

Monday, April 07, 2008

MY RADIOS

All of these radios were decided upon after much research.

Note – I prefer **analog tuning versus **digital tuning** – for stations that are difficult to get, analog gives you more control. Also, for FM transmitter use, again, you have more control.**

Tivoli Model One – WWW.TIVOLIAUDIO.COM – PHONE – 877-297-9479 – standard price as of 2008 about \$120 – Amazon, Tweeter, J & R, etc.

Only mono, but special audio system to sound very nice
Special circuit to pickup stations better
Very compact
Same model has slightly different versions depending on years they were built – I have 6 of them around the house and several are different from each other
FM and AM antenna connectors
Many other nice features
Very nice wooden cabinet – different colors / woods
Other models have many other features

Analog tuning

Overall best for me

Sangean WR-1 – FM & AM antenna connectors, - can pick up some stations other radios do not – mono sound is fine – compact – other nice features – from J & R??? about \$150??? – wood cabinet –

Analog tuning

Boston Acoustics Receptor Radio – WWW.BOSTONACOUSTICS.COM - Phone – 978-

538-5000 ??? - memory preset stations, alarm & clock [backup batteries] – may pick up some stations sometimes when other radios do not -

Radiosophy HD 100 – **high definition radio – WWW.RADIOSOPHY.COM – Phone – 877-443-7234 or 605-217-4100 - about \$120 – cheapest at the time – others well over \$200 – good reviews – new company – first HD radio was not very good – this one is excellent – even get some AM stations could not get on other**

radios – stereo – 2 speakers – many other nice features – well thought out – clock, alarm – external AM antenna – attached telescoping FM antenna can be unscrewed to reveal coaxial cable connection for external FM antenna

I have 2 of them in different areas of our home & they get different reception

They are right for me.

The big advantage is being able to get more radio programs on the HD portion of the regular station – these HD portions can give very different programming compared to the main station – sound is fine – I am not big into stereo, since where I do my work the rooms are not setup for the best stereo sound – however, HD radio is supposed to give better sound besides its other advantages.

We are on a small hill that faces Philadelphia, Pa so we can get WRTI and WHYY + some other very distant stations depending on many factors

WRTI and WHYY offer classical music at night that is different from their day schedules and much more creative in many ways. Their day programs are a different format in many ways.

Digital tuning

GE Superadio III FM / AM – supposedly the best for AM reception according to many reviews – supposedly a legend and has a “cult” following that even does modifications for improvement in performance – a big disappointment in our area for me – gives just adequate performance on both AM and FM – used only as a spare now -

Amazon 2005 was only about \$36 – so not much was invested

Several other minor radios are just used as spares and when doing messy work inside and outside.

ANTENNA

Basically, **Radio Shack TV antennas about \$50 to \$75 each**. Now I believe you can only get them delivered by ordering them from their website.

Two are mounted inside the attic at right angles and connected to the FM radios by coaxial cable. In the attic rather than outside and / or on the roof installation is easier and minimizes lightning issues.

Another very good antenna for about \$100 is an old standard **Magnum Dynalab ST-2 Vertical, Omnidirectional ½ wave FM antenna**. There are a variety of sources for this

popular and best seller antenna. It is a very simple design – a long thin whip type antenna about 3 feet long with a 2” x 4” cylinder containing a coil I believe at the base.

The one page 2 sides of directions are very helpful an practical.

In addition, I have a **Terk** antenna and a **Radio Shack FM antenna** in the attic. They sometimes pick up some stations the other antenna do not.

These are all connected by coaxial cable to **Radio Shack switch boxes with 3 press in switches**.

The 2 Radio Shack TV antenna at right angles to each other are connected to the **A** and **B** switches separately. The Terk and Radio Shack FM antenna are connected together and then to the third C switch.

Thus, depending on the weather and many other conditions probably, I can select any of these 3 switches and antenna to determine which is best for a particular radio station that I would like to listen to at that particular time.

I must say that there is a great deal of variation with the weather and probably many other factors, but not necessarily predictably.

In addition, there are some electronic noise issues that develop that are not predictable. Our area is rural but growing rapidly.

You just have to experiment with your own particular situation. But hopefully this will give you some ideas to try.

I did experiment with many other types of antenna and “boosters,” but in my particular situation, they were not very useful on a predictable basis.

Also, it depends on **your lifestyle**. I do not watch TV very much unless there is something special on, usually PBS. I like to read while I am eating a meal or just relazing and radio seems best for me. In addition, I work on the computer a lot and around the house inside and out. Therefore, again, radio is best for me. It keeps me company and keeps me informed about what is going on in the world, especially in case there are any emergencies, especially the weather.

From other downloads on this website, you can see some of the listings of the shows that I like to listen too and some of our local radio stations that I can get in our area.

RADIO RECEPTION ISSUES

Again, you will have to experiment about this. The time involved can be very worthwhile, since once you have determined the best overall reception, for a particular radio / antenna setup, you can then take advantage of it for the long term, until conditions change, naturally.

WWW.ABC.NET.AU/RECEPTION/RADIO/COMMON.HTM - seems to be a very good site for some information. Also, WWW.BBC.CO.UK/RECEPTION.

You may also email your local radio stations, especially those that are involved with classical music and NPR. They are usually very interested in how they are being received and have some very helpful information.

WRTI now out of Temple University in Philadelphia, PA is particularly good at this. They even have a dedicated person to answer your email and give you some advice.

With the advances of **cable, internet, high definition and satellite radio**, some of these reception issues may not be as important as in the past.

However, we live in a very rural area and DSL is still not available. Perhaps, by the end of the year some have said.

Internet radio with our computer setup and dial up internet access is not very good – sporadic delays, interruptions of reception, poor quality, etc. Also, some internet radio stations have commercials, which for many of us spoiled by those stations that only have some short commercial type announcements, it can be very annoying.

FM TRANSMITTERS

In another section of this website there is information on an FM transmitter for only about **\$20** that I have found to be very good. Some are **not** for a variety of reasons, even though the cost may be up to \$100 each and are very popular.

These transmitters very simply allow you to broadcast FM and AM programs throughout your house and even outside to a certain extent.

So if you have a particular radio connected to a particular antenna setup that picks up a particular program you like, you can broadcast it inside and outside so that no matter where you are working and moving, you can continuously hear it on another radio in that particular area you are in. You could even carry a portable radio with you as you move about and receive the program.

Basically, you plug the device [only about 1" by 2" by 0.5" thick – uses 2 rechargeable AAA batteries] into one of the outputs on your radio. You set the FM transmitter to an area on the radio dial that has no radio station playing or a very weak one. Your radio that this FM transmitter is connected to and the station you are presently listening to on this radio are now broadcast to other radios in your home that are tuned to this area on the radio dial that has no station broadcasting or only a very weak signal. So you can listen to the program that is on the radio with the FM transmitter connected to it on these other radios throughout the house and even outside to a certain extent.

Obviously, the particular situation you have in your home or work area will determine how far you can broadcast. However, I have found that with just this particular inexpensive \$20 FM transmitter, I can get about 75 to 100 feet of range.

I have mounted these FM transmitters as high as I can in each room using Velcro fasteners. Radio Shack leads can extend the length between the FM transmitter and the radio. Such leads are also useful in connecting and disconnecting the FM transmitter to the radio, without having to go to the back of the radio, depending on what output option on the radio you have selected. Some require that there be no plug in certain output options or the sound will not be heard.

Each radio has an FM transmitter that can be connected to it so that whatever radio is receiving the particular program I want to listen too, it can be easily connected to the radio and broadcast throughout the house.

Radio Shack "Y" adapters connected to such outputs allow the FM transmitter to be connected and another speaker system also, if that is desirable.

The FM transmitters I like the best are those that are **analog** and **not digital**. With analog, you can "**fine tune**" the FM transmitter to a particular area of the dial on your radio that is not being used or has a very weak station broadcasting. Likewise, if your radio is **analog**, you can "**fine tune**" your radio for the best reception. **Digital** just keys into a particular station number and you cannot fine adjust it.

The **Tivoli radio** even has an **LED in the center of the radio that brightens or dims** depending on the strength of the reception you are getting on a particular station.

In our rural area and for the stations I particularly like, we are on the "fringe areas" so reception can vary depending on many factors. Thus, the more control you have, the better the chances you have of getting the stations you want with decent reception.