

THE KENWOOD R-2000

A Short Examination

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The Kenwood R-2000 is a continuous coverage digital readout communications receiver offering reception of AM, FM, SSB, and CW signals. Like most communications receivers, the R-2000 has its share of "bells and whistles" however it is fairly simple to operate while providing many of the features the DXer is looking for. The R-2000 sells for about \$700 US, and is within the limits of most serious DXers.

The R-2000 can be tuned from any of the frequencies set in its 10 memories. The R-2000 has 3 tuning speeds; fast in 5 khz steps, medium in 500 hz steps, and slow in 50 hz steps. You can also change frequency in 1 mhz steps using the up and down "Band" switches. When the "Band" switches are held down, the frequency increases or decreases (depending which is pressed) continuously in 1 mhz steps. A frequency lock is also provided.

The R-2000 is capable of receiving 5 different transmission modes. Shortwave broadcast DXers will use the AM and SSB modes most often. Because AM selectivity isn't narrow enough for many DX situations, SSB will become the favored DX mode. If the interference is on the high side, use LSB, and if its on the low side, use USB. There are very few situations where this method of DXing won't separate two nearby stations. Unfortunately, when using SSB, the audio quality is somewhat degraded, especially during music. This is only a minor nuisance though, and something the DXer should be able to live with.

Besides the clock/timer and memories, other features include AF Gain, Tone, Squelch, RF Attenuator, AGC, Noise Blanker, and a switch to dim the digital readout. With congested conditions on the 49 meterband, the RF Attenuator will help reduce unwanted signals. The Squelch Control, AGC, Noise Blanker, and dimmer switch are rarely used. The AGC response time is too slow, and as a result is left in the fast position. The owners manual mentions that the Noise Blanker will reduce "pulsating ignition type noise", however personal experience has found it doesn't do the job. The only time when one needs the dimmer in the bright position is when the receiver is in direct Sunlight, otherwise it can be left in the soft position.

As for the memories, both the frequency and mode is stored. Entering a frequency/mode in memory can be done in 2 ways; either by depressing the selected memory channel then depressing the "Memory In" button, or by selecting the desired memory channel then depressing the "Auto Memory" button twice. "Memory Scan" scans the memory channels at 1.5 second intervals. "Program Scan" scans the frequency range between the frequencies set in memory channels 9 and 0 at a rate dependant on the tuning speed setting. Depressing the "Hold" button stops the scanning process. Depressing the "Hold" button a second time releases the hold and scanning continues. Scan doesn't stop at a signal unless one is willing to get inside the radio and make a simple modification outlined in the owners manual.

The R-2000 has two 24-hour clocks which can be set to UTC or any time zone desired. Since the Timer uses Clock 1, its best to set at UTC. The Timer turns the radio on and off and allows unattended recording of the last frequency/mode displayed. Absent DXing requires the use of two separate patch cords to connect the radio to a tape recorder. One cord connects the "record output" jack on the front of the R-2000 to the "audio in" or "auxiliary" jack on a tape recorder. The other cord connects the 8 pin jack located in the back of the R-2000 to the remote jack on a tape recorder. Kenwood was kind enough to include the special 8 pin plug needed for the receiver side of the remote patch cord. Only pins 1 and 4 are used to connect (solder) the patch cord to the 8 pin plug. The other pins are used in connecting a transmitter to the R-2000.

Kenwood offers several accessories for the R-2000. One can tune the VHF portion of the spectrum (118-174 mhz) with the VC-10 VHF converter. The converter fits conveniently inside the back of the receiver. If you like DXpeditions where AC power isn't available, the DCK-1 12 volt DC power cable kit will help. Like most recently manufactured receivers, the R-2000 can connect easily to a car battery with the use of the cable kit. A 500 hz filter for more selective CW reception can be obtained direct from Kenwood. Universal Amateur/Shortwave Radio Inc. in Reynoldsburg Ohio will replace the stock 6 khz wide filter with a 4 khz filter for \$39.95 when the receiver is bought. Universal also has Collins 1.9 khz

filters available for \$159.95 for improved CW and SSB selectivity. Since I haven't had any filter modifications done to my own R-2000, I don't know how the narrower selectivity will affect the overall audio quality.

●Disadvantages: As a left hander, I find the controls backward. I had difficulty operating some of the controls at first. This was only a minor inconvenience however. Another disadvantage is the poor selectivity in the AM mode. The Wide position (a 6 khz IF filter) is too wide. The Narrow position (a 2.7 khz IF filter) is adequate in most cases but the audio suffers from an annoying hiss. As a result, I personally operate the receiver exclusively in either USB or LSB. The R-2000 automatically switches internally to the 2.7 khz filter when in SSB. Use a graphic equalizer to help make the audio more understandable.

Besides entering the frequencies of your target stations in the memories, you may find it easier to enter the middle frequency of the most listened to bands. You'll then be able to move up and down the shortwave spectrum quickly. Tuning to a specific frequency with the R-2000 is only slightly slower than the key-pad tuning system. Unlike some receivers, the R-2000 doesn't move off frequency when switching between side-bands.

Overloading is a slight problem. There are a few rare occasions where one would have a problem with overloading, but the RF attenuator will easily take care of the problem.

●Advantages: Simplicity of operation. There are only a few controls that will be used regularly. This rig is not for those who like to "tweek" a dozen controls constantly. But if you're lazy and would rather listen than fiddle, you'll enjoy the R-2000. Most receivers manufactured today are portable and the R-2000 is no exception. One can quickly and easily disconnect the receiver from the "shack" and take it on vacation. Weighing only 12 lbs, it doesn't take a fork-lift to move it. Price is another advantage. For those who don't want to spend \$1000+ for a receiver, you'll want to consider the R-2000. After nearly 4 years of operation, I haven't had any troubles with mine.

●Final Word: Despite the R-2000's slight disadvantages, its definately a serious DX rig. Personal experience has shown that one can hear just about any rare DX station with the R-2000 that can be heard on any other receiver.



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