

Getting Started by W2HUV

Welcome to the Remote HF Station in the GCARC clubhouse. The station consists of an ICOM IC-7300 transceiver, a 54" crank-up tower with a 12/17 meter beam, a 10/15/20 meter beam, a 40 meter beam, a common rotator and an inverted-V for 80 meters.

Remote Control Software

A software solution was selected instead of a hardware solution because outstanding free software is available from RemoteHams.com that is immensely popular. The RCForb Server is used at the Remote station (W2MMD IC-7300) and the RCForb Client is used at the Control station (your Windows laptop or PC). The server provides the interfaces needed with virtually any radio, an antenna rotator controller, relay boards, Ham Radio Deluxe, selected logging programs and custom software.

Installing RCForb Client

- 1) Go to <http://www.remotehams.com/>, read the Welcome paragraph and complete steps 1, 2* & 3.

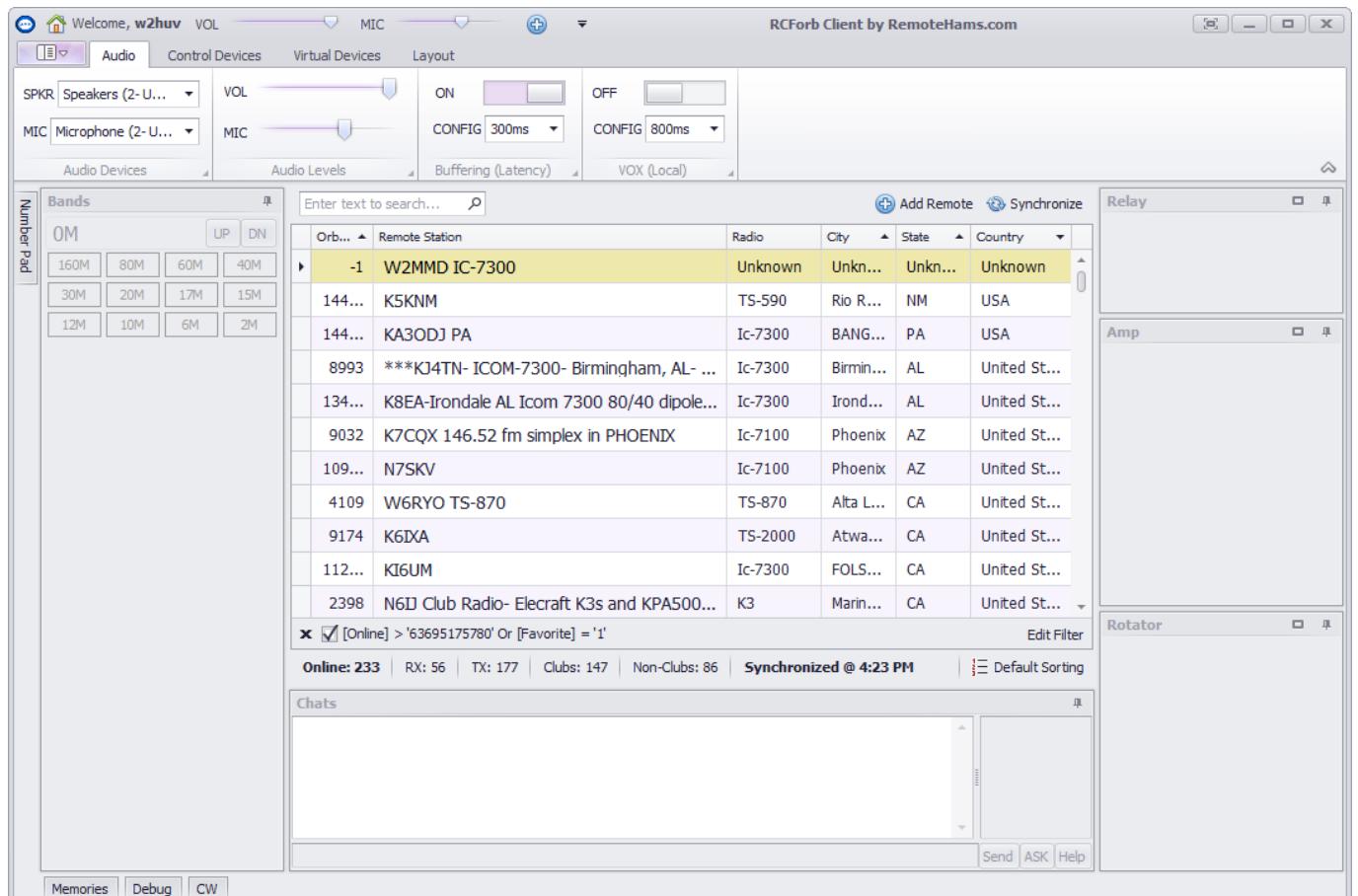
* **Don't press the Step 2 "Download" button!** Use the following link to install the latest version of the **RCForb Client v0.9 Public Alpha** instead:
http://download.remotehams.com/download.php?dir=orb&file=RCForbClientSetup_v0.9.246.exe. Be sure to check the "Virtual Serial Port Support" option when it appears.

- 2) Go to the top of the page and read and/or save the "Getting Started Guide" under "Documentation".
- 3) Open the RCForb Client. You will be asked to register. Make your "User ID" your callsign in lower case. You don't need to upload a copy of your license unless you desire to operate other stations.
- 4) The screen shot on the next page should appear less the first entry in the "lobby". The "W2MMD IC-7300" entry won't appear until you add it locally because it is not published (outsiders won't see it).
- 5) Let's go over the settings.

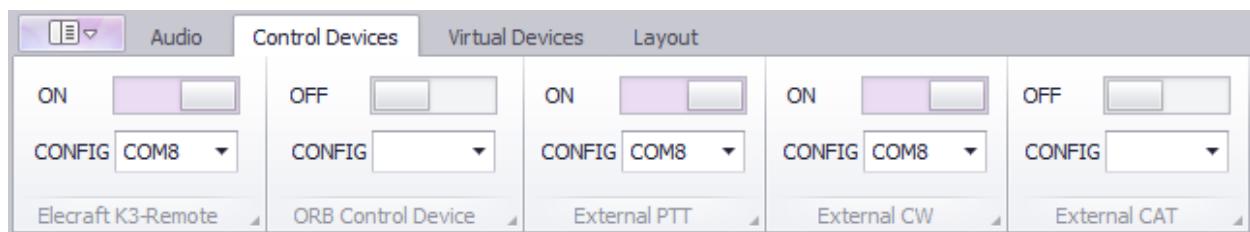
Settings

Audio: The audio settings are shown on the screen on the next page. Select the "Audio Devices" that you will be using and the desired "Audio Levels". Make sure that

“Buffering (Latency)” is on. Click the down arrow in the CONFIG box and turn on “Extra Low Latency”. Don’t worry about the “VOX (Local)” settings now.



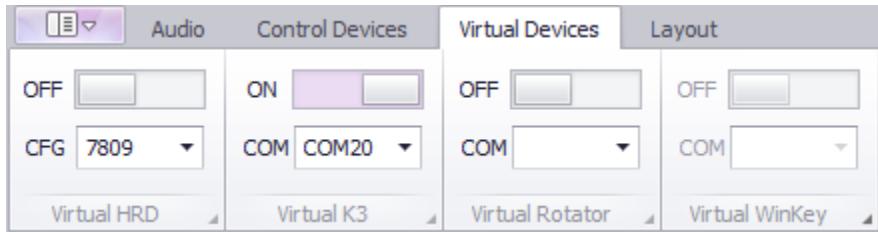
Control Devices: Select the “Control Devices” tab. The following settings will appear:



- **Elecraft K3-Remote:** This option allows you to use an Elecraft K3/0 Mini for tuning, its sound card for audio inputs and outputs and it's PTT and CW inputs. This eliminates the need to build an “External PTT / Paddle inputs” dongle. See the **Dongles** document for details. **Turn off for now.**

- ORB Control Device: This option allows you to use the ORB Control Device sound card for audio inputs and outputs and it's PTT and CW inputs. This also eliminates the need to build an “External PTT / Paddle inputs” dongle. The ORB Control Device is available at RemoteHams.com. **Turn off for now.**
- External PTT: Allows you to configure the PTT port to be used. Click the down arrow, select the port and set PTT Pin to CTS. Check “Use RTS as Power” if you are connecting a dongle. **Turn on when you are ready.**
- External CW: Allows you to configure the CW port to be used. Click the down arrow, select the port, set DIT to DCD, DAH to DSR and KEY to CTS. Check “Use RTS as Power” if you are connecting a dongle. Note that the PTT input is used for the KEY input. The RCForb Server/Client determine what to do with the input based on the mode. **Turn on when you are ready.**
- External CAT: Allows you to connect a CAT input from an external device. This is not the input used by internal software such as the N1MM Logger+.

Virtual Devices: Select the “Virtual Devices” tab. The following settings will appear:



- Virtual HRD: Allows you to connect to your HRD software. You need to select the correct version.
- Virtual K3: Allows software, such as the N1MM Logger+ to connect to a Virtual K3 for CAT control, regardless of the rig in use. It is recommended that you use COM20, since it is out of the way. **Turn on when you are ready.**
- Virtual Rotator: Not presently included.
- Virtual Winkey: Not presently included.

Layout: Select the “Layout” tab. The following settings will appear:



You may explore the Layout settings on your own.

Connecting to Other Remote Stations

You are encouraged to connect to some of the Remote Stations listed and check them out. There are quite a few IC-7300 stations, so I would check them out first. Whatever you do, if you see that someone is already signed on, don't touch the controls! Wait for the person to sign off or use the ASK button in the lower right corner of the "Chats" window to request permission to tune. You may be temporarily BANNED from the station if fail to do so.

Connecting to W2MMD IC-7300 for the First Time

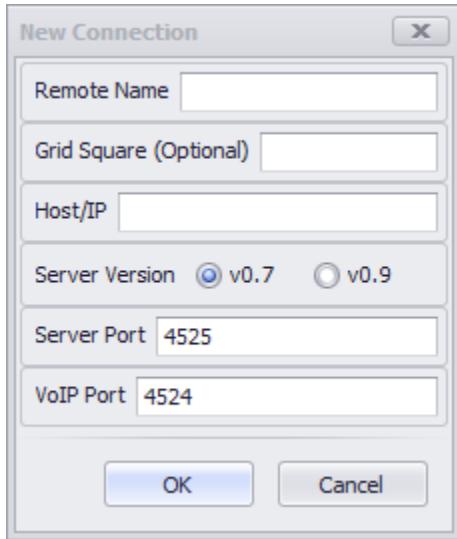


1) You must be on the Authorized User's list and obtain the Host/IP address before you may proceed. Send an email message to w2huv@arrl.net to request addition to the list and the Host/IP address.

Note: The Host/IP address is **confidential** to members in good standing of the GCARC that have been added to the Authorized User's list.

2) Go to the "Clubhouse Calendar" on the GCARC web page and see if someone has booked the station for the present time. A dark blue entry will appear if the station has been booked. Continue if the station hasn't been booked. You may book the station for yourself using the "Remote Operating" calendar if you plan to do some serious operating, such as during a contest. Other members are expected not to bother you at those times as a courtesy.

3) Open the RCForb Client. Click the blue button shown in the first screen shot at the top to add a station. The following screen will appear:

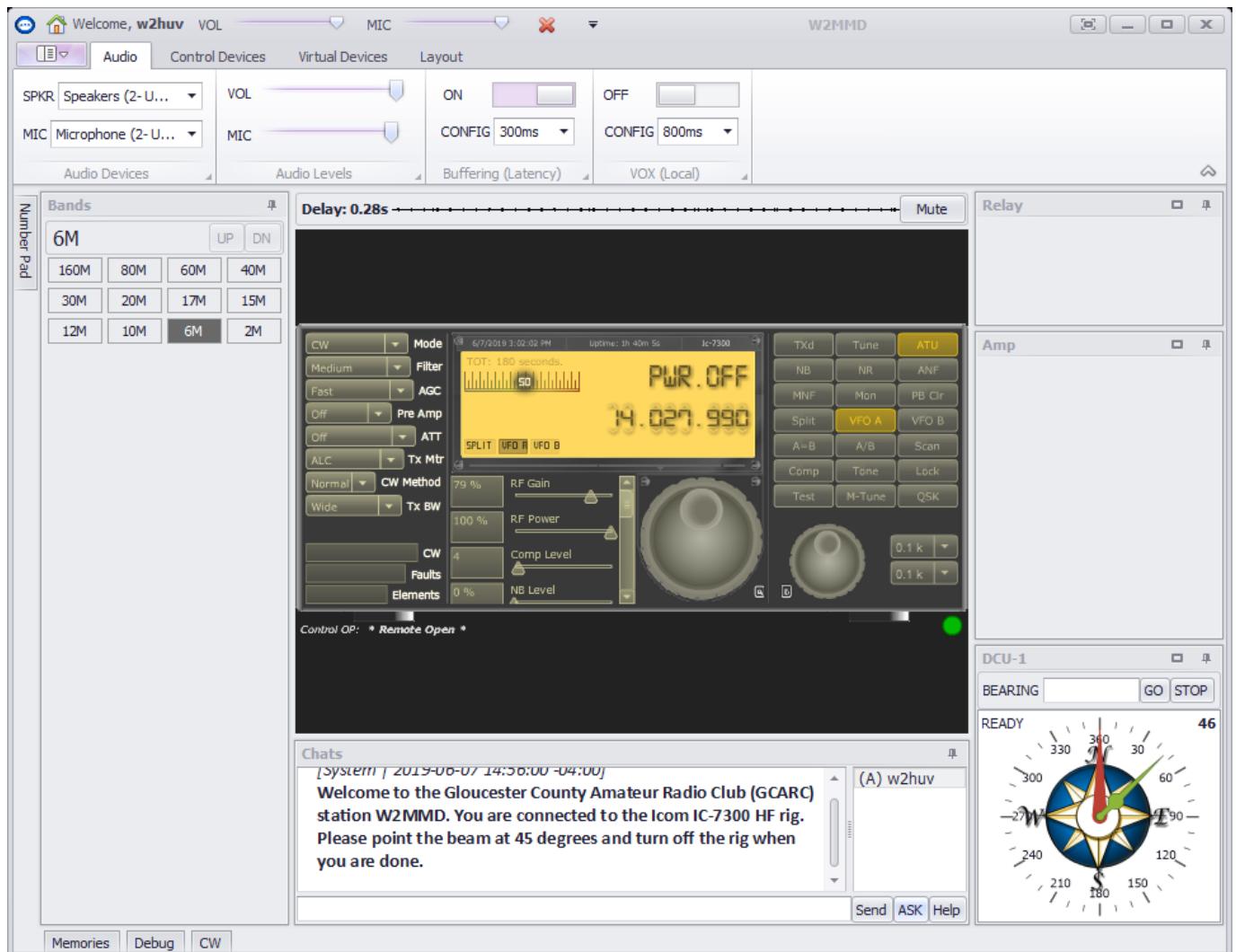


- 4) Enter "W2MMD IC-7300" or whatever you like for the Remote Name, FM29jr42 for the Grid Square, the Host/IP address and click "OK". You should be connected.
- 5) Look at the "Chats" window at the bottom of the screen that appears. Don't touch anything if a callsign is listed above yours. That person is operating the station. Use the ASK button in the lower right corner of the "Chats" window to request permission to tune. Comeback later if there is a negative or no response.



- 6) See the screen shot on the next page.
 - Note that the blue button has been replaced with a red X. Use this button to disconnect.
 - The innermost symbol in the upper right corner may be used to hide the settings.
 - Note the rotator in the lower right corner and the "Chats" comment to the left.
 - You may use the "Bands" buttons to change the band or the "Number Pad" to directly enter the desired frequency.

- Note the Memory, Debug and CW tabs in the lower left corner. The Memory tab allows you to name, store and recall desired frequencies. The CW tab allows you to enter keyboard CW and save desired macros.



7) If the rig is off as shown above, hover your mouse pointer over the radio keyboard to reveal the Stop, PWR, and Data buttons in the normally hidden eighth row. Click the PWR button. The rig should come on.

8) A few more comments are in order:

- There are three types of controls, left to right, in addition to the two frequency knobs: selectors, sliders and pushbuttons. Take some time to familiarize yourself with the controls.
- Antenna selection and tuning is automatic. The RCForb server is configured to allow you to only listen to and transmit on bands with antennas, currently: 80/75, 40, 20, 17, 12 and 10.

- The RCForb server is configured to restrict transmit frequency privileges in accordance with the License_Class indicated in the Club Roster List.

9) If you wish to check out phone operation at this point:

1. Connect the microphone or headset with microphone that you plan to use to your PC and select the devices in the SPKR and MIC boxes above and to the left of the radio. You will need a USB sound card for a standard headset/microphone. See the **Dongles** topic for a recommendation.
2. Select the desired band/frequency.
3. Set controls as follows: Mode, USB or LSB as appropriate; Filter, Medium; AGC, Slow; Pre Amp, Off; ATT, Off; RF Gain, 80-100 %; RF Power, 100 %; Comp Level. 23 %.
4. Click TXd to transmit, talk into your microphone and use the client “MIC” control to set the ALC level in the range 30-50%. ALC is the initial setting of TxMtr selector on the left. Click TXd again to stop transmitting. You may use the space bar for PTT after you click TXd the first time.

10) Set the antenna at 45 degrees, click the PWR button to turn off the radio, click the red X to disconnect and close the RCForb Client when you are done.

The next time that you open the RCForb Client, the station that you added should appear at the top of the lobby list.

Please address all questions, comments and issues to w2huv@arrl.net.