

ICF-7600D Review

I have been using a Sony ICF-7600D (aka ICF-2002) for quite a while now, and thought I'd say a few things about it. I originally purchased the radio from Executive Photo for \$139. It was somewhat of an impulse buy on my part, based mostly on the good deal Executive Photo was offering. In addition, I was in the market for a good receiver which I could take with me when I traveled (I am doing more of that now!). Before taking the plunge, I read the reviews in the WRTH and "Receiver - Chance or Choice". They were fairly favorable in the areas that I was concerned with. In addition, I had the opportunity to test other 7600 series sets, and I had been impressed. So, I decided to take a chance.

This is an all digital set, and is similar more to the ICF-2001 than the other sets in the 7600 series. In fact, the only real similarity to the other 7600 sets is the size (7 3/8 x 4 3/4 x 1 5/16 inches). Frequency coverage is 153-30000 khz AM, 76-108 Mhz FM. The 7600D has a larger FM band than its US counterpart, the 2002 (which starts at 87.6 Mhz). There are an impressive number of push buttons, switches and jacks that provide almost all the versatility a DXer would need.

There are four different ways to tune the set; 1) the frequency can be entered on the keyboard 2) select one of the 10 memory channels that can be programmed to any frequency AM or FM (easiest) 3) use the up and down buttons to increment or decrement the frequency (3 khz steps for LW, 10 or 9 khz steps on BCB, 5 khz steps on SW and 100 khz steps on FM) 4) use the scan function to search for strong signals, which halts for 1.5 seconds if it finds one, then continues to scan. The up/down buttons also allow the user to increment the radio up/down a band at a time (it is programmed for all the major SW bands, and AM/FM and LW). To make up for the discrete increments in tuning, Sony has provided a calibrated knob for fine tuning, +/- 5 khz. This allows complete, continuous tuning over the AM range of the radio (fine tuning doesn't appear to work on FM). In addition, there is a BFO switch, a two position RF gain switch, and a two position audio filter switch (news/music). It has jacks for headphones, recorder and an external antenna.

It also has a digital alarm clock with a 65 minute sleep function. This means I'll never have to wake up to the beep-beep of my alarm clock again!

There are no choices for selectivity, but the stock filter is 3.6 khz wide, and a pretty good performer, except next to strong locals.

One of the places where this radio has problems is in the RF section. Even a modest longwire will improve SW reception over the whip. AM and FM locals do well with the whip and internal ferrite rod. For AM DX, an external loop should be used, and with a 'shotgun' antenna near by, the radio becomes quite good. The external antenna input seems to disconnect all internal antennas, both the whip and ferrite rod, thus allowing an excellent means for evaluating antennas without the worry of interference from internal antennas. However, examination of the schematic indicated only the whip is disconnected. So why does the signal level drop on broadcast band when a dummy plug is put in the external antenna jack?

Another big drawback is that there is no "S" meter of any kind, only a single LED. This makes it extremely difficult to use any peaking techniques for loops and tuners. I usually turn on the BFO, detune slightly, then reduce the RF gain until the tone is barely audible, then peak my antenna. This technique usually does not work here, as the RF gain switch does not attenuate the input enough in most cases. It is thus difficult to work on BCB with a loop, as it is necessary to use "ear" techniques for peaking and nulling.

In summary, I have enjoyed the ICF-7600D on trips and even as a convenient bed side set. It can easily be tuned in the dark, and with the memories set up at convenient points in the BCB, I can even DX in the dark!

Above
review by
Phil Bytheway
in PNBCDCDXC