

## If You Could Only Have One Radio...

My first impression of the IC-7000 is that it answers the question “if you could only have one radio, what would it be?” The answer could be this radio.

To see if my first impressions were lasting ones, I took it home for a weekend to try it out. The first thing that struck me is its size. It was no bigger than my 2 meter mobile transceiver and yet it runs a full 100 W on HF. It fits comfortably in my Samsonite attaché case

The most striking feature of this radio is the high resolution color display. The display is, simply, stunning. The twenty something year olds in the household were very taken with the IC-7000's looks. They never paid much attention to my “standard” size transceiver, but the razor sharp color display on IC-7000 caught their eye. They're used to cell phones and iPods, so, to them, it looked like a modern consumer electronic device. The display, while small, is perfectly readable in all light levels. I could read it easily without having to lift my head to use the close-up lenses in my bifocals.

I must be the exception to the rule, but, before I turn on a new radio, I read the manual. A tradeoff of a software-controlled radio is that you can control nearly every function you can imagine, but you have to *find* the function first on a menu. The IC-7000's menu tree is complex because the radio has many functions but only a few buttons and knobs on the front panel. There are two or more ways to control some functions, so it was confusing to determine the best method. A suggestion for ICOM: Include an index in the back of the manual.

The knobs themselves are fine and I especially liked the feel of the large tuning knob with its indented “dimple.” Ergonomically and visually, the radio controls felt right.

I connected the '7000 to my G5RV, anxious to see what my friends on a Sunday morning 40 meter sked thought of the audio quality. My friends know what I sound like and said that, compared to my normal audio, my voice was “hollow” and “lacked bass.” I consulted the manual and adjusted the audio bandwidth and compression to different settings, but the reports were still not very complimentary. My friends commented that while it lacked bass, the signal had a lot of “punch.” I would guess that these conditions are a function of the digital audio processing and compression parameters.

I also tried the IC-7000 on 20 meter CW with its internal keyer and full CW break-in capability. You need to go three menus deep to adjust keying speed, not the easiest arrangement for quickly changing speeds unless you left this menu on the display while operating. I could not find any way to lock the radio in transmit to manually adjust my antenna tuner using both hands.

With the keying functions set to my liking, the radio performed flawlessly. I worked a number of a number of stations and received excellent signal reports. I tried working a DX station operating split, but it took me some time to figure out how. The manual suggested three different ways to do it! Once you master it, it is easy to do.

I enjoyed using the IC-7000 and that display really grows on you. There are so many capabilities that it will take a while to feel totally comfortable with it, but it's worth the effort. — *Harold Kramer, WJ1B, ARRL Chief Operating Officer*