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RemoteHamRadio Station Network

Imagine your dream station, the one you'll never own because...

- You can't afford it (most dream stations come with price tags north of \$50,000).
- You don't own a house, much less the acres of property needed to support several towers, a four-square vertical antenna array on 80 and 160 meters, etc.
- It will generate RF fields the likes of which God has never seen and cause your neighbor's electronic devices to respond accordingly.
- Your spouse says, "No way."

The DIY solution is to build your dream station at your buddy's abode and control it via the Internet. (Surely you have a friend with dozens of acres available to satisfy your every whim, right?) You'll need to have a few tons of hardware delivered and installed. When that task is complete, you will need to interface all that gear to your generous friend's Internet connection. Then, you'll need to set up the other end of the Internet control circuit at your home.

RemoteHamRadio takes a far less painful approach to the remote dream station dilemma. For an annual subscription fee, they provide easy Internet access to not just one but several superbly equipped stations.

How Does It Work?

You need only two things to qualify for access to the RemoteHamRadio network: a computer (even a tablet computer will do) and a broadband Internet connection that sports a minimum downstream data rate of 1 Mbps. The RemoteHamRadio people take care of everything else.

Your membership begins when a package shows up at your door. Inside you'll find an Elecraft K3/0 transceiver and a RemoteRig transceiver/network interface. The K3/0 contains no RF components whatsoever; it is a transceiver designed strictly for remote control functionality.

The next step begins when your telephone rings. That will be the support person at



The RemoteHamRadio K3/0 with the Remote Rig interface and the Apple iPad 1 was using at the time.



The RemoteHamRadio console screen. You select your stations and control their antennas and amplifiers here. There is also a "chat" window so that you can exchange messages with other operators.

RemoteHamRadio calling to walk you through the process of connecting various cables and testing your setup.

You're on the air in less than 30 minutes and the experience is nothing short of astonishing. The RemoteHamRadio implementation is so seamless, no one visiting your station can tell that your transceiver isn't a real radio connected to a massive array of antennas that just happen to be hiding in your back yard. Spin the K3/0 VFO and listen to the signals zip by. Adjust the K3 filter bandwidths and hear the effects instantaneously. Plug a set of paddles

into the RemoteRig and bang out Morse as powerfully as anyone else — especially when you activate the remote power amplifiers.

In addition to working voice and CW, you can also operate any digital mode supported by the K3. During this review, for example, I used my iPad tablet to operate PSK31.

You'll have access to a wide array of antennas at one of five station locations in the eastern United States (more are on the way). Some of the antenna selections include stacked, rotatable Yagis with phenomenal performance. While I was test driving the RemoteHam Radio system I heard signals that were completely undetectable with my 43 foot vertical antenna. Busting a pileup with a single call was a unique pleasure as well!

Is all this luxury legal? Absolutely. As far as the FCC is concerned, these are simply ham stations with extremely long microphone cords, so to speak.

Do your contacts count for ARRL DX Century Club awards? Under the current rules, yes. You operate these remote stations using your own call sign, so you take credit for the contacts you make. The rules of other award programs may differ.

Cost Considerations

Accessing the RemoteHamRadio network isn't inexpensive. Annual subscription costs range from \$2999 to \$4999 and you are also charged by the minute for access, depending on the package you purchase. (This helps discourage those who might monopolize a station for hours at a time.)

However, for those who are unable to get on the air at all — much less from a dream station — the costs are reasonable when spread over the course of an entire year. It is a particularly attractive option for groups of amateurs in retirement communities where the costs can be shared.

As for me . . . well . . . having access to RemoteHamRadio was similar to being given the keys to a high performance sports car for an entire week. It was quite a ride!

Manufacturer: RemoteHamRadio, tel 888-528-6937; www.remotehamradio.com.