

FM & Repeaters

Edited by Jay Mabey, NU0X, Editor, The ARRL Repeater Directory

So You Want to Talk on the Internet...

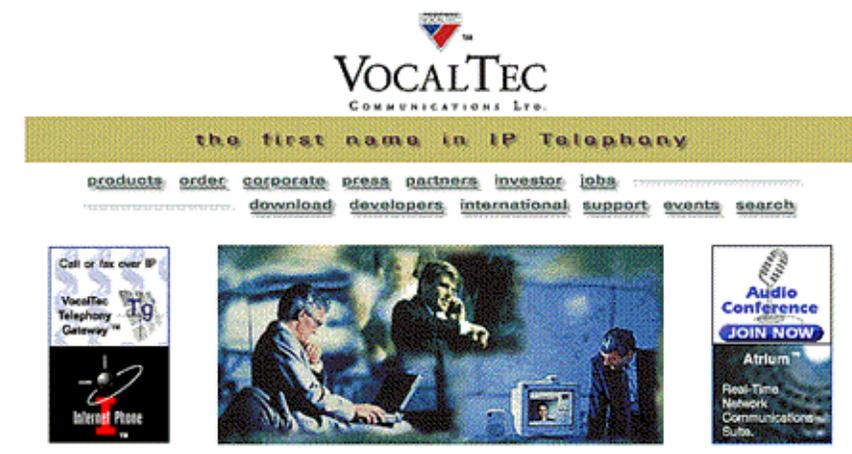
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Since publication of the "The Internet-Repeater Connection" in this column in the December, 1997 QST, I've received numerous inquiries asking how to go about talking to other amateurs and accessing amateur repeaters on the Internet. Due to space limitations for the original article, it wasn't possible to include as much information as I would have preferred. Let's take another crack at this popular topic and see how much more ground we can cover. Specifically, what sort of software do you need and where can you find it?

IPHONE

One of the keys to passing audio through the Internet for ham applications is a bit of software known as *IPHONE* by Vocaltec. Although there are other "phone" software products available, amateurs seem to favor *IPHONE*, especially for repeater use. The product is available for a one-week free trial and can then be ordered on-line (at <http://www.vocaltec.com>) or purchased over the counter.

As you experiment with *IPHONE* you'll discover the various *voice chat rooms*. Some of the more favored amateur rooms are "private," but for the most part this only means that you need to know the *exact* room title to be able to enter it. These rooms may not necessarily appear in the general listing of available voice chat rooms. The author will be happy to provide you with these titles upon request. Because the titles may change, they are not listed here. Use these chat rooms to become familiar with the operation of your *IPHONE* software before you attempt to access a repeater.



IPHONE is available on a trial basis from Vocaltec's site on the Web at <http://www.vocaltec.com>.

Accessing A Repeater Via The Internet

When you're ready to attempt repeater operation from the Internet, you'll need one more piece of software called *Repeater Link*. Like *IPHONE*, *Repeater Link* can be downloaded on the Web. A "contribution" is expected if the shareware is used for more than 30 days. You can download it at <http://mebcs.ez1.com/rptrlink/dlrptrik.html>.

Repeater Link works in conjunction with *IPHONE* and allows the repeater systems you are trying to access to run your call through their call sign databases. If there is a match, you'll be granted access. If not, your link will be disconnected. In other words,

the systems attempt to verify that you are a licensed Amateur Radio operator.

Actually, there are several different types of *Repeater Link*-style programs specifically designed for users and repeater system operators. For basic operation into a repeater from the comfort of your computer chair, I recommend *LITE*, a *Windows 95*, 32-bit version. Since other amateurs may also be utilizing the shareware to access repeaters, it will be doubly useful if you are trying to contact them on a computer-to-computer basis.



You can download *Repeater Link* from the Web at <http://mebcs.ezl.com/rptrlink/dlrptrlk.html>.

Linking Your Club Repeater to the Internet

If you are interested in having other amateurs access your club or personal repeater via the Internet, you'll need the software we've already discussed and a hardware interface system. The purpose of the interface is to provide audio signal paths and transmitter keying between a dedicated computer and transceiver. For information on how to construct or build an interface, please see the December 1996 issue of *QST* and the article "A New Band for Your Radio" by WB2REM. Unfortunately, I'm unaware of any other articles or Internet sites that provide technical data on the construction of this interface. Also, to the best of my knowledge, none are available commercially. Perhaps there is some technically inclined amateur in your club that can design one. I would recommend that it be connected to the dedicated computer/ transceiver through patch cords to avoid defacing the equipment.

Good luck, have fun and enjoy this not-so-new technology!