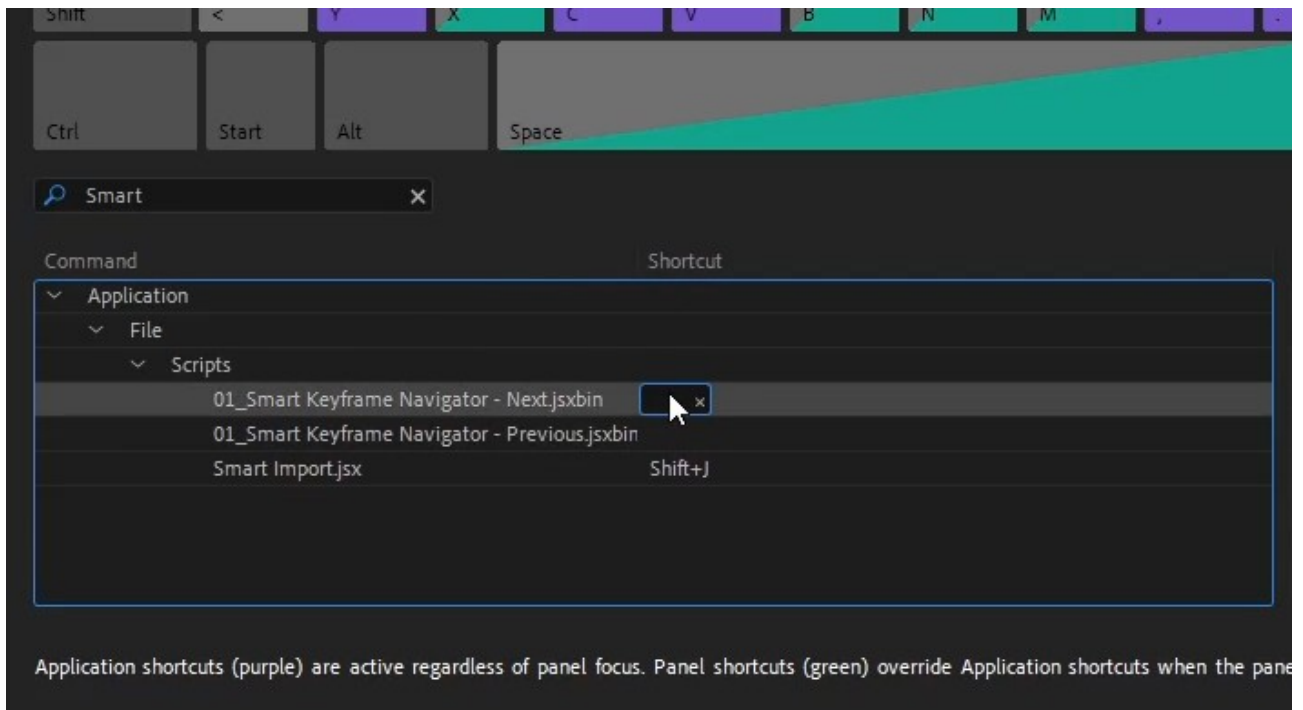
Mac, AE version older that CC2018

- Same as with Windows, except the *keyboard shortcuts.txt* is under *Users / YourUserName / Library / Preferences / Adobe / After Effects / YourVersionOfAfterEffects*

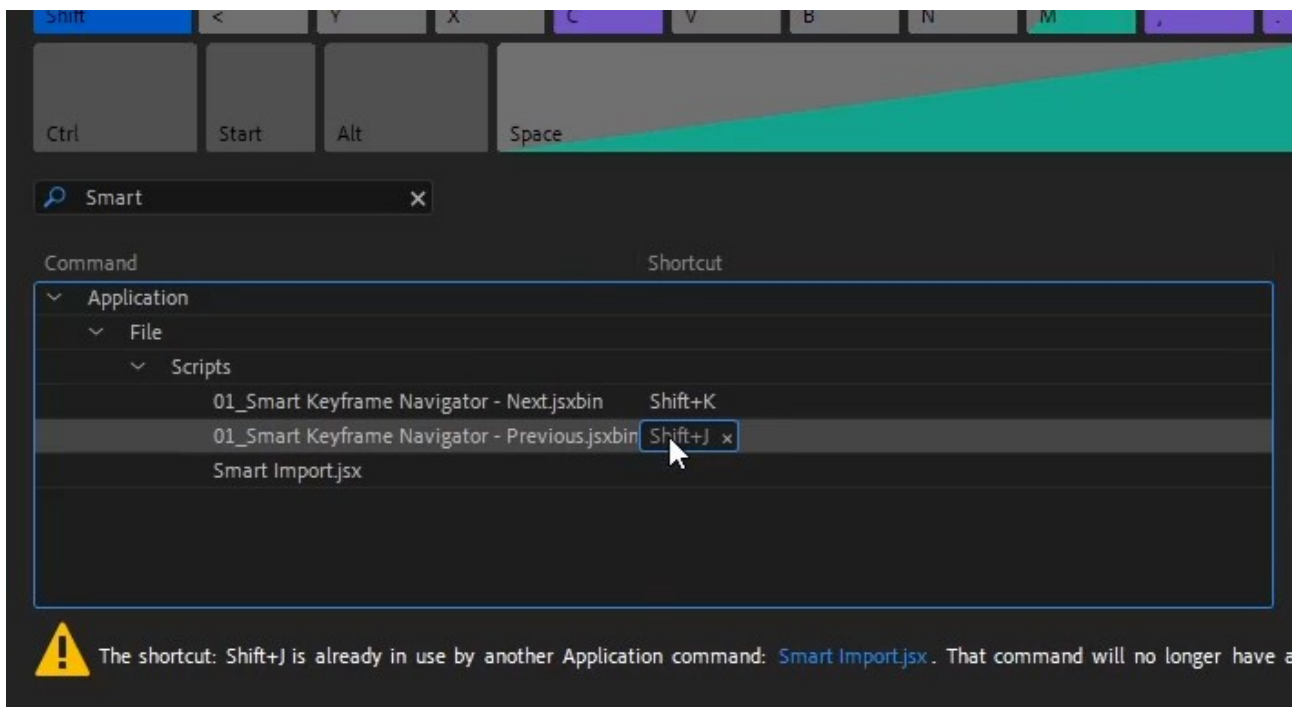## Using the Keyboard Shortcut Editor

If you run into trouble using the keyboard shortcut editor, have a look at these screenshots:

If you can't see which is the *Next* and which is the *Previous* script, you might have to widen the *Command* column as shown.

To get the keyboard shortcut editor to accept your key input, click on this area twice. Note the dark entry box. This is the correct state to press the keys on your keyboard.

The **Shift + j** combination may already be taken by the *Smart Import* script, but it will be overwritten when you set the shortcut on *Smark Keyframe Navigator*. There shouldn't be any conflict, just this little warning at the bottom.

Changelog

1.1

- in 1.0 using the script on keyframes with negative time values would throw an exception, fixed
- renamed script files to 01_... to move script files to top of script stack. It seems there can only be 20 script files. If the renaming messes with your other keyboard script shortcuts, you can simply rename the script files
- updated manual, specifically the handling of keyboard shortcut editor

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