Getting Started in RTTY and RTTY Contesting

(From a team of SDXA people: Mel N7GCO, Jay WS7I, Gary K7GS, Randy K7TQ)

Question #1: What interface are you using between your radio and computer/logging software for FSK? (It needs to be able to control and key your radio)

- **Mortty?** (https://hamprojects.info/mortty/) Many of us have found this the best option.
- Signalink USB?
- USB?
- Navigator?
- CIV?
- Microham?
- Rigblaster?
- Serial?
- Other?

NOTES:
1) The question assumes you want to operate FSK. AFSK, if properly set, is just as effective.
2) Some radios have a built in Sound Card. Most don't and they need an interface that for sound and rig control
3) If you are already setup for the WSJT-x modes, your rig and interface may be all set already.
4) Jay WS7I is willing to trouble shoot specific installs via TeamViewer or AnyDesk. He did that for me, and it was a great help.

Mentors:
- If you are using a mortty – Jay WS7I, Mel N7GCO, Murf N7UVH
- If you are using Navigator – Gary K7GS

Question #2: What radio are you using?
- Icom 7610
- Icom 7600
- Icom 7300
- Yaesu
- Kenwood
- Elecraft
- Flex

Mentors:
- If you are using a 7300 – Mike K7STO
- If you are using an Icom 7410 – Jay WS7I
- If you are using an Icom 7600 – Mel N7GCO
- If you are using a Yaesu – Gary K7GS
- If you are using a Kenwood – Murf N7UVH
- If you are using an Elecraft – Randy K7TQ or Bob K7TM

Question #3: What logging software are you using for RTTY?
- N1MM+ (Over 95% of all RTTY contesters use N1MM+)
- Writelog (Preferred by a couple of RTTY pro's in our club – Jay WS7I and Gary K7GS)
- N3FJP (I love using this for SSB contests, but for RTTY it does not allow using the best decoders)
- HRD

Mentors:
- If you are using an N1MM+ – Randy K7TQ, Murf N7UVH
- If you are using N3FJP – Mike K7STO
- If you are using Writelog – Gary K7GS, Jay WS7I
- If you are using HDR – John K7KB

Question #4: What RTTY Decoder are you using?
- 2-tone (I believe this is currently by far the most popular among serious RTTY contesters)
- mmtty
- Gritty
- FLdigi
- Digital engine (for N3FJP)

Mentors:
If you are using 2-Tone – Jay WS7I, Randy K7TQ
If you are using Gritty – Randy K7TQ
If you are using Digital Engine – Mike K7STO

Note:
1. A number of contesters think mmtty is dated and finicky.
2. Jay WS7I is willing to trouble shoot specific installs via TeamViewer or AnyDesk. He did that for me, and it was a great help.

Recommended Steps for getting started:

Step #1: Get you interface setup between radio and computer

Step #2: Get your RTTY software setup -- NOTE: Make sure it sends and receives RTTY

Step #3: Download the suggested function keys for the first contest you will be operating.

Step #4: Operate a contest with the minimal numbers of windows. In N1MM those windows would be a) Entry Window, b) one Digital Interface Window, and c) Check Window. In this contest you will learn how to tune the radio, how to visually eliminate the extra character clutter in the Digital Interface, and how to use your function keys. When you come across these operators, work them, then stick around for a couple of minutes and observe how they operate. The operators to watch are A) AA5AU, Don located in LA, B) W6SX, Hank located in CA, and C) N3QE, Tim located in MD. Have fun and learn.

Step #5 Add the Bandmap window, the Available Mults window, and the telnet window then repeat Step 4. With the Telnet window it will be easier to find the three great operators so be sure to observe how they operate.

Step #6: Add a second digital interface window and learn the keyboard or mouse shortcuts to make operating easier. Operate more contests.

Step #7: Get all your components to work together (VE7CC, Rotator controller, SWR/Power/ Antenna switching, Amp, etc.)

Step #8: By now you will have sufficient operating experience to be on your own.

Highly Recommended RTTY Websites:

https://www.rttycontesting.com/   by Ed Muns, W0YK/P49X
https://www.aa5au.com/rtty/ by Don Hill AA5AU

Highly Recommended YouTube videos:

RTTY Contesting with Jay Townsend WS7I
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRDBnWAmdPs&list=PLFShNgTo7MsFtVpQ4Dt-L2slnkAzDFaTU&index=4

RTTY Roundup Contesting with Jay Townsend WS7I
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2NwlvSSVI8&list=PLFShNgTo7MsFtVpQ4Dt-L2slnkAzDFaTU&index=6&t=210s

N1MM+ CQ WW RTTY with Randy Foltz K7TQ
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWVCY62huo4&list=PLFShNgTo7MsFtVpQ4Dt-L2slnkAzDFaTU&index=8

N3FJP using N7YG RTTY for RTTY Roundup
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6d0a2kV8ac&list=PLFShNgTo7MsFtVpQ4Dt-L2slnkAzDFaTU&index=12

RTTY Masterclass with Craig (K9CT)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwWwKl-jhrw