

TRX-Manager

Laurent Labourie, F6DEX, developed *TRX-Manager* primarily as a means to control transceivers via computers running Microsoft *Windows*. Most modern transceivers offer computer control and there are many programs available to do the job, but what makes *TRX-Manager* different is its versatility. The program does so much, it is impossible to describe everything in a "Short Takes" review. Instead, I'll concentrate on several highlights.

Rig Control

TRX-Manager communicates with your transceiver through the computer COM (serial) port. You can control up to two radios and two antenna rotators, but not simultaneously. A drop-down menu allows you to select your rig model from a long list including ICOM, Kenwood, Yaesu, TenTec, Alinco, Elecraft and more. All you need is an interface between the computer and the rig itself. For this review, I used the LCU-3 WIGEE serial interface to my ICOM IC-706 MkII transceiver (the interface is available for a very reasonable price from Personal Database Applications, the US and Canadian distributor of *TRX-Manager*).

Logging

TRX-Manager incorporates a comprehensive station log, complete with award tracking. You can print and sort records at will, print QSL labels and perform call sign lookups on CD-ROM databases (assuming you have them). If you purchased the *LOGic* software by Personal Database Applications and prefer to use it instead, *TRX-Manager* has a toolbar "button" to bring it up automatically.

DX Spots

With *TRX-Manager*, you can establish either a telnet or packet radio connection to a DX PacketCluster and receive DX spots as they appear. Just double click your mouse on the spot information and suddenly your radio tunes to the frequency and mode.

Shortwave Listening

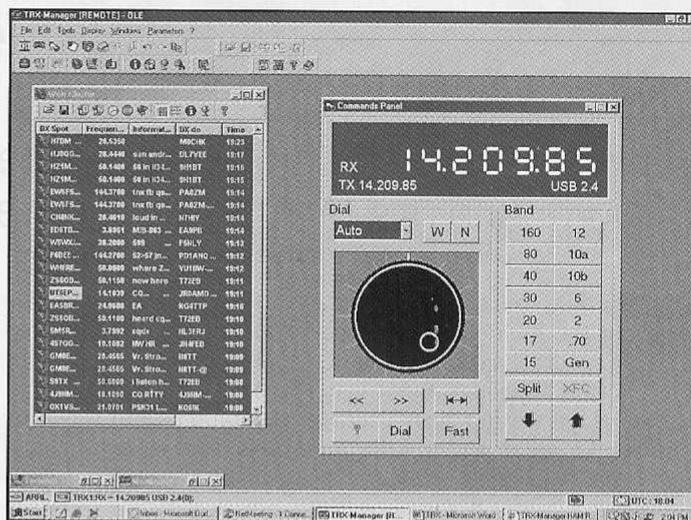
TRX-Manager maintains a separate database for shortwave listening. You can enter stations that you find on your own, or download broadcast schedules from sources such as Fineware at www.fineware-sw1.com/. I downloaded an English-language schedule database and enjoyed a new appreciation of shortwave listening. I could sort by time of day, then simply click on the desired station and my IC-706 would tune automatically. *TRX-Manager* even provides a sound recorder that allows me to record programs by manual activation, or at specific times of the day when I'm away from the radio.

Remote Control

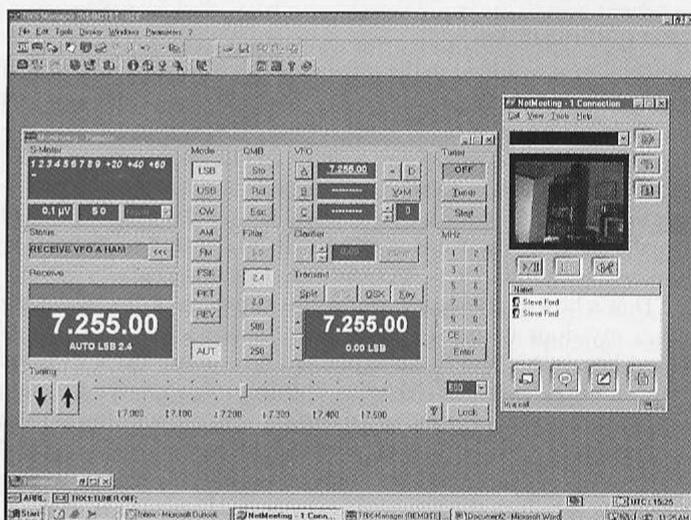
Remote control is one of the most fascinating and popular features of *TRX-Manager*.

With my DSL Internet connection at home, I have been able to use *TRX-Manager* to control my IC-706 remotely from my office computer at Headquarters. Before I leave for work, I turn on my transceiver and start *TRX-Manager* in its "slave" configuration. With the terminal window open, *TRX-Manager* is standing by for an Internet control connection via telnet.

At the office, I boot up *TRX-Manager* in the "master" mode, open its terminal window, enter my IP address in the telnet line and click on the green "connect" arrow. Within a few seconds, I'm in control of a transceiver that's 30 miles from my operating position.



Hunting DX with the PacketCluster function (left window).



Remote control with *TRX-Manager*. The right-hand window is Microsoft *Netmeeting* (not supplied with *TRX-Manager*), which I use to relay audio from my home station to my office.

Conclusion

If you want to try computer control of your radio, *TRX-Manager* should be at the top of your list—especially if you are interested in remote control. The software is so multifaceted, there still are several features I've yet to explore fully (such as the memories and bandscope). I experienced only one glitch, which involved loading a shortwave broadcast database. I posted my dilemma on the Yahoo *TRX-Manager* reflector (groups.yahoo.com/group/TRX-Manager) and had a solution within 24 hours. Try the free 30-day *TRX-Manager* demo. It's downloadable from www.hosenose.com/trx-manager/.

Manufacturer: Laurent Labourie, F6DEX, distributed in the US and Canada by Personal Database Applications, 1323 Center Dr, Auburn, GA 30011-3318; tel 770-307-1511; www.hosenose.com. \$69. LCU-3 serial interface: \$25. System requirements: Windows 95/98/2000/NT/XP on a 100-MHz Pentium PC (minimum) with a CD-ROM drive.

