

Companion — animATEM user guide

This module drives [animATEM](#) from a Stream Deck, or any other Bitfocus Companion surface: **cut, auto and fade to black per M/E, program, preview and aux selection by input name, and SuperSource/DVE memory recall, with tally.**

The [README](#) covers installing the module. This is how to build a surface with it, and what to be careful with.

Before you rely on this: this module has **no automated tests**. Its protocol file is a hand-kept mirror of animATEM's own — the two are separate packages and cannot import each other — so a change to the control server's message shapes breaks this module **silently**: a button stops working mid-show with no error anywhere obvious. Keep the app and the module in step, and re-test a page after upgrading either.

This module was built with AI assistance, directed and reviewed by a human author.

What a press actually does

This puts things on air. There is no confirmation step and no undo.

And there is a second thing to understand before you build anything, because every design decision below follows from it: **animATEM's control server never replies**. No result, no error frame. It drops malformed messages silently, and it catches a failing command and logs it *at the app* rather than propagating it.

So a command sent while the switcher is disconnected looks exactly like one that worked.

Two consequences you will meet:

- **No button here lights up from its own press.** Every feedback reads the app's snapshot instead, because "I sent it" is not evidence that anything happened.
- **Take and aux-follow refuse rather than guess.** When there is no snapshot, `Take preview to program` and `Point an aux at program` do nothing and say so, rather than acting on a guess about what is on preview. Guessing wrong puts the wrong thing on air.

Connecting

animATEM runs its control server on `127.0.0.1:51234` whenever the app is open. There is nothing to configure on the app side.

That server has no authentication. It is safe only because it binds loopback — anything that can reach that port can put something on air. Companion must therefore run on the same machine as animATEM.

Put both connection lights on the page

Light	Answers
Connected to animATEM	Can Companion reach the app?
animATEM's ATEM connection is up	Can the app reach the switcher?

These are two different questions and they fail separately. The second goes dark on its own while a switcher reboots, with the first still green — and **while it is dark, every tally on the surface is stale rather than false**. It is showing the last thing it knew.

Conflating them means restarting the wrong thing at the worst possible moment. Put both on every page that has transition buttons.

Inputs are picked by name

An ATEM's sources are numbered awkwardly — 1..N plus black, bars, media players and SuperSource at 3010 and up — and the numbers are neither contiguous nor memorable. animATEM already sends the input list with short and long names, so **every input dropdown is populated from it**, and every generated bus preset is labelled with the switcher's own short name, the one the multiview shows.

The cost is honest and worth planning around: **bus presets only exist once a switcher has connected**. Before then the module does not know what inputs there are. The transition, memory and status sections work regardless.

Every dropdown also accepts a typed number, so a button built while animATEM was offline still works. Use that if you are building a page in advance on a laptop.

Auto goes amber mid-transition

During an auto, **both buses are on air**. A plain program tally is therefore telling only half the story for the length of the transition, which is exactly when someone is looking at it.

The generated Auto and PGM/PVW display buttons show that state in **amber**. Keep it — a two-colour tally during a mix is a tally that lies for a second and a half.

Aux follow is a one-shot

animATEM has no follow mode. **Point an aux at what is on program** reads program *once* and sets the aux.

To make it stick, drive it from a repeating trigger. If you expect it to behave like a real aux follow and it does not, this is why.

Memories can go stale

`memories` is the one message animATEM does **not** broadcast on change. It arrives on connect, and when the app explicitly asks for it.

The module rebuilds its memory dropdowns and presets whenever one arrives — but a memory added in the app without that call **will not appear until the module reconnects**. If a new memory is missing from the dropdown, disable and re-enable the connection.

Building a surface that fails safe

1. **Both connection lights, on every page with transitions.** See above.
 2. **Amber for mid-transition**, from the generated presets.
 3. **Program and preview rows from the generated bus presets**, once the switcher has connected — they carry the switcher's own short names, so the surface matches the multiview.
 4. **Do not build a page that assumes a press worked.** Nothing is acknowledged; the feedbacks read state, and state is what you should be looking at.
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Troubleshooting

Symptom	Cause
Buttons do nothing, no error	Almost the default failure here — nothing is acknowledged. Check the ATEM connection light before suspecting the module.
No bus presets at all	No switcher has connected yet, so the input list is unknown. The transition and memory sections still work.
Tally is wrong	Check whether the ATEM light is dark. While it is, every tally is the last known value.
A new memory is missing	The app did not broadcast the memory list. Reconnect the module.
Aux stops following	It never was. It is a one-shot; drive it from a trigger.
A button worked yesterday and silently stopped	The app and the module have drifted — the protocol is mirrored by hand. Check versions.

See also

- [README](#) — installing, and the full action/feedback/variable list
- [companion/HELP.md](#) — the same material, in Companion's help panel

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<https://github.com/stoatworks-labs/companion-module-animatem>