

# SHORT TAKES

## HamStationUltra

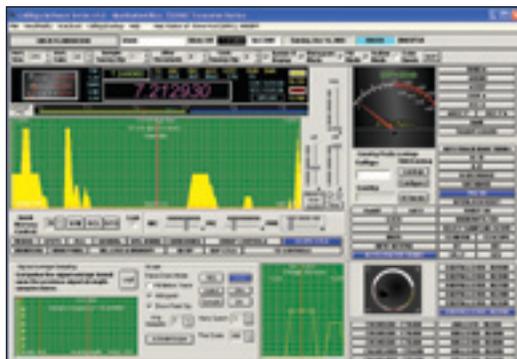
Many modern transceivers, even so-called “low end” models, now include computer interfacing of one sort or another. At one end of the spectrum you have radios that allow external software to edit the contents of their memory channels (handheld and mobile VHF+ transceivers are typical examples). At the other end you have rigs that bare their electronic souls to the software developers, making every function accessible to computer manipulation.

The *HamStationUltra* package for Windows is designed with soul-baring radios in mind, specifically the Kenwood TS-2000, Yaesu FT-2000 and Ten-Tec Jupiter/Pegasus transceivers. *HamStationUltra* doesn't simply control a handful of functions, it *completely* takes over the operation of the transceiver. With *HamStationUltra* running on your PC, your rig might as well be sitting on a shelf in a nearby closet.

### Boot Up and Go

The software begins by having an RS-232 “conversation” with the radio, reading the transceiver information, loading configuration settings and so on. This dialog between my station computer and TS-2000 transceiver lasted about a minute. Once the loading was complete, I was presented with an amazing display — buttons, dials and meters everywhere. The screen captures shown in this review really don't do justice to the plethora of features.

An incomplete feature list includes an enhanced receive *and* transmit scope display, propagation monitoring, NCDXF/IARU beacon monitoring, DX cluster monitoring, built-in logging, call sign lookup, triple band-stacking registers and a versatile sound recorder. Despite the richness of *HamStationUltra*, and the load it places on the CPU, my old 2 GHz Pentium computer running Windows XP seemed to keep pace nicely.



The *HamStationUltra* main screen.



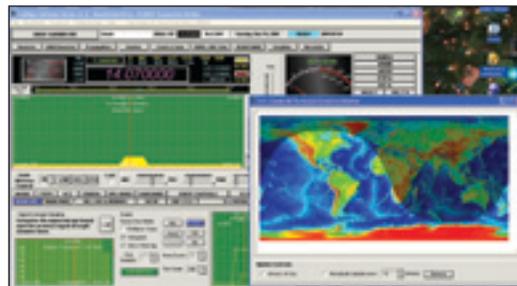
This pop-up window allows Telnet access to your favorite DX Cluster.

*HamStationUltra* doesn't make your transceiver do anything it can't do already, but it brings the complete transceiver functionality to your computer where the software can enhance and improve the experience. For example, to access receiver audio equalization in the TS-2000, I would normally have to dig into its multilayered menu system. With *HamStationUltra*, altering an EQ setting is as easy as clicking a mouse, plus I have the flexibility to alter the individual settings.

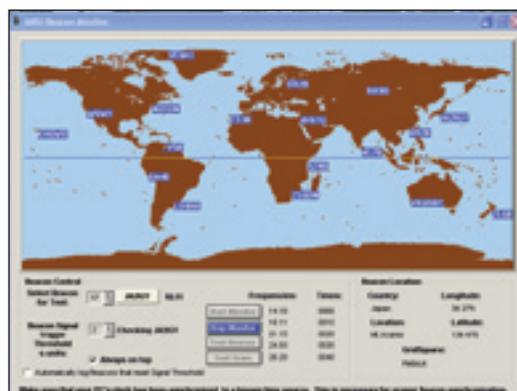
Speaking of mouse clicks, you can tune the transceiver VFOs virtually with the animated on-screen knob, or open the direct-frequency-entry window. But if you prefer the real “knob experience,” *HamStation* is compatible with the Griffin Technologies USB PowerMate knob ([www.griffintech.com/products/powermate](http://www.griffintech.com/products/powermate)).

### Who is HamStationUltra For?

This software is designed for hams who want to seamlessly integrate their transceivers and computers. *HamStation* doesn't offer Internet remote-control capability, but I was



Opening a colorful grayline real-time map display.



The NCDXF/IARU beacon monitor steps your rig through all the HF beacon frequencies, listening and noting the signal levels.

able to do so by accessing my station computer using Symantec's *PCAnywhere* software. *HamStation* responded a bit sluggishly in that environment, but that is to be expected.

It may go without saying, but should be said anyway, that *HamStationUltra* is a complex piece of software. This program seems best suited to the computer “power user,” someone who is fairly conversant with personal computer technology and terminology. Even if you feel confident in your computer skills, I'd strongly recommend spending plenty of quality time with the manual before wading into *HamStationUltra*.

Its complexity notwithstanding, *HamStationUltra* is a powerful, impressive package.

*Manufacturer: Callsign Software, PO Box 652, Merrimack, NH 03054-0652; [www.callsignsoftware.com](http://www.callsignsoftware.com). HamStationUltra for the TS-2000 and FT-2000: \$149.99; for the Ten-Tec Pegasus and Jupiter: \$99.99. System requirements: Windows XP or Vista, 1 GHz, minimum CPU with 1 GB RAM and 100 MB available disk space.* 