

Technology that works for me—portable DVR!

By N6JSX/8

08/2012

The marvel's of the today's technology is mind boggling. Look at the size of your HAM radios and what they can do compared to the old Drake, Swan, Hallicrafter, Heathkit, or the infamous IC-2AT thumb wheel HT. HAMdom has really progressed in just a generation with super miniaturized solid-state components giving us remote control head radios, blue-tooth's, CTCSS, HT's smaller than a cigarette pack and now IF DSP, clearly the best all time RX improvement.

As I age I find that my hard-drive between my ears has nearly reached capacity with retrieval seek-times getting longer and longer. Only my wife can effectively push the defrag button. Bill Cosby's recommendation to sit down hard in the chair to push the forgotten back to the top of the stack, just doesn't work anymore. It still remains lost until my wife barks which miraculously pops it to the front of my mind, but that bark comes with consequences. Now that I've been diagnosed with sleep-apnea (that is causing occasional short-term memory losses) I found the DVR a handy if not necessary tool.

Decades ago when I my life was super busy balancing work, family, night-college and more, I bought myself an expensive pocket mini-cassette recorder/player but found it was too cumbersome to use. It was a battery and tape killer (it stretched tapes). Then about ten years ago, I again decided to reorganize my thoughts in a desire to become more efficient. I bought an Olympus VN-90 (90min) ~\$65, DVR with three message folders, using two AAA batteries, very light pocket small, using EE memory and **no tapes**. This DVR can be adapted to many different uses, imagination and ingenuity being your only boundary. The DVR even has a built-in mic/speaker and two external jacks for mic/speaker. I used it for years until I forgot where I put it, only to find it last year in one of my old NoteBook cases. It is now part of my HAM shack to record my Satellite operations with passes not exceeding 12 minutes. Afterwards I transpose the contact data to my PC log and make a PC audio file (.wav/.mp3/.wma) to save those special contacts.



VP-90 used in my portable SAT Com OPs

Yesterday, I bought another Olympus VN-7200 DVR (HQ mode = **68hrs** of record time with the same features of the VN-90) from Wal-Mart™ for ~\$29.95. I carry this one in my pocket at all times as one never knows when an epiphany, tid-bits of wisdom, or a fable will hit me or a task is created that cannot be lost. I want to insure I follow up before something distracts me and I lose those witticisms. This one button pocket DVR allows me to use the DVR while playing mobile HF to retain contact reports for later transposing to my log. With today's social focus in creating hands-free laws to minimize vehicle driver distractions (due to untrained/undisciplined cell phone users) the use of a DVR is a safety tool eliminating the need for pen-paper and taking my eyes off the road. Another handy use of the DVR is to record a radio conversation where the other party insists their signal sounds good and the problem must be yours. Playback will surely humble these know-it-all braggarts.



I was considering buying a voice-keyer for contesting, not now. I'll use my DRV speaker output into my HF IC-746P mic input. Now I just need to toggle the DVR to the pre-recorded message number, key the radio (or set VOX), and press play - sending my pre-recorded voice message again and again. This will save my voice and insure consistent CQ/contact information every time. The boss can bark at me even while I'm playing radio but the message will still get out without background interference! And while the DVR is playing I can input the contact information into the PC log – improving my contact speeds and efficiency.

How many times have you been working on a project to discover you need to buy something to complete it or you've made a critical measurement – and JUST THEN the phone rings, the radio calls, or the boss yells for you - to discover you now have just lost that important thought/measurement? Worst of all you know what ever that thought was is important. That lost thought begins to nag at you to be rediscovered, to the point that you will even retrace your footsteps hoping something you see will jog your memory! A pocket DVR can solve this dilemma and save you much time (and embarrassment). These new pocket DVR tools have become CHEAP with long battery life. I'm not much of a pocket guy so I just bought a nice vertical small cellphone belt holster for my DVR.

A side note; do not use the DVR to record the boss snoring (to prove she does), she really barks when you play that one!

Once again technology is wonderful, providing I remember to carry my DVR with me and use it!

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