**This is an abridged data log from (02/13/17) Monday night’s D-Rats training on the w5aw ratflector - it omits intermittent chatter and retains the primary lesson dialogue.**

D-RATS vdaily-02232012Copyright 2012 Dan Smith (KK7DS)[20:01:08] [W5AW] KB5HPT: In the first session, we will tweak some of the configuration settings. Then we will discuss the Stations Pane and the Status Pane on the Main Window. Next, we will go to the Chat page and discuss the Main Area, Port Selections, Quick Messages, QST’s and some additional functions such as Using/Adding filters, Join Channels, and Private Chat.[20:01:47] [W5AW] KB5HPT:

Let’s get this training started. Check-ins please state the following:

1. The Operating System that you are using i.e. Windows, MacOS or Linux

2. How long have you been using D-RATS?

There are a lot of things going on under the hood of D-RATS that you should be aware of and I hope to accomplish that with this training.

[20:08:07] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Tweak Configuration file: Make the following changes to the following config settings.

Preferences

Click on Files>>Preferences

Enter your Callsign or Tactical Call.

Enter your name is optional if you use your name elsewhere such as I have done.

Sign on/off messages can be what you would like the rest of us to see when you sign on and off with D-RATS.

Units are normally Imperial. If you like to use UTC time be sure to check the box. The Ping reply is what we will see when we ping your station. Take all other defaults.

I recommend taking the defaults on this. You will notice that when you installed D-RATS it put the D-RATS Shared Folder on your desktop. Do not delete it. If you move it be sure to change the File Transfer Path. This is where D-RATS is looking to find its shared files.

[20:09:16] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Make the changes at this time.[20:10:11] [W5AW] KB5HPT: GPS

Enter your lat/longs in the decimal format. If you are using an external GPS then check the box. Remember we are located west of the prime meridian in the western hemisphere so our longitude is prefaced with a minus (-). Use the following link to find the latitude and longitude of an address, http://stevemorse.org/jcal/latlon.php. This link will be helpful later on in the training when map overlays are covered.

Click on the DPRS button and select the icon you want to display at your position on the map.

[20:10:21] [W5AW] KB5HPT: ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?[20:12:15] [W5AW] KB5HPT: LET'S CONTINUE ON.

Set the Chat Font to your preference.

Note: If Show status updates in chat is disabled your .WAV tones that are selected in the SOUNDS page below will not be heard when an update is received. This feature is handy if you monitor busy RATflectors with a lot of messages and you don’t want to be notified each time.

Change the QST Size Limit to 4096 to allow larger file sizes of QST’s.

Take all other defaults.

[20:15:56] [W5AW] KB5HPT: ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?[20:17:01] [W5AW] KB5HPT: LET'S CONTINUE ON.[20:17:35] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Messages

Be sure to check automatically forward messages. Someone may have to send messages through your station.

Queue flash interval: Sets the length of the Queue flush interval in seconds.

Station TTL: If a station has not been heard longer than this interval, D-RATS will send out a ping before attempting to transfer a message.

Take the defaults for the rest.

[20:17:49] [W5AW] KB5HPT: ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?[20:18:29] [W5AW] KB5HPT: LET'S CONTINUE ON.[20:18:55] [W5AW] KB5HPT: The Main Window:

[20:19:01] [W5AW] KB5HPT: The Main Window is the first screen you will see when you start D-RATS. D-RATS will also notify all stations that your station is now online and your call sign will appear in their Stations Pane on the right hand side. Your Callsign will not appear in your Stations Pane. Any stations that have messages in their Outboxes addressed to you, will now deliver them to your Inbox.

Each of D-RATS different Modes are accessed from the Tabs at the top of the window.

Message: Selects and creates a preformatted message.

Chat: Exchange real time text with other stations.

Files: Upload/download file between stations.

Event Log: A list of transactions that has taken place on the port(s).

[20:19:18] [W5AW] KB5HPT: ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?[20:20:15] [W5AW] KB5HPT: LET'S CONTINUE ON.[20:20:25] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Stations Pane:

This area on the right side of the window displays Callsign heard and the time since last heard in parentheses.

[20:20:46] [W5AW] KB5HPT: • Ping: Check the status of a station.

Test Connectivity: Test the quality of the path to an RF station.

Request Position: Get the location of a station to be displayed on the map.

Get Version: Request version of D-RATS

Request mail check: Check if a station is holding mail for you.

Clear All: Clears all Call signs from the Stations Pane.

Ping All Stations: Same as Ping above except to all stations connected to the Ratflector.

Request All Positions: Same as Request Positions above except for all stations connected to the Ratflector.

Stations with an Online status will be displayed in Blue. Stations with an Unattended status will be displayed in Brown. Stations with an Unknown status will be displayed in Black. Right click on the Callsign and Ping the station. If it is still connected it will change to either Blue or Brown.

[20:21:18] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Exercise: Hover your mouse over a Callsign to display their status and status message. Right click your mouse on a Callsign to display a context sensitive menu of additional operations.

[20:22:04] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Status Pane:

Use the drop-down arrow to set your status as “Online” or “Unattended”.

Type a short message to be displayed with your status on the second line. This is what other users will see when they hover their mouse over your Callsign in parentheses in the Stations pane.

The F9 key is used to show or hide the Stations and Status panes.

[20:22:14] [W5AW] KB5HPT: ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?[20:23:13] [W5AW] KB5HPT: LET'S CONTINUE ON.[20:23:31] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Main Area (Chat Tab):

This is where real time text is exchanged with all stations. Received and transmitted text is displayed in different colors and includes the port name and time stamp. The colors can be adjusted in Preferences > Appearance. Text can be selected, copied and pasted into other applications. Likewise, text can be pasted into the typing box from other applications.

Port Selection:

Use the drop down arrow to select the port where text and QST’s are sent.

All enabled ports are monitored and can receive messages and file transfers, but text and QST’s only go out the selected port. You will go to File>Preferences > Radio to create the ports. D-RATS support serial connections to D-STAR radios, IP Networks, KISS TNCs, AGW and the DV Dongle.

Note: The ports are listed alphabetically by name. When you start D-RATS, or click “Save” in the preferences window, the selected port reverts to the first one on the list.

[20:23:40] [W5AW] KB5HPT: ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?[20:24:28] [W5AW] KB5HPT: LET'S CONTINUE ON.

[20:24:48] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Exercise: Go to File>>Preferences>>Radio and put a check in the box for net:ref.d-rats.com:9000. Click Save. Click on the

PORT drop-down Box. You should see the name you gave your main screen and RAT. Whichever one you have selected will be the ratflector you will transmit to. Uncheck net:ref.d-rats.com:9000

[20:25:51] [W5AW] KB5HPT: ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?[20:28:44] [W5AW] KB5HPT: LET'S CONTINUE ON.[20:28:59] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Quick Messages:

D-RATS allows the storage of commonly used phrases when communicating via text. To add a quick message click on the “+” button then ADD. Enter the text for the new Quick Message and click OK. Point and double-click on a message to send it. Use the buttons at the right to add or remove Quick Messages.

Drag and drop the messages to change their order. Use the Function Keys to send out Quick Messages. F1-F8 will send out the first eight Quick Messages.

Various types of bulletins can be sent periodically. These may contain:

1. a string of text, the contents of a text file

2. your current position

3. position of a station or static location in the map window

4. the current temperature at an airport

5. an RSS

6. CAP feed

Click on the button then ADD to create a new QST. Select the type and interval between bulletins from the drop down lists. You may enter the number of minutes directly. Additionally, a colon may be placed before the number to make the time absolute. (:56 = 56 minutes past the hour). The GPS-A and GPS QST’s will not display in the Chat window. They will show in the Event Log at the receiving station. The other QST’s will display in your Chat window. You can now choose whether to send QSTs on the currently selected port or all ports. The ports depends on how many ports are enabled in the Port

Selection dropdown box. Select the CURRENT port or select ALL enabled ports.

[20:29:41] [W5AW] KB5HPT: ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?[20:30:49] [W5AW] KB5HPT: LET'S CONTINUE ON.[20:31:06] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Additional Functions:

A few utilities are available by clicking on the File Menu:

Send D\*Query: Sends a request compatible with Pete Loveall's (AE5PL) D\*Query application.

Broadcast Text File (Ctrl+B): Sends the contents text file as if it was typed in the Chat screen.

Ping Station (Ctrl+P): Prompts you to enter a Callsign to ping.

Preferences (Alt+P): Opens the Config window.

Quit (Ctrl+Q): Close D-RATS.

[20:31:42] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Using Filters:

Incoming chat text from all active ports goes to the Main area in the chat window. If there is a large amount of activity, it may be desirable to sort incoming Chat text using filters. Filter strings can be used to route incoming text and divert it into other areas in the chat window. The filters appear as Tabs at the bottom of the Chat window. The filter tabs may be dragged and dropped to change their order.

[20:31:48] [W5AW] KB5HPT: ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?[20:32:26] [W5AW] KB5HPT: LET'S CONTINUE ON.[20:32:55] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Exercise:

Note: Clear the regular expression “\[QST\]” that you entered in File>>Preferences>>Appearance before doing this exercise. This regular expression has an effect on this exercise. The tab letters will not turn red with this regular expression in place.

Click on ADD Filter. Enter [QST] then click OK. Now notice at the bottom of the Chat window you have another Tab called [QST]. Now all incoming QST messages will be diverted to this window and not your Main window. When new text is received on the unmonitored tab the text will turn Red. Everyone make sure you are looking at your Main page. I will force send a QST and the “QST” on the tab will turn red.

Note: Make a decision on how you want to handle the QST.

1. Leave the regular expression “\[QST\]” in the Appearance page and have the QST subdued (grey) on the Main Chat page, or

2. Remove it and have the QST diverted to this Tab, and will not be seen on the Main Chat page. The QST text will be blue in this Tab.

[20:52:51] [W5AW] KB5HPT: LET'S CONTINUE ON.[20:53:06] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Join Channels:

A variation on the filter concept allows you to create “channels” within the Chat window. Multiple stations with a similar task may be grouped together or communications with a specific location can be separated from the Main traffic area. Example: Any station may communicate directly with the EOC or he Hospital during a Search & Rescue operation in these respective tabs.

[20:53:26] [W5AW] KB5HPT: ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?[20:54:17] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Exercise: Click on Join Channel. Enter EOC in the box and click OK. Repeat the steps and create a channel for HOSP. You should now have two other Tabs showing at the bottom of the Chat window. The titles are case sensitive. Everyone go to the EOC Tab and standby and I will meet you on each tab.

[21:02:33] [W5AW] KB5HPT: LET'S CONTINUE ON.[21:02:41] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Private Chat:

The third version allows you create a “private” channel with another station.

It should be noted here that there is not any real privacy in D-RATS, the text is merely hidden from others in the Main Chat window.

[21:03:37] [W5AW] KB5HPT: ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?[21:03:55] [W5AW] KB5HPT: LET'S CONTINUE ON.

[21:04:02] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Exercise: Click on Private Chat. In the box type the Callsign of the person you want a Private Chat with and click OK. You should now see another tab at the bottom of the Chat window. Now Drag and Drop one of those tabs to a new location in the row. To remove these tabs that we just created select each one-one at a time and click Remove Filter.

[21:09:10] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Log File

While in the Chat window, select View >>log and you will see a complete log since the first time you started D-RATS, not just the daily log but the complete log. That is because you enabled "Log chat traffic" and "Load log tail" in Preferences>>Chat. If you have been operating in a "JOIN CHANNEL" or "PRIVATE CHANNEL" situation that text is also available. Go to C:\\Users\ (your computer name)\AppData\Roaming\D-RATS\logs and you will see a file with that name listed. Open it and retrieve the data that you need.

[21:11:32] [W5AW] KB5HPT: The log file is very important to remember. If you want to go back and see this lesson plan all over again this is where you go to see it. As long as you do not uninstall D-RATS this lesson plan will always be here you cannot delete this file.[21:11:51] [W5AW] KB5HPT: ARE

THERE ANY QUESTIONS?[21:12:08] [W5AW] KB5HPT: LET'S CONTINUE ON.[21:12:46] [W5AW] KB5HPT: TIP: How Dragon Works

Dragon NaturallySpeaking uses the human voice as the main interface between the user and the computer. While relatively simple to use, speech recognition software is a highly sophisticated technology. Dragon is an example of a speaker-dependent speech recognition system. This means Dragon - unlike automated phone systems or voice-activated mobile devices - is designed to recognize the voice of a single speaker. Dragon creates a unique voice profile for each user that contains information about unique characteristics of the person’s voice along with a customizable set of words, known as a vocabulary, and user-specific information including software settings and personalized voice commands.

When users create their profiles, Dragon adapts to how individuals speak and which words they use. This way, the software accommodates users with varying accents and speech patterns and allows users to dictate naturally. There's no need to talk robotically or insert long awkward pauses between words or phrases.

As you use Dragon, the software will adapt to the way you sound and the words you use. At the same time, you should also practice good habits like speaking in long, natural sentances and turning off the microphone when necessary. The biggest challange is learning how to edit on the fly. But, with Dragon Naturally Speaking it is relatively easy once you get use to it.

Dragon Naturally Speaking takes some practice to get use to. It will conform to your way of speaking and you will conform to it's way of printing. Practice, practice, practice at first. It get's easier as you go. Dragon Naturally Speaking will work with any amateur radio software that uses a text editior. I use it with V4 Chat, H4 Chat, ARDOP, Fldigi (PSK31, NBEMS & FSQ), as well as D-RATS as I am right now.

You truelly can speak faster than you can type. This is the reason why I got Dragon Naturally Speaking. I have to be the slowest typest in the world.

[21:13:51] [W5AW] KB5HPT: For Lesson Four

You will need a data cable when we connect D-RATS to the radios in lesson Four. Consult your radio users manual in the Low Speed Data Communications Section for the correct cable type. If you don't have one now would be a good time to get one on order. [21:14:48] [W5AW] KB5HPT: Session One Closing Thank you to all of tonight’s attendees. I hope you got something out of the session. This will conclude tonight’s session. You are welcome to stay connected to the ratflector and continue practicing tonight’s topic. To find other Ratflectors online go to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/d-rats\_group/ and join the group. Then click on “More” then “Database” then click on Ratflertor List”.

The topic for the next session on February 16, 2017 will be Messages/File Transfer. This will include sending Memo’s, Radiograms, Winlink 2000 (WL2K), email via Amateur Radio, and transferring files from one station to another. To do the WL2K you will be required to have a Winlink 2000 account. To create your Winlink account click on the link provided http://www.winlink.org/user and follow the instructions on “How to Get an Account”. I would recommend using the Winlink Express. Use Telnet WL2K mode in Winlink Express. If you have any questions about what we have covered tonight send me an email at kb5hpt@arrl.net.

73,

Lew, KB5HPT