Perspectives

QEX Morse Input Design Challenge

Dave “Doc” Evison, W7DE, a new QEX subscriber, has issued a challenge to the Amateur Radio community. He writes that he’s been licensed since 1954, and that Amateur Radio has been an active part of his long life. Now 86 years old, he’s experiencing difficulties with typing skills. He’s not alone. Dave writes that many of his daily activities involve keyboarding, and observes that he can send Morse CW faster and with greater ease than he can type. The use of a paddle to input text to a personal computer in Morse format seems like a promising solution to the age-related and disabilities-related keyboard handicap. Since the Amateur Radio community is overflowing with exceptional people with technical skills, resourcefulness, and passion, a design and construction article by a radio amateur author to remedy this real-life problem seems to be a natural fit.

We agree, and are pleased to implement this as a QEX Morse Input Design Challenge. The Morse text input device should also implement a small control box, or other method, to be operated with the other hand with keys for Shift, Backspace, Enter, Tab, and so on. The text generated by the Morse input device will require standard keyboard editing for professional formatting and editing. But the Morse input system will work well as a raw text generator for even a professional writer. Morse text input to a personal computer can have significant benefits beyond helping the typing challenged. Finally, use of this device will obviously enhance the operator’s Morse code skills, and this will help preserve the legacy and utility of Morse code communications.

The Official Rules

(1) Each entry must appear in the form of a QEX construction article that adheres to the QEX author’s guide and must include:

- Detailed plans (hand drawings are acceptable) and schematics that implement the Morse key input along with a control box or other adjunct implementing Shift, Backspace, Enter, Tab, and other non-Morse characters.
- A list of materials and sources.
- Copy of all software needed to implement the solution.
- Photographs of the completed Morse input solution.

(2) The Morse input device and control box adjunct must be an independent device, not an integral part of another device such as a keyboard or a PC.

(3) Only one entry per individual or team will be accepted. Entrants must be ARRL members. ARRL Headquarters staff and commercial manufacturers, or those associated with commercial manufacturers, are not eligible.

Send your entry article files (photos, text, drawings) to the postal address given below, or via email to qex@arrl.org with “QEX Morse Input Challenge” and your call sign in the subject line. Do not send zip files as our email system will reject these.

(4) Non-commercial designs only; Morse input devices must be the sole creations of the entrants.

(5) Submission deadline: December 1, 2019.

(6) Judging and prizes: The first five complete articles received (post mark for postal submissions, email time-stamp for electronic submissions), which satisfy all of the listed criteria will be awarded a one-year subscription or extension of your subscription to QEX, and will be considered for publication in QEX. The decisions of the judges and QEX editorial staff are final.

(7) Disclaimer: By participating in the competition, you are verifying that you are the owner and producer of the QEX Morse Input Challenge device and its software, and that no third-party ownership rights or patents apply to your design. ARRL acquires no rights to your design, but through your name and call sign you are granting ARRL a perpetual, worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free right to publish your entry materials in all media now known or hereinafter created, anywhere in the world, for any lawful purpose.

Writing for QEX

Keep the full-length QEX articles flowing in, or share a Technical Note of several hundred words in length plus a figure or two. Let us know that your submission is intended as a Note. QEX is edited by Kazimierz “Kai” Siwiak, KE4PT, (ksiwiak@arrl.org) and is published bimonthly. QEX is a forum for the free exchange of ideas among communications experimenters. The content is driven by you, the reader and prospective author. The subscription rate (6 issues per year) in the United States is $29. First Class delivery in the US is available at an additional rate of $40. For international subscribers, including those in Canada and Mexico, QEX can be delivered by airmail for $35 annually. Subscribe today at www.arrl.org/qex.

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Very best regards,
Kazimierz “Kai” Siwiak, KE4PT