

How do I?

An occasional series

This week: Manufacturer Roundup 2020

The Ham Radio Outlet (HRO) Catalog arrived in the mail this week. I like catalogs. Send me one and I will look at it. On the other hand, I will never get up in the morning and ask ‘what is Retailer **X** selling today’ and go look for a website. Ham Radio Outlet., or HRO, is one of the top two or three retailers of amateur radio equipment in North America. They do not carry everything, from every vendor, but generally speaking, if they do not carry it, you need to hunt.

With the demise of AES- Amateur Equipment Supply- a couple years ago, DX Engineering has broadened their offerings and there are some internet only vendors.

I was sort of surprised at the current offerings in the HRO catalog. This is not an endorsement of any product or manufacturer. Just some musings about what the market looks like and what it may mean for the hobby.

There are 4 “mainstream” transceiver manufacturers. I do not have sales data, but in terms of total units sold for the amateur service, it probably looks like Yaesu, Icom, Kenwood and Alinco. All have their merits, and for the most part it is like arguing Chevy vs Ford or John Deere vs Case IH, and someone always chimes in with “What about Dodge” or “What about Agco?”.

Let’s start with **HF**.

Alinco still offers the **DX-SR8T**.

Icom offers the top of their line **IC-7610** and **IC-7700**, as well as what may be the best seller of the moment, the **IC-7300**. The trusty (see elsewhere in this series) entry level **IC-718** is still in the catalog. Rounding out the 100 watt HF category is the **IC-7851**. The mobile **IC-7100** fits here as well. We will also insert the QRP (low power) **IC-705** here, as it does HF, but Icom puts it in another category, so we shall meet it again later.

Kenwood offers the top of their line **TS-990S**, **TS-890S** and the **TS-590SG**.

Yaesu offers the **FTDX101D** and **FTDX101MP** at the top of their line, the **FTDX5000MP-Limited** (200 watt output vs 100 watt in the standard FTDX5000) and the **FTDX3000**. The HF plus VHF/UHF **FT991A** rounds out the line and for QRP work the **FT818ND**. Unique to Yaesu at the moment is the 100 watt mobile radio. They offer the **FT891**, which is much like the older FT857D minus the VHF/UHF capability. The shocker is the FT450, Yaesu’s “entry level” HF rig, is gone from the catalog. I suspect that while the **FT891** seems to cost more than the 857D and the **FT991A** was designed to sort of replace both the FT857D and FT897D for mobile and portable work, that in general the cost difference between “entry

level” and mid-grade was reduced to the point where the FT450 just didn’t have a market any more.

VHF/UHF Mobile.

This used to be a simple category. The rise of digital radio has made it complicated.

Alinco has maybe the most interesting lineup. They have the 2m/70cm dual band **DR-735T**. The 85 watt 2 meter only **DR-B185HT**, the 50 watt 6 meter **DR-06TA**, the 50 watt 2 meter **DR-135TMKIII** and the very similar but 220 MHz only **DR-235TMKIII** and 440 MHz only **DR-435TMKIII**.

Icom offers the dual band (2m/440cm) **IC 2730A**, the 2 meter only **IC 2300H** as analog radios and the **IC-7100** (HF/VHF/UHF), the **ID-4100A**, **ID5100A Deluxe** and as mentioned before, the QRP **IC 705** all with analog and D-Star capability (see elsewhere in this series for articles on digital modes, including D-Star).

Not sure where else to put it, but Icom offers the **IC-9700**. It can be mobile but seems most used in the shack. It covers 2 meters, 70 cm and 1200 MHz. Icom sells it as designed for weak signal work and satellite operation and it also handles D-Star.

Kenwood offers the dual band 2m/70cm **TM-D710G** ready for GPS and APRS work; the **TM-281A** and the Echolink ready **TM-V71A**, both 2 meter only.

Again the biggest changes seem to be in the Yaesu lineup. The **FT-991A** does 2m and 70cm as well as HF. The **FT-818ND** does QRP only but covers 2m and 70cm. The **FTM_300DR** seems built to go head to head with the Kenwood TM-D7106, as is the FTM-400DXR. Just looking at the catalog, I am not sure what the advantage of one or the other is. The 2m analog category is down to 2 radios-the **FT2980R** and the **FTM3100DR**. If you want analog and digital C4FM, the offering is the **FTM-7250D**.

Handhelds.

This category has perhaps changed the most.

Alinco offers a dual bander and tri-bander. That is it in analog. For 2m/70cm it is the **DJ-VX50T**. The tri-bander adds 1200 MHz in the **DJ-G7T**. The **DJ-MD5TGP** is a dual band (70cm/2m) handheld. This still seems to be the only DMR offering from a major manufacturer. (see elsewhere in this series for more on DMR)

Icom has one analog HT, the **IC-V86** (see elsewhere in this series for reviews), a 2 meter only transceiver. D-Star users have the dual band 2m/70cm **ID-52A***.

Kenwood offers 3! The 2m analog **TH-K20A** basically goes head to head with the Icom V86. The **TH-D72A** is a dual band 2m/70cm with GPS and APRS and the **TH-D74A** is a tri-band (2 m/ 220 MHz/70 cm) with GPS/APRS and D-Star.

Yaesu offers 6 handhelds. The stunner here is they no longer have a single band HT. They used to carry 2m or 70 cm single banders and they were well liked. If you want a classic Yaesu **FT-60R** you may only have weeks or months to get one. This very popular dual band analog 2m/70cm is still in the catalog, but so is the **FT-65R** which says it is based on the FT-60R. The next oldest is the **VX-6R** which is a triband 2m/220 MHz/440 MHz. The **FT-4XR** is sold as a very compact analog 2m/70cm. The **FT-3DR** offers analog and C4FM with GPS and APRS and is a dual-band 2m/70cm. Last but not least is the **FT-70DR**, dual-band 2m/70cm, analog/C4FM.

So what does all this mean? While you may pay a little more, you still have access to perhaps the best performing HF transceivers of all time.

The mobile market seems to have shrunk. But then you do not see as many antennas on cars or articles about vehicle installations.

The hand held offerings have shrunk. Yet you seem to see more articles than ever about handhelds. I sort of think the manufacturers can offer a HT with multiple bands and modes for not a lot more than a single band, analog radio, and have sort of priced themselves out of that market. Or maybe the Baefongs have forced them out.

More info:

Dealers:

Ham Radio Outlet: <https://www.hamradio.com/>

Main Trading Company: <https://www.mtcradio.com/>

DX Engineering: <https://www.dxengineering.com/>

Giga-Parts: <https://www.gigaparts.com/>

Manufacturers:

Alinco: <http://www.alinco.com/>

Icom: <https://www.icomamerica.com/en/>

Kenwood: <https://www.kenwood.com/usa/>

Yaesu: <https://www.yaesu.com/>

Catch 'ya on the air!

| HF Radios | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Brand | Model | Freq.Coverage | Power | Other Features |
| Alinco | DX-SR8T | 160m-10m | 100 watt / 40 am | SSB, CW, FM, AM |
| Alinco | DX-SR9T | 160m-10m | 100 watt / 40 am | SDR |
| ICOM | IC-705 | HF, up to 70cm | QRP up to 10 watt | SDR |
| ICOM | IC-718 | HF | 100 watt / 40 am | Entry Level, no 60 m |
| ICOM | IC-7100 | HF, VHF, UHF | 100/50/35w | Mobile |
| ICOM | IC-7300 | HF + 6m | 100 watt max | Current Best Seller |
| ICOM | IC-7610 | HF + 6m | 100 watt max | Top of the Line |
| ICOM | IC-7700 | HF + 6m | 200 watt max | Top of the Line |
| ICOM | IC-7851 | HF + 6m | 200 watt max | Top of the Line |
| Kenwood | TS-590SG | HF + 6m | 100 watt max | |
| Kenwood | TS-890S | HF + 6m | 100 watt max | Top of the Line |
| Kenwood | TS-990S | HF + 6m | 200 watt max | Top of the Line |
| Yaesu | FT-818ND | | QRP | |
| Yaesu | FT-891 | | | Mobile |
| Yaesu | FT-991A | HF + VHF/UHF | 100 watt /50 watt VHF | C4FM |
| Yaesu | FTDX-101D | HF + 6m | 100 watt max | Top of the Line |
| Yaesu | FTDX-101MP | HF + 6m | 200 watt max | Top of the Line |
| Yaesu | FTDX-3000 | HF + 6m | 100 watt max | |
| Yaesu | FTDX-5000 | HF + 6m | 100 watt max | |
| Yaesu | FTDX-5000MP | HF + 6m | 200 watts | |

| VHF/UHF Radios | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Brand | Model | Freq.Coverage | Power | Other Features |
| Alinco | DR-735 T | 2m, 70cm | 50 watt max | Analog FM |
| Alinco | DR-B185 HT | 2m | 85 watt max | Analog FM |
| Alinco | DR-06 TA | 6m | 50 watt | Analog FM |
| Alinco | DR-135 T MK III | 2m | 50 watt max | Analog FM |
| Alinco | DR-235 T MK III | 220 MHz only | 25 watt max | Analog FM |
| Alinco | DR-435 T MK III | 440 MHz only | 35 watt max | Analog FM |
| ICOM | IC-2300H | 2m only | 65 watt | Analog FM |
| ICOM | IC-2730A | 2m, 70cm | 50 watt | Analog FM |
| ICOM | IC-7100 | HF, VHF, UHF | 100/50/35 | |
| ICOM | ID-4100A | 2m, 70cm | 50 watt | Analog FM, D-Star, GPS |
| ICOM | ID-5100A Deluxe | 2m, 70cm | 50 watt | Analog FM, D-Star, GPS |
| ICOM | IC-705 | HF, VHF, UHF | QRP up to 10 watt | Analog, D-Star |
| ICOM | IC-9700 | 2m, 70cm, 1.2 GHz | 100/75/10 watts | Analog, D-Star, Satellite |
| Kenwood | TM-281A | 2m | 65 watt max | Analog FM |
| Kenwood | TM-D710 G | 2m, 70cm | 50 watt | GPS, APRS |
| Kenwood | TM-V71A | 2m, 70cm | 50 watt | Analog, EchoLink Ready |
| Yaesu | FT-818ND | 2m, 70cm | QRP 6 watt | |
| Yaesu | FT-991A | HF + 2m, 70cm | 100/50/50 | |
| Yaesu | FTM-300DR | 2m, 70cm | 50 watt | C4FM |
| Yaesu | FTM-400DXR | 2m, 70cm | Up to 50 watt | |
| Yaesu | FT-2980R | 2m | Up to 80 watt | Analog FM, Packet |
| Yaesu | FTM-3100DR | 2m | Up to 65 watt | Analog FM |
| Yaesu | FTM-7250D | 2m, 70cm | 50 watts | Analog FM, C4FM |

| Handheld Radios | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Brand | Model | Freq.Coverage | Power | Other Features |
| Alinco | DJ-G7T | 2m, 70cm, 1.2 GHz | Up to 5 watt | Analog AM & FM |
| Alinco | DJ-MD5TGP | 2m, 70cm | 5 watt max | Analog, DMR, GPS, APRS |
| Alinco | DJ-VX50T | 2m, 70cm | 5 watt VHF / 4 watt UHF | Analog AM & FM |
| ICOM | IC-V86 | 2m | 7 watt | Analog FM |
| ICOM | IC-52A | 2m, 70cm | 56 | Analog FM, D-Star |
| Kenwood | TH-D72A | 2m, 70cm | 5 watt | GPS, APRS |
| Kenwood | TH-D74A | 2m, 220 MHz, 70cm | Up to 5 watt | GPS, APRS, D-Star |
| Kenwood | TH-K20A | 2m | 5.5 watt | Analog FM |
| Yaesu | FT-60R | 2m, 70cm | 5 watt | Analog, Nearing End of Life |
| Yaesu | FT-65R | 2m, 70cm | Up to 5 watt | Analog |
| Yaesu | FT-70DR | 2m, 70cm | Up to 5 watt | Analog, C4FM |
| Yaesu | FT-3DR | 2m, 70cm | Up to 5 watt | Analog, C4FM, GPS, APRS |
| Yaesu | FT-4XR | 2m, 70cm | Up to 5 watt | Analog FM, Compact Size |
| Yaesu | VX-6R | 2m, 220 MHz 70cm | 5 watt / 1.5 watt 220MHz | Analog FM |