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Subject	Remote Controlled Stations		
Society	IRTS	Country:	Ireland
Committee:	C4	Paper number:	SC11_C4_12
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Introduction:

Worldwide access to remote-controlled stations, via internet gateways, is now commonplace, being facilitated by the ready availability of software, and of integrated interfaces in modern rigs. Such operation is often unregulated and, in particular, may be unlicensed when the remote link crosses national boundaries.

Background:

In the past, many radio amateurs experimented with remote control, over their personal communications links, whether as an end in itself, or because of restrictive covenants or other difficulties in operating from home.

Now, with the near-universal availability of domestic high-speed internet connectivity, many amateur radio operators use remote control just because they can, or to gain a competitive advantage while DXing or contesting.

Key Points and Proposal:

By definition, remote control means that a remote operator controls a station. In these circumstances, local control does not exist even when the licensee attends the station. Remote control may be legitimate, under national regulations, when both the station and the remote-control point are located in the same country and/or administration. However, there may nevertheless be issues with regard to regional identification when the remote and station locations are in different DXCC countries (for example GM and G) or in different areas (VE1 and VE7) which may affect other operators' understanding of the true nature of the contact.

Amateur Radio claims to be a self-regulatory activity and so should look critically at any matter that is not defined by national or international licensing regulations. The transnational remote control of amateur stations would seem to fall into this category as, so far as can be established, this would not seem to be covered by existing regulatory mechanisms.

CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01 relates only to countries that have adopted the Recommendation. Licences issued under it, as the Recommendation explicitly states, make it possible for radio amateurs from a CEPT country to operate during short visits in other CEPT countries without obtaining individual temporary licences from the visited CEPT country. It is clear that a CEPT licence only relates to visits to other countries and that the CEPT format call sign may only be used in the course of such visits. By definition, it does not cover remote control of an amateur station in

one CEPT country where the operator is located in a different CEPT country or in a non-CEPT country, which has adopted Recommendation T/R 61-01 such as the United States.

Some national regulations do not allow transnational remote control of amateur stations. In Ireland and the United Kingdom (UK), for example, the relevant regulations require that an amateur station not being operated by the licensee must be operated under the direct supervision of the licensee. In the Irish regulations, there is provision for automatic stations relating to various types of repeaters as well as beacons and internet gateways. There is, however, no specific provision for remote-control operation. The UK regulations make provision for unattended and remote control operation. However, it is explicitly stated that the Licensee is not permitted to install "Radio Equipment capable of Remote Control Operation for general unsupervised use by other Amateurs."

It is clear that in Ireland and the UK it would not be permissible to set up an amateur station to be remotely controlled by an amateur located in another country. Indeed, it is difficult to see how any Radio Regulatory Authority would be satisfied to allow an amateur station within its jurisdiction to be operated remotely by an amateur located in a different jurisdiction and to whom a different regulatory and legal system would apply.

Recommendations

Recommendation A. Contest organisers shall not accept entries from remote-controlled stations where the control circuit crosses regulatory borders.

Recommendation B. Call signs used in the operation of remote-controlled stations, within a single regulatory area, must reflect the prefixes identifying the country or call area of both the operator and the station (if different).

Recommendation C. The incoming Executive Committee is mandated to set up a sub-group to examine the question of transnational remote-controlled operation and to establish under what conditions such operation might, if ever, be regulated and to issue its findings in due course.