How do I?

An occasional series

This week: Alinco DJ-MD5X Progress Report
*   September 2021*

A few months ago (May 2021), this space had an article about unboxing the Alinco DJ-MD5 DMR hand held radio. You can find this article on this website in our **Know-How Resources >> Radio a la Mode >> Digital Radio** page.

https://www.radioclub-carc.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/How-Do-I-Unboxing-Alinco-DJMD5.pdf

Here is a progress report and some thoughts. These are the author's, and no one else's.

1. I have yet to make a contact on it, so I cannot speak about how it receives or transmits in the amateur bands.

2. Digital radios require programming via computer. Alinco has free software available for download.

http://www.alinco.com/download.html

Steve N3FWE is adamant that the best way to learn is to do. He recommends building your own codeplug. I wasn't sure I was willing to watch the videos and start from scratch, so I found the Wayne County Ohio Radio Club (who cannot like a W8WOO call sign?) had one on line.

https://w8woo.org/alinco-dj-md5-codeplug/

If you use nearly any brand of DMR radio besides Alinco, this site has a variety of code plugs for central Pennsylvania repeaters and talk groups.

https://www.miklor.com/DMR/DMR-CP101.php

I downloaded the software and opened the sample code plug. It is straight forward enough,

but I am so used to the RT Systems radio programming software that I do not really have the patience to program it. I expected to be able to do a lot of copy and paste from my RT Systems data files as I moved my standard package of frequencies into the new radio. Nope. Have to enter each one into the appropriate data fields. I have some 200 or so frequencies in the standard package. I have begun entering them, but every so often, the software crashes and loses my work. I have learned to save after every entry, which seems excessive and slows down progress. The radio has upwards of 4,000 memory slots so I am not worried about running out of space!

The sample codeplug easily downloaded to the radio and the radio receives the National Weather Service frequencies really well, with the stock "rubber duck" antenna.

So far, I would rate the radio itself as a strong **B+** since I have not really used it.   The software is at best a **C-**. I do not really have any other DMR radios to compare to, but the radio is, in my opinion, the best one out there in terms of backing and support from a major manufacturer.

DMR is not necessarily "plug and play". If you are just getting started in the hobby, I strongly recommend a simple analog HT as the "first radio". Get used to it and the DMR HT will make a lot more sense.

I have not tried using my Alinco DMR on a repeater or connecting to a "hot spot" internet gateway. I expect that where I live, to get the most play value out of it, I will need to use one or the other.

Stay tuned for further updates!

Catch 'ya on the air!