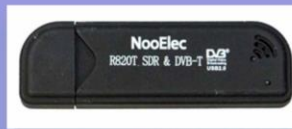


# ***A Low Cost Panadapter Interface to a SDR dongle for radios with a 50 to 70 MHz 1st IF***



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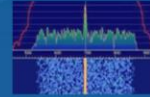


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# Topics Covered



## Design

- Find out what others have done & define design objectives
- Circuit design, component selection, PCB generation

## Prototype Construction & Testing

- Filters – simulation & verification
- Main board PCB
- Installing the PCB in a radio

## Application Software

- How do you use this thing?

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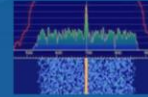
• I always start out by looking around to see what others have done and how well it fits my needs. It helps me understand how to approach the problem and avoid pitfalls if I choose to do my own design

• During design and prototyping a number of unknowns especially around filtering needed to be addressed.

• Application software is critically important and there doesn't seem to be much around about how to use an IF panadapter. Additionally the SDR applications are typically undocumented save for an occasional bit about installation

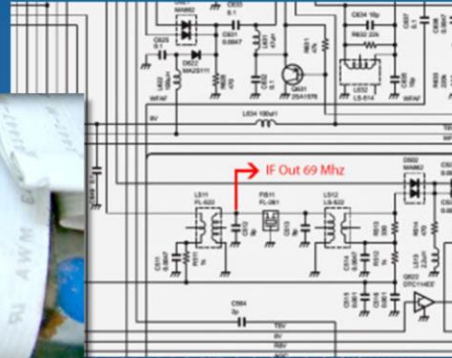
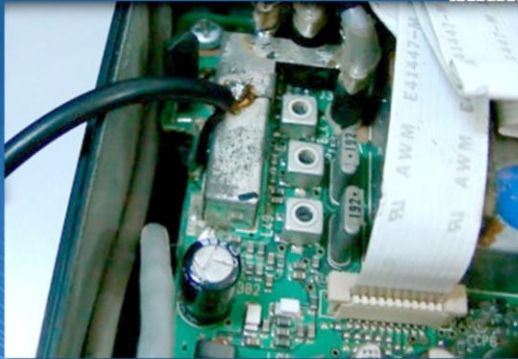


## What others have done



### Coax connection directly to the radio's 1<sup>st</sup> IF

- It works but radio performance can be compromised



PU2VLW taps the IF on  
an ICOM 706

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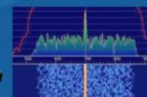
3

Direct connections work in some cases but the load imposed on the IF by a direct connection often compromises radio performance.

Intermediate frequency (IF) tap points tend to be at the input of a relatively high impedance filters input so the loading at this point from a dongle's input impedance can reduce sensitivity.

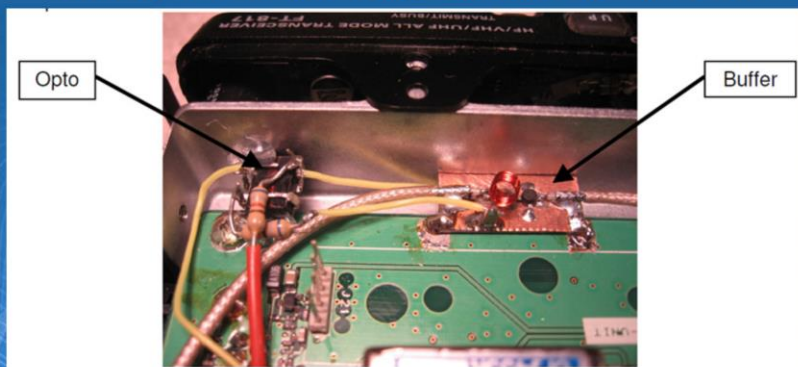


## What others have done...



### Mike Seguin N1JEZ & Don W1KEF

- Cap coupled MAR6 MMIC buffer amplifier at the 1<sup>st</sup> IF
- Opto isolator switch frn PTT line turns amplifier off during Tx
- Interface to FUNcube dongle via Mini-Circuits SBP70+ filter



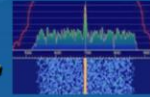
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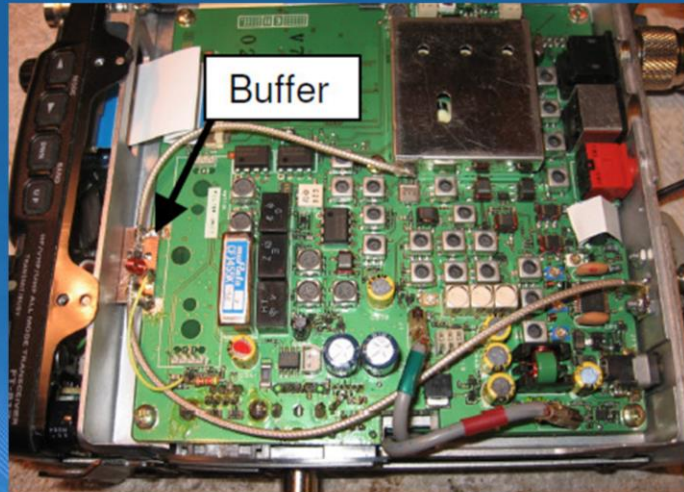
4



## What others have done...



### N1JEZ installation in FT817



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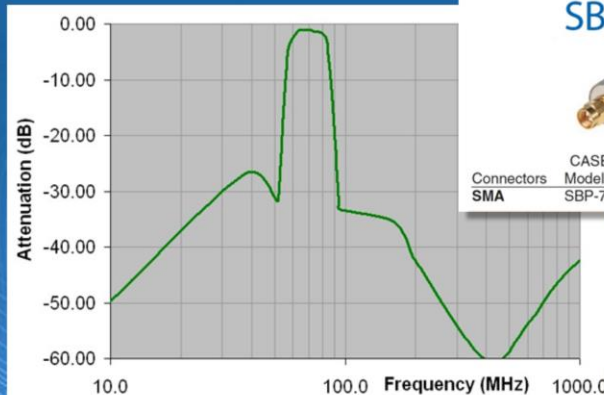
It appears the picture was take before the optical isolator switch was added



# What others have done...

## SPB70 Filter

| CENTER<br>FREQ.<br>(MHz) | PASSBAND<br>(MHz)   | 3dB<br>BANDWIDTH<br>(MHz) | STOPBANDS                   |                             |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                          | I.L. 1.5 dB<br>Max. | Typ.                      | (I. loss > 20 dB)<br>at MHz | (I. loss > 35 dB)<br>at MHz |
| 70                       | 63-77               | 58-82                     | 51 & 94                     | 6.0 & 193-1000              |



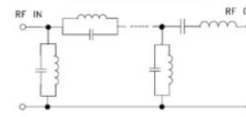
### SBP-70+



CASE STYLE: FF99

| Connectors | Model   | Price       | Qty.  |
|------------|---------|-------------|-------|
| SMA        | SBP-70+ | \$42.95 ea. | (1-9) |

#### electrical schematic



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Mini-Circuits SPB70+ filter was needed in front of the FunCube dongle to keep high level carriers present in the IF from reducing the dongle gain. More on this later

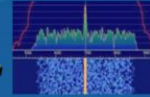
Note at 40+ dollars this filter is not cheap.

This is a very good elliptical filter design as it has just 1.1dB passband loss, steep skirts, and is quite compact.

Note how the attenuation decreases at frequencies above 500MHz.



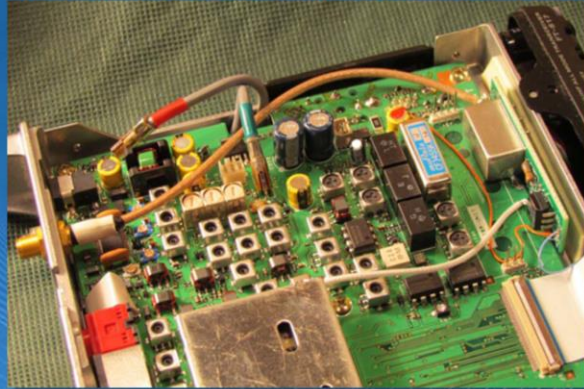
# What others have done...



**Paul Wade W1GHZ**

## **PCB for the FT-817 Panadapter**

- Creates a PCB for Mike's design using less expensive PC mounted version of the Mini-Circuits MPL-PBP70 filter



Qpt-18

Low Cost Panadapter

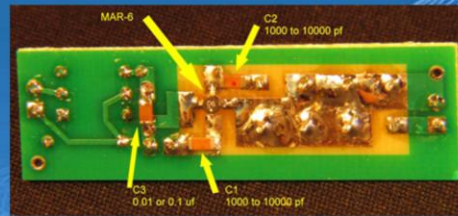
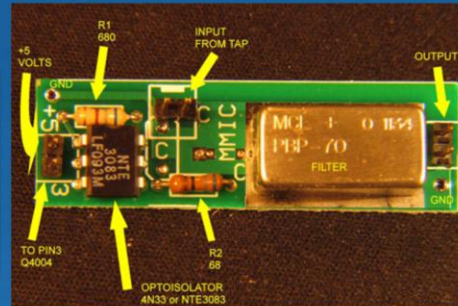
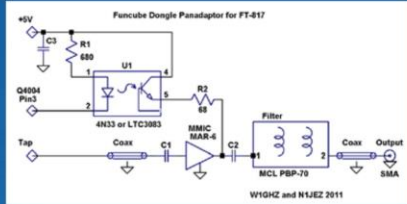
7

Paul indicates this implementation is simply Mike's circuit put on a PCB. The PCB is mounted against front bulkhead with double sided tape. Note that this solution uses space occupied by CW filter option



# What others have done...

## W1GHZ cont'd



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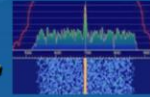
Low Cost Paradiapter

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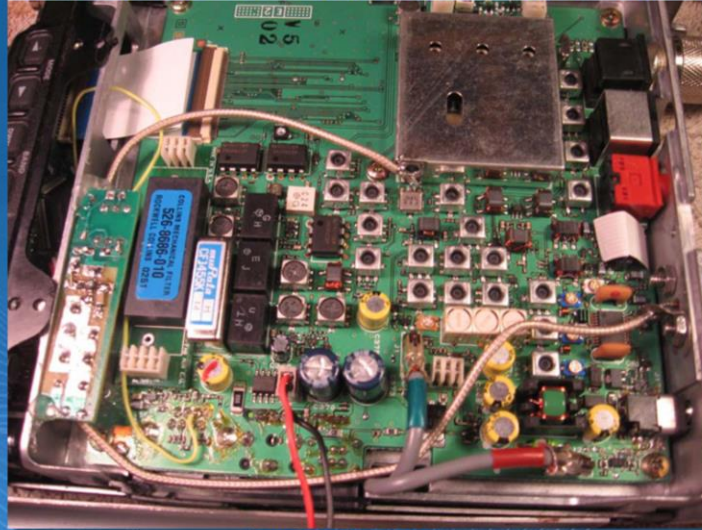
This double sided PCB solution has an optical switch and filter on one side and MMIC amplifier on the other



## What others have done...



*Mike shoe horns PCB into a unit with CW filter*



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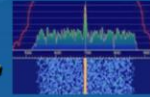
Low Cost Paradapter

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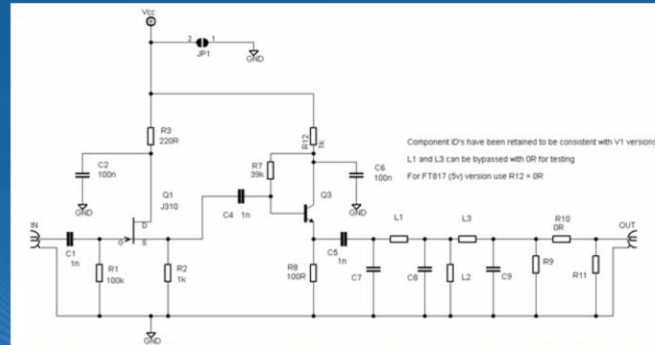
I'm not sure just how it was secured for mounting, but looks like it was glued in place to the front of the chassis.



# What others have done...



## G4HUP PAT (Panoramic Adapter Tap)



- Two voltage followers, low pass filter & attenuator
- Filter components can be chosen for IF's from 10-70MHz
- Power supply range is 5 to 13V.

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Low Cost Panadapter

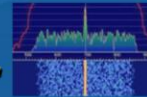
10

G4HUP's design features a buffer with two active stages, a JFET source follower for high input impedance and a bipolar transistor emitter follower capable of driving the filter. The buffers are followed by a 50 ohm low pass filter to attenuate signals above the IF.

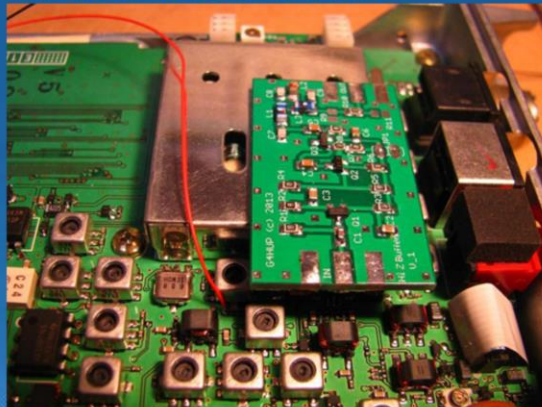
The filter circuit components can be configured for IF' s from 10 to 70 MHz. Power supply range is 5 to 13V.



## What others have done...



### G4HUP PAT in a Yaesu FT817



- PAT on the PLL shield held in place with double sided tape
- PCB layout – generous space for beginner SMT assembly

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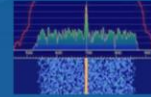
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The PCB is designed so that it can easily put together by individuals with little or no SMD soldering experience. At about 25x40mm the PCB is a bit of a challenge to tuck into smaller rigs.



# Design Objectives



## 1<sup>st</sup> IF interface design goals

- Low current consumption. Target about 5mA
- No impact on receiver sensitivity
- Small size so that it could be installed into most radios
- Versatile
  - Can be used with a variety of supply voltages from 5 to 14V
  - Usable with any radio 1<sup>st</sup> IF's in the 50-70 MHz range
- IF output must remain stable with any dongle load or open circuit
- Low cost

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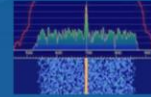
Low Cost Paradapter

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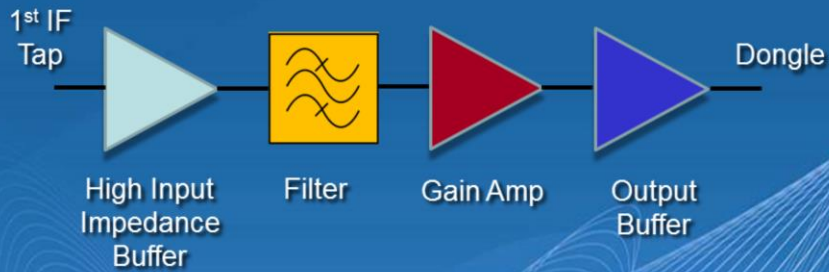
Low current consumption was a very important design parameter. I didn't want the solution to impact the battery operating time of portable rigs.



# Interface Block diagram



## Three Stage Solution



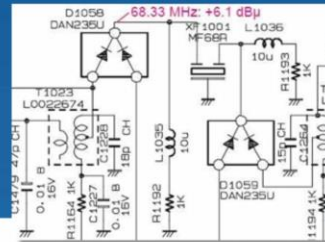
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In the following slides let's take a look at the design considerations for each section of the interface.





| 名称         | Name                               | MF40M2(2pole) | MF45U9(2pole)               | MF68Q(2pole)                |
|------------|------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 公称周波数      | Nominal Frequency                  |               | 45.000 (MHz)                | 68.330 (MHz)                |
| 通過帯域幅      | Bands domain via the web           |               | 3.0 (dB): ±15.0kHz min.     | 3.0 (dB): ±6.00kHz min.     |
| 減衰帯域幅      | Bands domain via amplitude damping |               | 15.0 (dB): ±60.0kHz max.    | 15.0 (dB): ±25.0kHz max.    |
| リップル       | Ripple                             | 1.0 max. (dB) | 1.0 max. (dB)               | 0.5 max. (dB)               |
| 挿入損失       | Insertion Loss                     | 2.5 max. (dB) | 3.0 max. (dB)               | 2.5 max. (dB)               |
| 保証減衰量      | Ensure that the amount of damping  |               | 65min. (dB) @ $f_0$ -910kHz | 65min. (dB) @ $f_0$ -910kHz |
| 入出力インピーダンス | Input & Output Impedance           |               | 1.2k(Ω)/ 0.0(pF)            | 480(Ω)/ 4.0(pF)             |

## Low Cost Panadapter

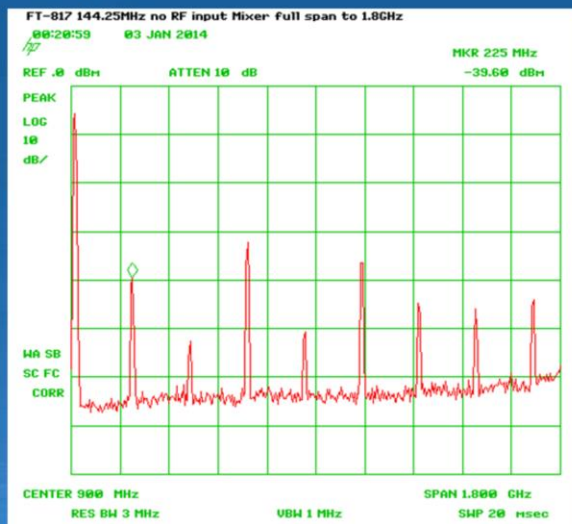
And yes those English spec translations are directly from Google translate. It give one an appreciation for the difficulty translators had with early equipment manuals from Japan.



# Filter

Why?...The 1<sup>st</sup> IF is not quiet !

This spectrum analyzer snapshot shows the FT817 IF when set to the 2 meter band with NO RF signal present.



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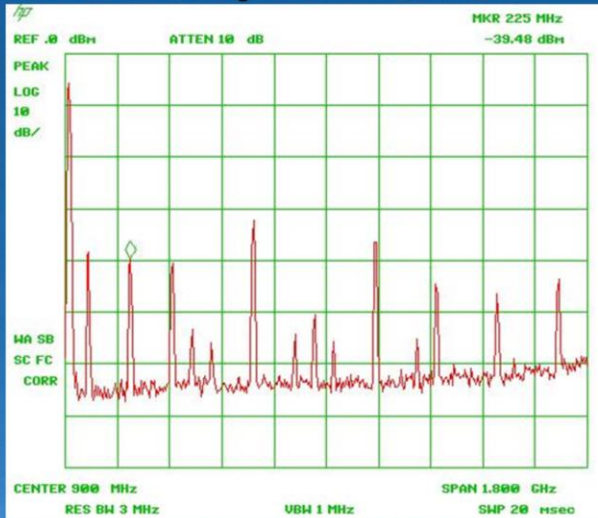
15



## Filter (cont'd)

1<sup>st</sup> IF @ 2m with -50dBm CW signal at 144.25MHz

With a moderately large input signal there are several carriers that have levels close to or higher than the intended RF signal.



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The frequency on the spectrum analyzer isn't very accurate with a wide span. The marker is actually at 144.25+IF or 212.58MHz

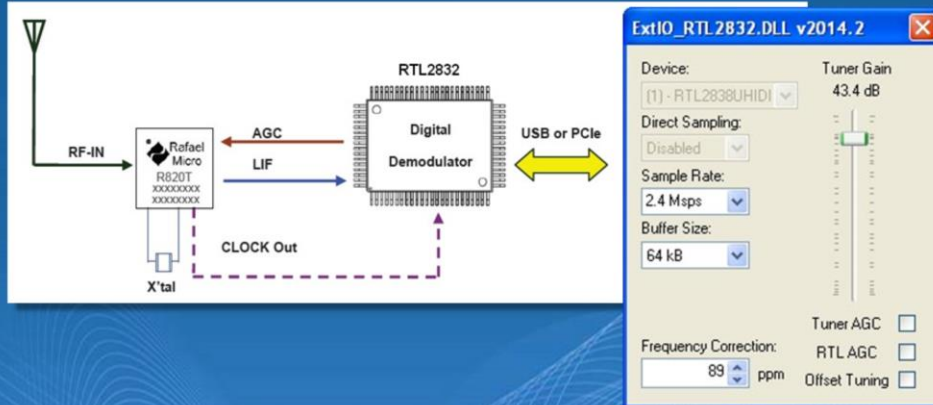
There are half a dozen signals with levels close to or higher than the 1<sup>st</sup> IF

The signal to the left of the marker is the IF of interest.



## Filter (cont'd)

Impact of large out of band signals on receive sensitivity



There are typically three AGC loops in most SDR dongles  
Two can be selectively controlled by most applications

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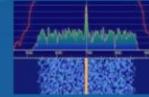
Low Cost Paradapter

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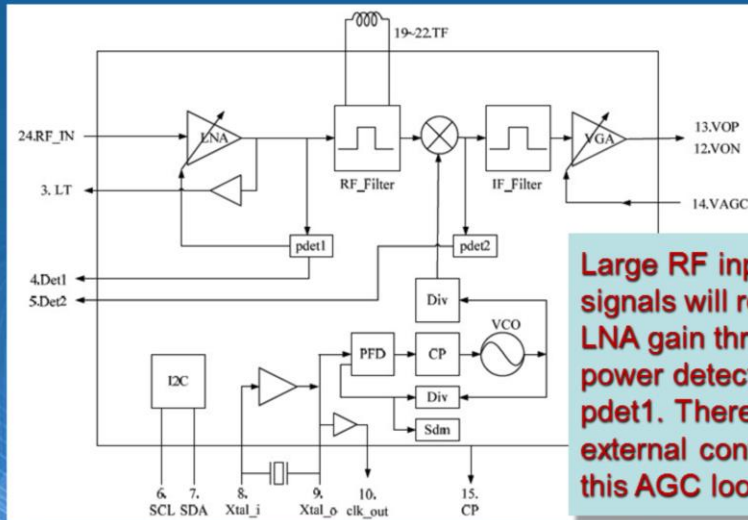
EXIO from HDSDR shows two AGC controls available, one to control gain in the RTL2832 and the second gain in the tuner in this case an Raphael R820 but the EL4000 used in many other SDR dongles is similar



## Filter (cont'd)



The third within the RT820 is autonomous AGC around the LNA



**Large RF input signals will reduce LNA gain through power detector pdet1. There is no external control for this AGC loop**

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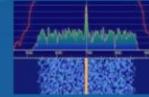
Low Cost Paradafter

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The RT820 front end tries to prevent overload from strong signals by reducing the LNA gain via power detector pdet1. This detector will respond to the sum of all signal levels in the dongle passband.

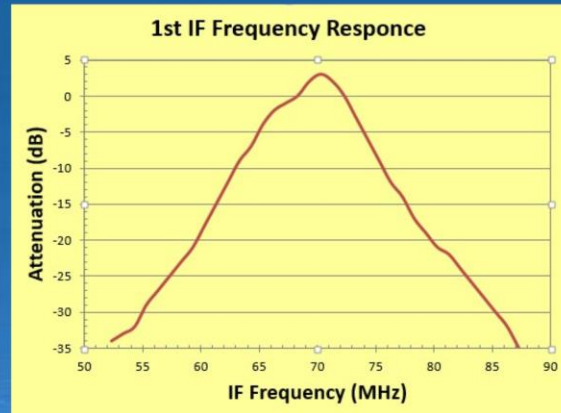


## Filter (cont'd)



***Large unwanted signals within the dongle's passband will reduce receiver sensitivity***

NooElec RT820 passband is WIDE...about 25-1750MHz. Transceiver's first IF's usually have some a filtering to the RF input. The graph to the right shows FT817 normalized IF gain



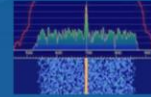
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## ***Filter (cont'd)***

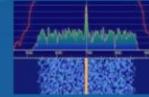


### ***Large signals within the dongle's passband will reduce overall sensitivity***

- While the transceiver offers some filtering of RF from the antenna to the 1<sup>st</sup> IF there are still a lot of strong carriers present on the radio's 1<sup>st</sup> IF.
- Large constant carriers present in the IF need to be attenuated to prevent the tuner chip LNA gain being reduced by the power detector
- Gain reductions caused by AGC power detector feedback can often be seen as a level shift in the displayed noise baseline



# Filter (cont'd)

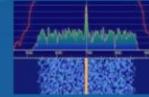


## Filter Criteria

- Small footprint
- Moderate bandwidth – around 20 MHz keeps filter order manageable in small size
- Insertion loss less than conversion gain 3 - 4dB max.
- Center frequency IF 68.33 or a design that can be easily modified to suit IF's from 50 to 70 MHz.



# How much gain?



## How much gain is needed from the panadapter interface to optimize overall performance?

- Well not a lot really
- There is conversion gain from the RF input to the 1<sup>st</sup> IF

FT817 Conversion Gain vs Frequency

| Frequency (MHz)      | 1.8 | 3.6 | 14.1 | 28.3 | 50.3 | 144  | 430  |
|----------------------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|
| Conversion Gain (dB) | 5.1 | 3.2 | 4.9  | 4.6  | 12.5 | 10.9 | 11.4 |

- And the SDR dongles are decent receivers. Measurement for 12dB SINAD...
  - FT817 at 50MHz CWNarrow using the 500Hz CW filter was -131dB
  - NooElec RT820 using SDR# at 68.33MHz CW with 300Hz bandwidth was -133dBm

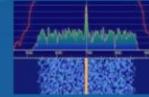
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# How much gain?

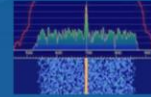


## ***Additional gain won't improve sensitivity***

- There is enough gain in the transceiver & dongle without additional gain in the panadapter interface
- Sensitivity is determined by the receiver's front end noise figure & gain. It should be noted that losses through the interface filter if greater than the conversion gain will degrade the sensitivity if the RF input signal is at the receiver's noise threshold.
- Significant interface gain will simply boost signal levels and could result in additional distortion unless the interface is extremely linear at higher signal levels.
- Enough gain to overcome filter losses (1 to 2dB) plus a small bit 6dB or so would be good objective.



# Output Driver

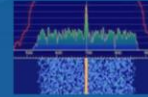


## ***What's needed at the panadapter interface output to a dongle?***

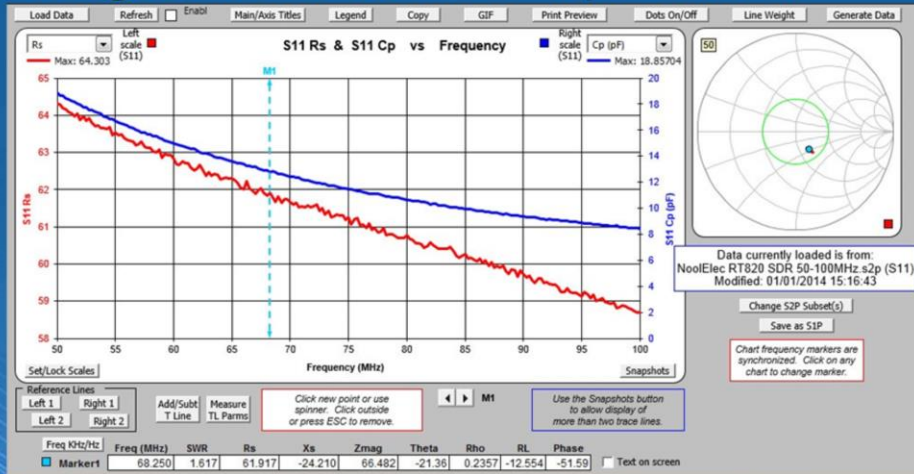
- Should be able to drive the dongle without impacting the interface's gain or filter frequency response.
- Must be stable driving an open circuit as the dongle may not always be attached
- Emitter follower buffer isolates the amplifier stage from the interface's output
- NooElec dongle impedance at the IF frequency looks quite reasonable as the next slide shows.



# NooElec RT820 Dongle



**S11 @ 68.3MHz Rs=68ohms CP=13pF VSWR=1.6**



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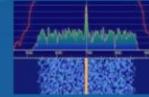
Low Cost Paradaptor

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Ok so now that we have most of the criteria for the interface let's examine the design.



# Solution Summary



## Input Buffer

- $Z_{in} > 1k \text{ Ohm}$  so it won't load the IF crystal filter
- Output drives 50 ohm  $Z_{in}$  of filter



## Filter

- Compact & fairly simple - 20 MHz or so bandwidth 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> order
- Insertion loss less than conversion gain target  $< 3 \text{ dB}$
- Center frequency design alterable for between 50 & 70 MHz

## Gain Block

- 6-10 dB gain (4 to 8 dB overall after filter loss)
- $Z_{in}$  matched to filter - 50 Ohms

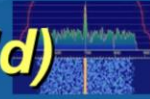
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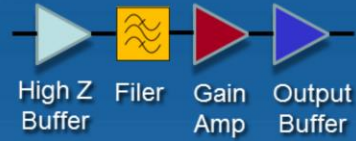


## Solution Summary (cont'd)



### Output Buffer

- Unconditionally stable working into an open circuit
- Able to drive most (all) dongles

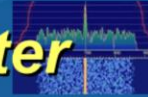


### Other Criteria

- Small PCB size to fit into most rigs
- Low current consumption – 5 mA target

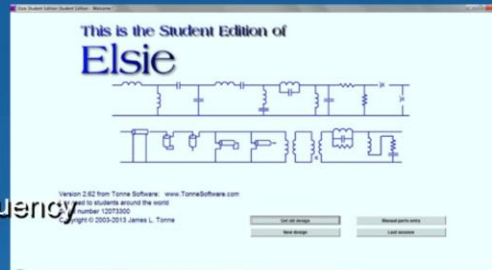


# Design...start with the filter



## Elsie Filter Design

- Explore Filter topology & family
- Explore filter properties
  - bandwidth - center frequency
  - filter order - Z in & out
- Access impact of other parameters
  - capacitor and inductor Q



## Filter Topology Chosen

- Nodal inductor coupled bandpass
  - A bit more complex but has steeper high frequency cut-off

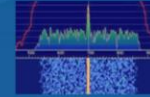
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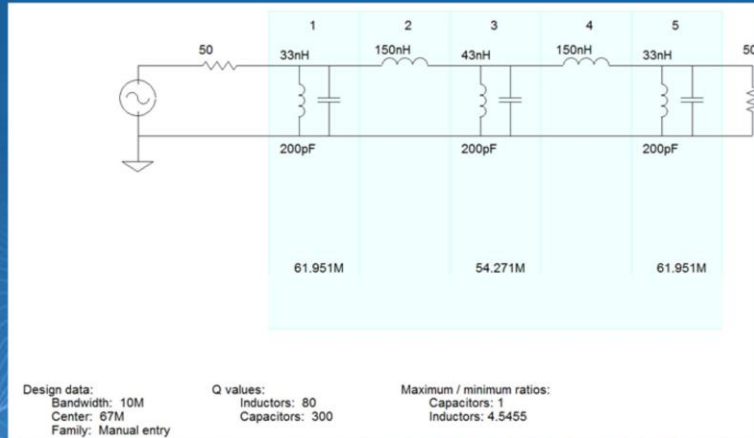
28



# Filter Quest



Choose the filter topology & key parameters



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Low Cost Paradapter

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Begin by selecting a filter topology and order. Elsie quite nicely takes your hand and guides you through the process.

Filter parameters chosen Nodal inductor coupled bandpass Chebyshev Bandwidth 10MHz Center frequency 67MHz Filter order 3 Passband Ripple .01

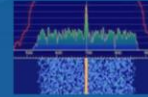
The Elsie design values are precisely calculated. They will need to be changed to values you can buy!

Note that Q values 80 for inductors 300 for caps. 80 is optimistic for commercial inductors but realizable for air core wire wound parts

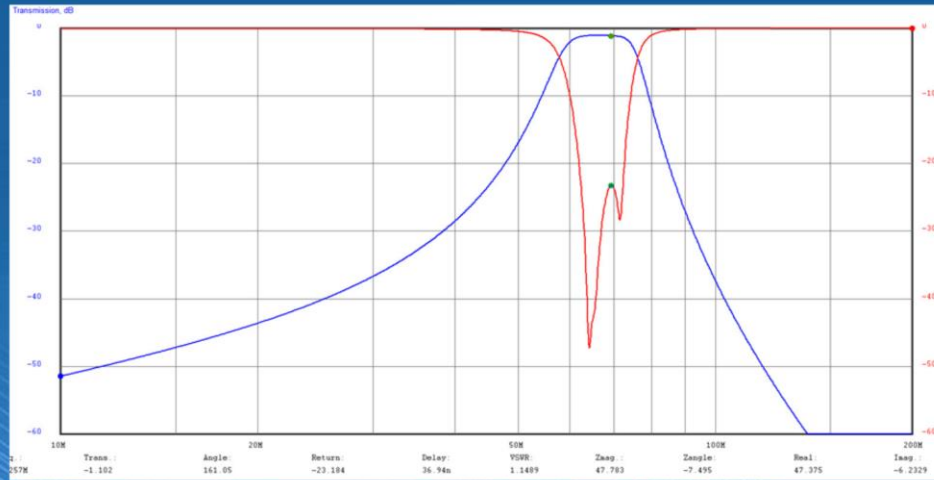
50ohm source and load impedance, makes the filter easy to test on a network analyzer



# Filter Quest



- Filter S21 & return loss - plot marker at 68.33MHz



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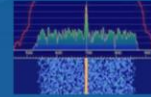
Low Cost Paradapter

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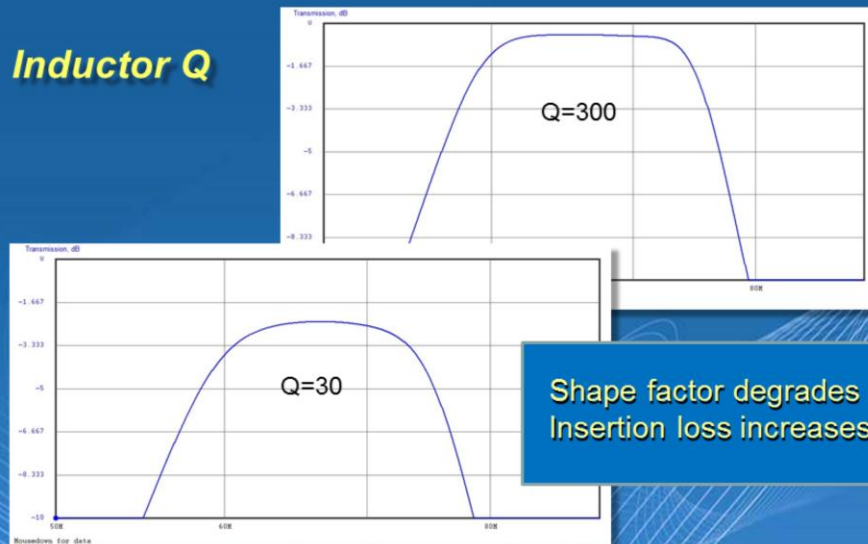
Passband loss about 1 to 1.5dB dB. 3dB bandwidth 18MHz



# Filter Quest



## Inductor Q



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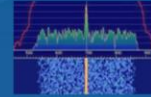
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Insertion loss increases from 1 to 2.5dB

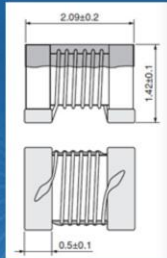


# Filter Inductor Selection

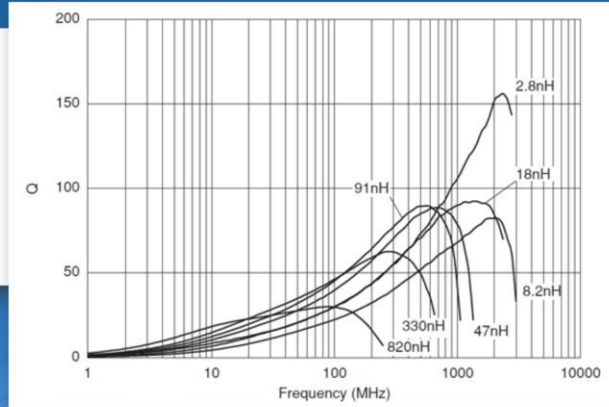


## Inductors – hard to find small parts with high Q

- Small Physical size < 3mm w & h x 6 -7 mm l
- Q > 50 preferably 70-100 at 70MHz.



Murata  
LQW2BA  
inductors



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Wire wound inductors have higher Q than MLCC

Wire wound air core below about 100nH have Q's top out around 100 most are 50-100

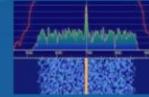
Above 100nH Q's tend to be around 30 or so

Note that Q increases with frequency to the inductors SRF then drops like a rock

Also if the device is specified and measured at a higher frequency than you're using it the Q will be lower not higher.

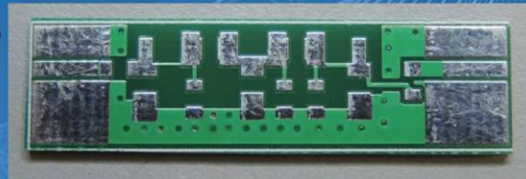


# Filter Considerations



## *The criteria that simulation won't easily tell you*

- Multiple inductor placement on PC & mutual coupling
  - Space in-line inductors a minimum of 2 diameters apart
  - Place inductors orthogonal where possible
- PCB groundplane impact on filter
  - Standard practice removes the ground plane under the filter on all cu planes – how far away from filter does it need to be?
- Capacitor Q and size (0805 vs.. 0603)
- Impact of layout parasitics
- Test PCB created to evaluate performance of the filter alone



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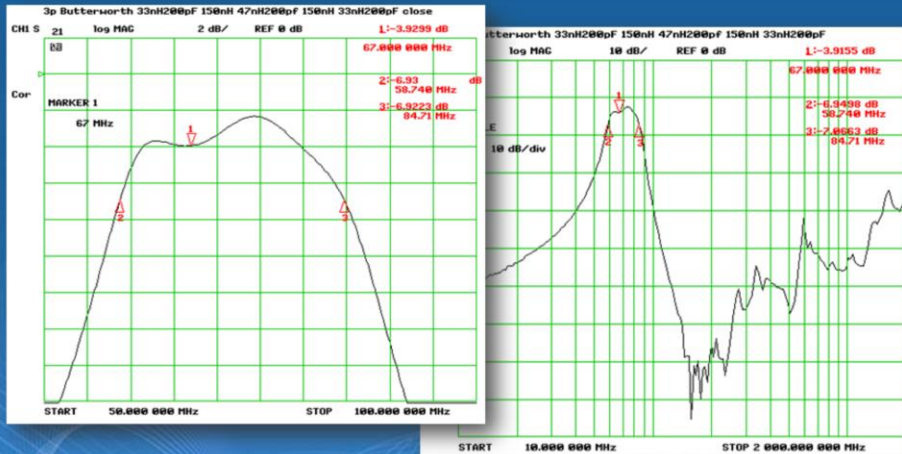
33

Since  $Z_{in}=Z_{out}=50$  ohms the filter could be easily tested on a network analyzer. There were enough unknowns that a test board was created with and without groundplane under the filter.



# First Filter Tests

Didn't work out well



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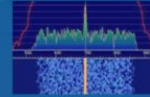
Low Cost Paradapter

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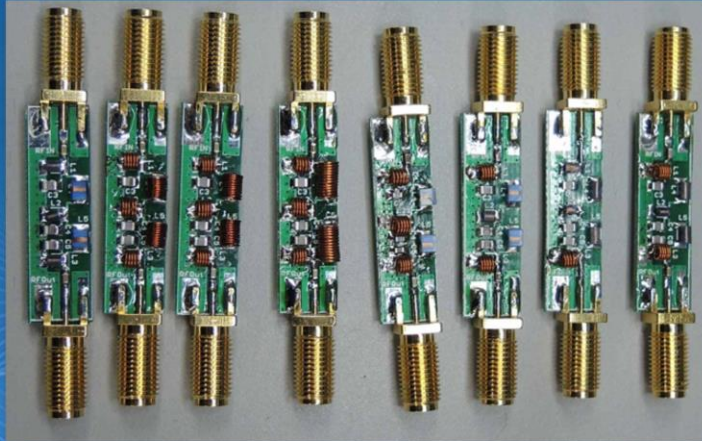
Not having worked with filters before I hand taken the plunge to simulate first with Elsie and LTSpice . Both gave fairly consistent results and looked good but something told me in reality parts on a PCB might be a bit different. But I didn't expect this!



## ***First Filter Tests (cont'd)***



***So I built more filters from different components some looked better but not all***



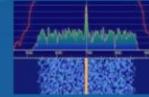
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# Test Equipment Added



## HP 4274 /5

- Capable of measuring caps into the fF and inductors into the pH range.



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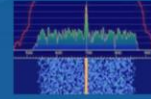
Low Cost Paradapter

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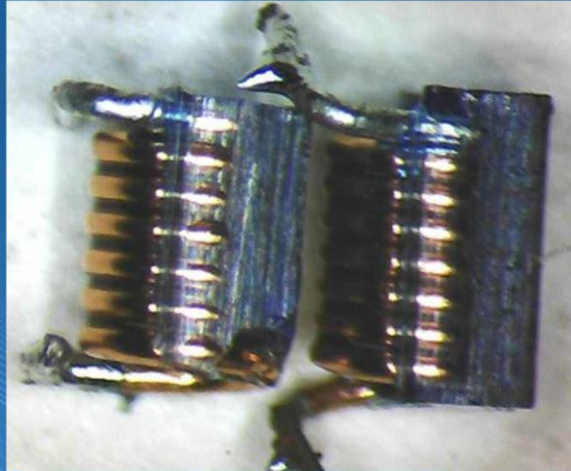
Of course I had to build test jigs for inductors and buy jigs for caps. But I was now able to measure accurately.



## Found the Culprit



Abracon had mixed in some 22nH inductors along with 33nH parts. The inductors are the same diameter but one turn less



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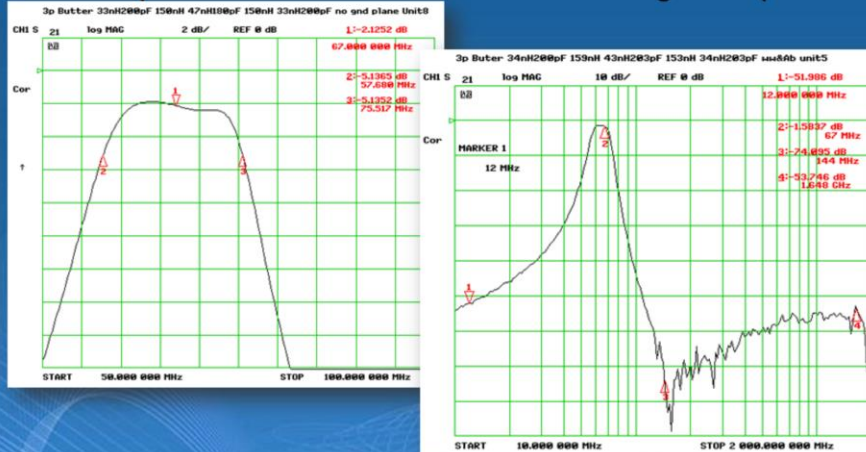
Because they're so tiny even under the microscope I couldn't see the difference. It wasn't until I removed each part from a filter and measured them individually that I found the difference.

About half the parts ordered were the incorrect value



# Working filter

- Reasonable passband characteristics with standard parts
- Stop band attenuation best with full back ground plane



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Low Cost Paradafter

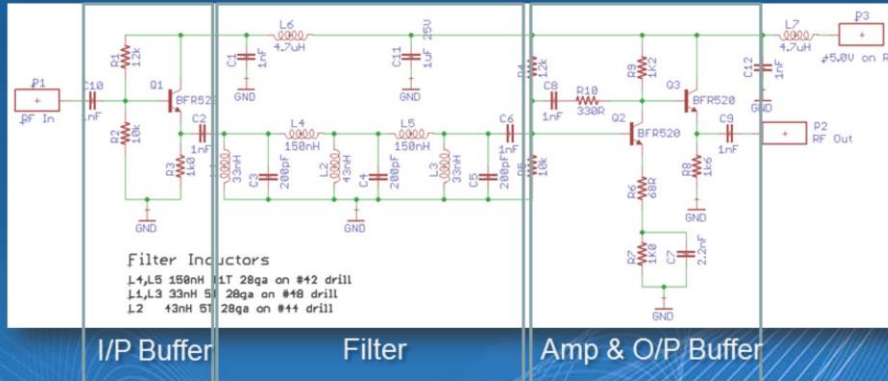
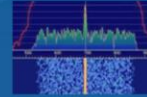
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Center frequency chosen was 67 MHz so that the 68.33MHz IF is shifted toward the upper portion of the pass band. This increases the attenuation of the IF+RF mixing products.



# Interface Schematic

V0.1a



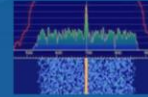
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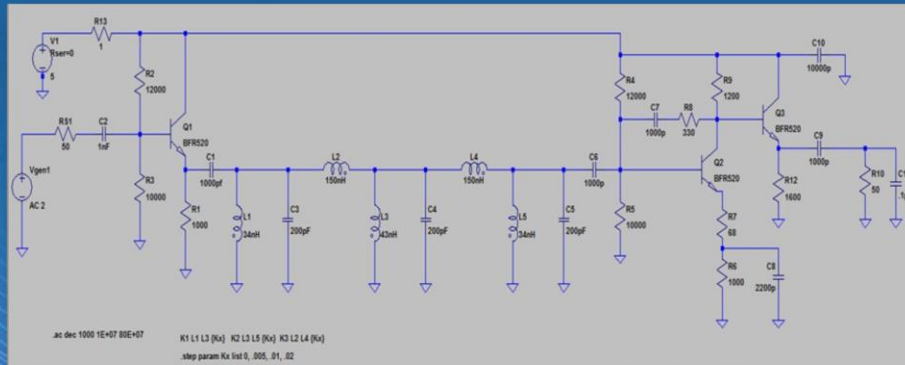


# Circuit Simulation



## LTSpice simulation files

- Complete circuit &
- Output amplifier + buffer



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LT Spice simulation files are included in the documentation.

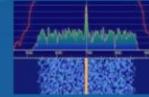
Filter analysis includes filter inductor mutual coupling and inductor parasitic resistance limiting Q.

BRF520 spice parameters from NXP include in the component files.

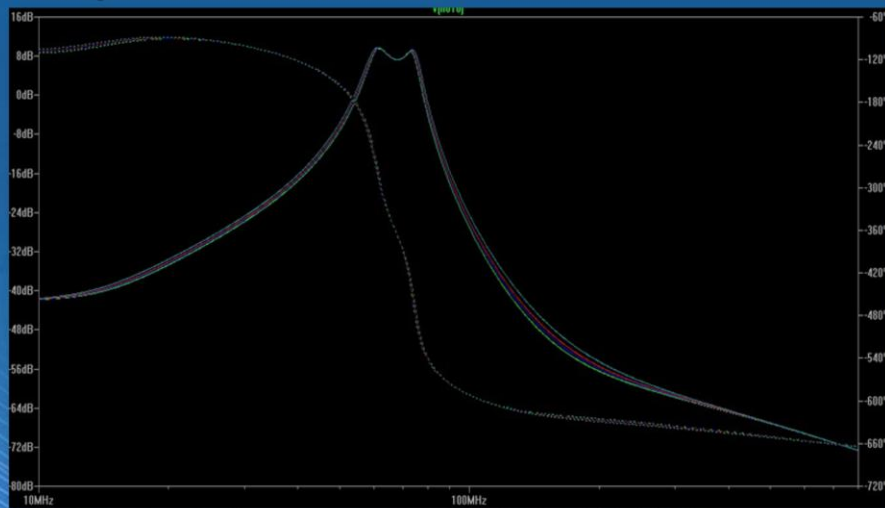
Also included in the documents are simulation files for the second and third stages, gain and output buffer. Feedback on the amplifier stage is set to keep the input impedance a reasonable match to the filter output while providing moderate gain.



# Circuit Simulation



## LTSpice simulation results



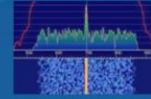
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# PCB Layout



## ***Small size to fit most transceivers***

- 12mm x 40mm

## ***All components on the top side no tracks on bottom***

- Bottom is ground plane only, so PCB can be soldered to any grounded surface within the transceiver

## ***Keep-out areas allow PCB to be fitted against the PLL – Unit can in FT-817***

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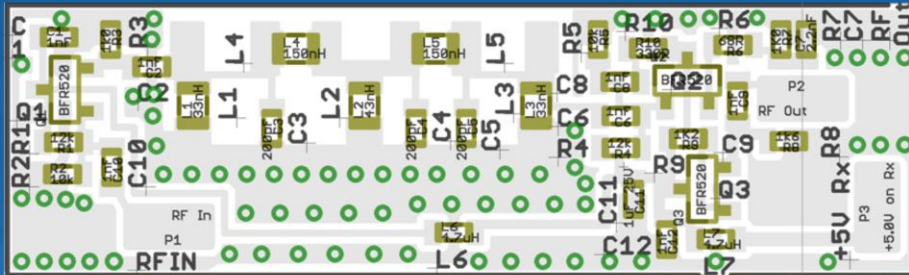
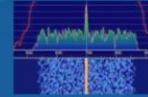
42

- Eagle is used for schematic capture and PCB layout



# PCB Layout

40 x 12mm



- Layout has keep-out areas that allow the board to easily fit against the side of the PLL - Unit shield in the FT-817
- All components are on the top side, bottom is ground plane

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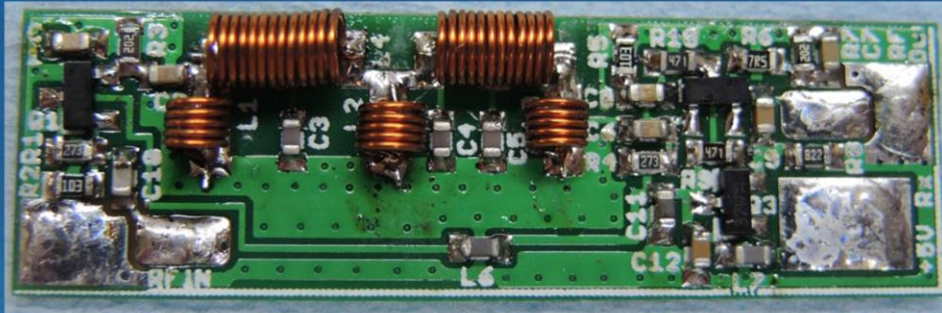
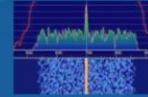
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# ***Assembled PCB***

***Using wire wound air core inductors***



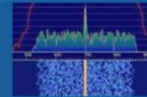
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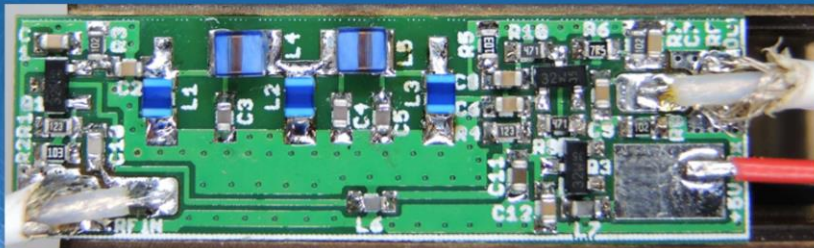


## Assembled PCB (cont'd)



### PCB also has pads for commercial inductors

- L4 and L5 are 150nH - 1008
- L1 and L3 are 33nH - 0805
- L2 is 43nH - 0805
- These values shift the passband down slightly so that the 68.33 MHz center frequency is a bit closer to the upper edge



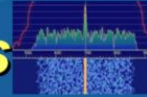
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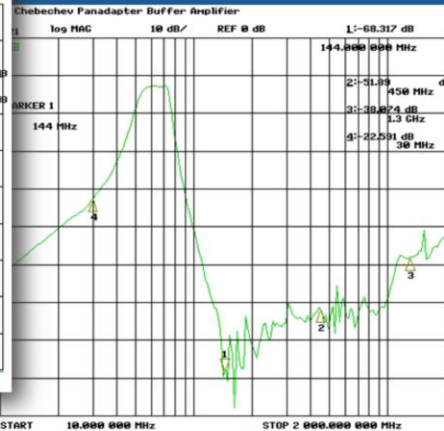
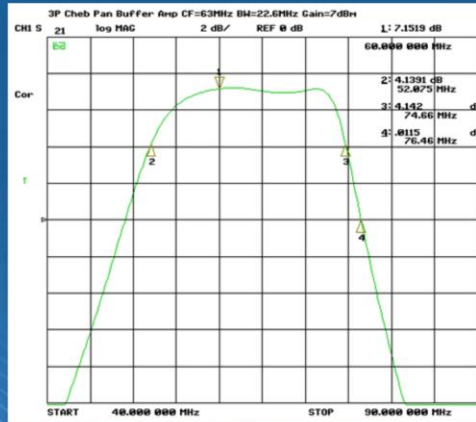
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# Bench Performance tests



PCB made with home brew air core inductors



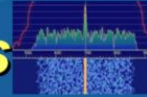
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Low Cost Panadapter

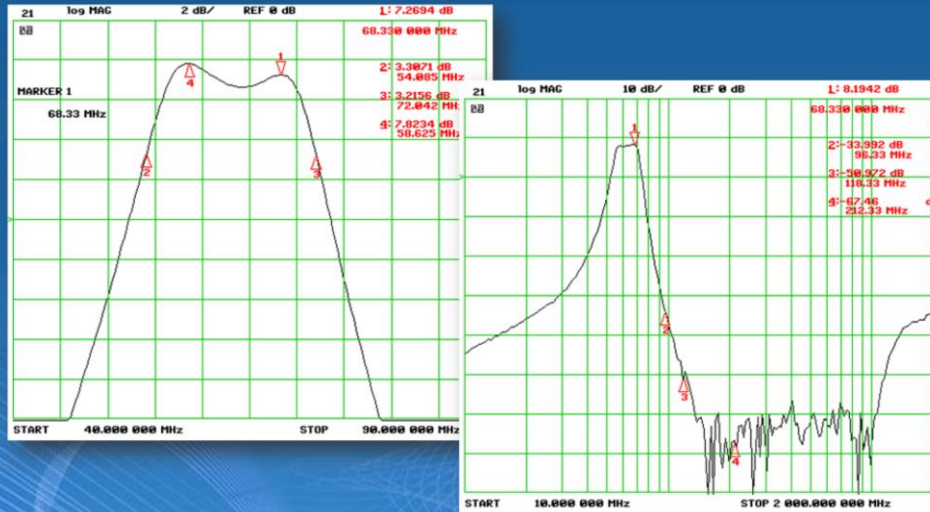
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# Bench Performance tests



## PCB made with commercial inductors



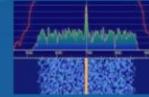
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Low Cost Panadapter

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# ***Interface to a FT-817***



## ***Four connections are needed from the interface PCB to the transceiver***

- Switched +5V – on during Rx – off during Tx. A switched supply is very desirable as the IF is used for both Tx & Rx so the dongle display is quiet during Tx
- RF input – tapped into the radio's 1<sup>st</sup> IF before a crystal filter
- RF output – port connects the interface output to the dongle typically through a connector on the radio's rear panel
- Ground

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A spectrogram of a speech signal. The x-axis represents time in seconds, ranging from -0.05 to 0.05. The y-axis represents frequency in kHz, ranging from 0 to 5. A prominent, sharp peak is visible at approximately 1000 Hz (1 kHz) at the time 0 mark. The background shows a noisy, textured pattern of lower frequencies.



## Low Cost Panadapter

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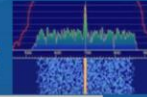


- 
- A micrograph of a PLL-UNIT on a circuit board. The unit is a large, rectangular component with a complex internal structure. It is surrounded by various other components, including capacitors (labeled C1001, C1002, C1003, C1004, C1005, C1006, C1007, C1008, C1009, C1010, C1011, C1012, C1013, C1014, C1015, C1016, C1017, C1018, C1019, C1020, C1021, C1022, C1023, C1024, C1025, C1026, C1027, C1028, C1029, C1030, C1031, C1032, C1033, C1034, C1035, C1036, C1037, C1038, C1039, C1040, C1041, C1042, C1043, C1044, C1045, C1046, C1047, C1048, C1049, C1050, C1051, C1052, C1053, C1054, C1055, C1056, C1057, C1058, C1059, C1060, C1061, C1062, C1063, C1064, C1065, C1066, C1067, C1068, C1069, C1070, C1071, C1072, C1073, C1074, C1075, C1076, C1077, C1078, C1079, C1080, C1081, C1082, C1083, C1084, C1085, C1086, C1087, C1088, C1089, C1090, C1091, C1092, C1093, C1094, C1095, C1096, C1097, C1098, C1099, C1100, C1101, C1102, C1103, C1104, C1105, C1106, C1107, C1108, C1109, C1110, C1111, C1112, C1113, C1114, C1115, C1116, C1117, C1118, C1119, C1120, C1121, C1122, C1123, C1124, C1125, C1126, C1127, C1128, C1129, C1130, C1131, C1132, C1133, C1134, C1135, C1136, C1137, C1138, C1139, C1140, C1141, C1142, C1143, C1144, C1145, C1146, C1147, C1148, C1149, C1150, C1151, C1152, C1153, C1154, C1155, C1156, C1157, C1158, C1159, C1160, C1161, C1162, C1163, C1164, C1165, C1166, C1167, C1168, C1169, C1170, C1171, C1172, C1173, C1174, C1175, C1176, C1177, C1178, C1179, C1180, C1181, C1182, C1183, C1184, C1185, C1186, C1187, C1188, C1189, C1190, C1191, C1192, C1193, C1194, C1195, C1196, C1197, C1198, C1199, C1200, C1201, C1202, C1203, C1204, C1205, C1206, C1207, C1208, C1209, C1210, C1211, C1212, C1213, C1214, C1215, C1216, C1217, C1218, C1219, C1220, C1221, C1222, C1223, C1224, C1225, C1226, C1227, C1228, C1229, C1230, C1231, C1232, C1233, C1234, C1235, C1236, C1237, C1238, C1239, C1240, C1241, C1242, C1243, C1244, C1245, C1246, C1247, C1248, C1249, C1250, C1251, C1252, C1253, C1254, C1255, C1256, C1257, C1258, C1259, C1260, C1261, C1262, C1263, C1264, C1265, C1266, C1267, C1268, C1269, C1270, C1271, C1272, C1273, C1274, C1275, C1276, C1277, C1278, C1279, C1280, C1281, C1282, C1283, C1284, C1285, C1286, C1287, C1288, C1289, C1290, C1291, C1292, C1293, C1294, C1295, C1296, C1297, C1298, C1299, C1300, C1301, C1302, C1303, C1304, C1305, C1306, C1307, C1308, C1309, C1310, C1311, C1312, C1313, C1314, C1315, C1316, C1317, C1318, C1319, C1320, C1321, C1322, C1323, C1324, C1325, C1326, C1327, C1328, C1329, C1330, C1331, C1332, C1333, C1334, C1335, C1336, C1337, C1338, C1339, C1340, C1341, C1342, C1343, C1344, C1345, C1346, C1347, C1348, C1349, C1350, C1351, C1352, C1353, C1354, C1355, C1356, C1357, C1358, C1359, C1360, C1361, C1362, C1363, C1364, C1365, C1366, C1367, C1368, C1369, C1370, C1371, C1372, C1373, C1374, C1375, C1376, C1377, C1378, C1379, C1380, C1381, C1382, C1383, C1384, C1385, C1386, C1387, C1388, C1389, C1390, C1391, C1392, C1393, C1394, C1395, C1396, C1397, C1398, C1399, C1400, C1401, C1402, C1403, C1404, C1405, C1406, C1407, C1408, C1409, C1410, C1411, C1412, C1413, C1414, C1415, C1416, C1417, C1418, C1419, C1420, C1421, C1422, C1423, C1424, C1425, C1426, C1427, C1428, C1429, C1430, C1431, C1432, C1433, C1434, C1435, C1436, C1437, C1438, C1439, C1440, C1441, C1442, C1443, C1444, C1445, C1446, C1447, C1448, C1449, C1450, C1451, C1452, C1453, C1454, C1455, C1456, C1457, C1458, C1459, C1460, C1461, C1462, C1463, C1464, C1465, C1466, C1467, C1468, C1469, C1470, C1471, C1472, C1473, C1474, C1475, C1476, C1477, C1478, C1479, C1480, C1481, C1482, C1483, C1484, C1485, C1486, C1487, C1488, C1489, C1490, C1491, C1492, C1493, C1494, C1495, C1496, C1497, C1498, C1499, C1500, C1501, C1502, C1503, C1504, C1505, C1506, C1507, C1508, C1509, C1510, C1511, C1512, C1513, C1514, C1515, C1516, C1517, C1518, C1519, C1520, C1521, C1522, C1523, C1524, C1525, C1526, C1527, C1528, C1529, C1530, C1531, C1532, C1533, C1534, C1535, C1536, C1537, C1538, C1539, C1540, C1541, C1542, C1543, C1544, C1545, C1546, C1547, C1548, C1549, C1550, C1551, C1552, C1553, C1554, C1555, C1556, C1557, C1558, C1559, C1560, C1561, C1562, C1563, C1564, C1565, C1566, C1567, C1568, C1569, C1570, C1571, C1572, C1573, C1574, C1575, C1576, C1577, C1578, C1579, C1580, C1581, C1582, C1583, C1584, C1585, C1586, C1587, C1588, C1589, C1590, C1591, C1592, C1593, C1594, C1595, C1596, C1597, C1598, C1599, C1600, C1601, C1602, C1603, C1604, C1605, C1606, C1607, C1608, C1609, C1610, C1611, C1612, C1613, C1614, C1615, C1616, C1617, C1618, C1619, C1620, C1621, C1622, C1623, C1624, C1625, C1626, C1627, C1628, C1629, C1630, C1631, C1632, C1633, C1634, C1635, C1636, C1637, C1638, C1639, C1640, C1641, C1642, C1643, C1644, C1645, C1646, C1647, C1648, C1649, C1650, C1651, C1652, C1653, C1654, C1655, C1656, C1657, C1658, C1659, C1660, C1661, C1662, C1663, C1664, C1665, C1666, C1667, C1668, C1669, C1670, C1671, C1672, C16

## Low Cost Panadapter



## FT-817 – I/F Connections



- Interface PCB bottom groundplane is soldered to the side of the PLL-Unit housing



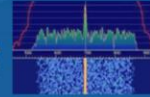
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Low Cost Paradapter

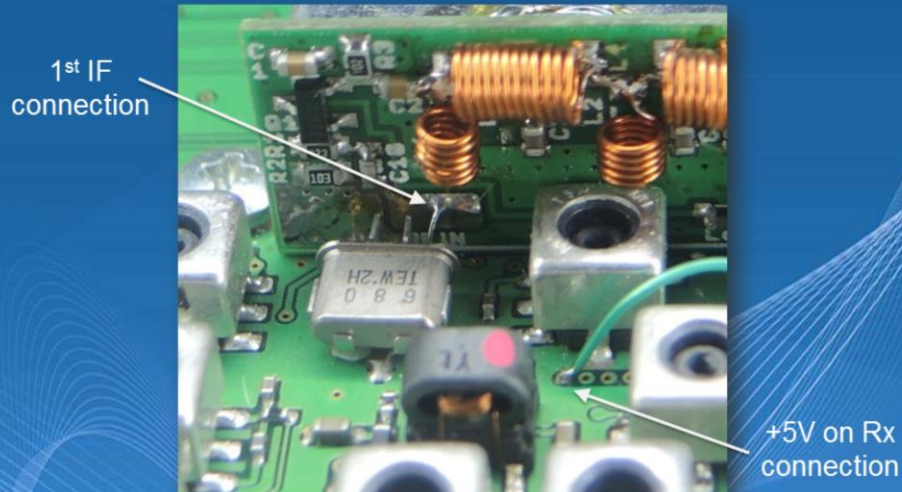
51



## FT-817 – I/F Connections



- 1<sup>st</sup> IF and 5V on Rx connections



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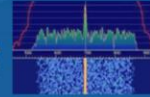
Low Cost Paradapter

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To attach 1<sup>st</sup> IF to the PCB first solder a small bear piece of wire-wrap or 30ga wire to the crystal filter input. Cut the wire to length and solder it to the interface PCB RF input pad



## FT-817 – I/F Connections



- MCX push on connector jack is located above the SO239 antenna connector on the radio's rear panel



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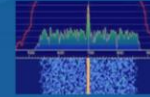
Low Cost Paradapter

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# Sensitivity Tests

## Before & After Panadapter installation



| Frequency<br>MHz | Mode    | Baseline Measurement |         |      |      | FT817 wit Panadapter Installed |         |      |      | Difference    |         |    |    |
|------------------|---------|----------------------|---------|------|------|--------------------------------|---------|------|------|---------------|---------|----|----|
|                  |         | SINAD<br>12dB        | S Units |      |      | SINAD<br>12dB                  | S Units |      |      | SINAD<br>12dB | S Units |    |    |
|                  |         |                      | 1       | 5    | 9    |                                | 1       | 5    | 9    |               | 1       | 5  | 9  |
| 3.6              | CWN     | -123.7               | -100    | -96  | -72  | -123.9                         | -99     | -94  | -72  | 0.2           | -1      | -2 | 0  |
|                  | CWW     | -110.8               | -96     | -92  | -71  | -112.1                         | -95     | -91  | -70  | 1.3           | -1      | -1 | -1 |
|                  | FM 3KHz | -115.7               | -103    | -99  | -92  | -115.8                         | -103    | -97  | -91  | 0.1           | 0       | -2 | -1 |
| 14.1             | CWN     | -126.7               | -104    | -100 | -76  | -126.9                         | -103    | -99  | -80  | 0.2           | -1      | -1 | 4  |
|                  | CWW     | -113.4               | -100    | -96  | -74  | -114.4                         | -99.5   | -95  | -73  | 1             | -0.5    | -1 | -1 |
|                  | FM 3KHz | -118.8               | -108    | -101 | -98  | -118.3                         | -107    | -100 | -95  | -0.5          | -1      | -1 | -3 |
| 28.25            | CWN     | -127.8               | -104    | -101 | -78  | -127.4                         | -104    | -100 | -77  | -0.4          | 0       | -1 | -1 |
|                  | CWW     | -115.2               | -101    | -97  | -75  | -115.5                         | -99     | -95  | -73  | 0.3           | -2      | -2 | -2 |
|                  | FM 3KHz | -119.4               | -109    | -101 | -96  | -119.1                         | -108    | -100 | -95  | -0.3          | -1      | -1 | -1 |
| 50.25            | CWN     | -131.0               | -111    | -107 | -80  | -131.1                         | -110    | -106 | -83  | 0.1           | -1      | -1 | 3  |
|                  | CWW     | -118.2               | -108    | -103 | -78  | -118.6                         | -105    | -101 | -79  | 0.4           | -3      | -2 | 1  |
|                  | FM 3KHz | -123.3               | -115    | -107 | -102 | -123.4                         | -114    | -106 | -101 | 0.1           | -1      | -1 | -1 |
| 144.25           | CWN     | -130.2               | -112    | -109 | -82  | -129.8                         | -111    | -107 | -83  | -0.4          | -1      | -2 | 1  |
|                  | CWW     | -116.2               | -109    | -105 | -79  | -116.1                         | -106    | -102 | -79  | -0.1          | -3      | -3 | 0  |
|                  | FM 3KHz | -122.2               | -116    | -110 | -104 | -122.1                         | -115    | -108 | -103 | -0.1          | -1      | -2 | -1 |
| 430.25           | CWN     | -130.4               | -110    | -106 | -79  | -129.1                         | -109    | -105 | -81  | -1.3          | -1      | -1 | 2  |
|                  | CWW     | -117.4               | -107    | -103 | -78  | -116.6                         | -104    | -100 | -78  | -0.8          | -3      | -3 | 0  |
|                  | FM 3KHz | -121.9               | -114    | -107 | -102 | -121.4                         | -113    | -105 | -101 | -0.5          | -1      | -2 | -1 |

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Low Cost Panadapter

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The measurements with the panadapter installed were conducted about six months after the baseline measurements were taken

For these measurements the HF & 50MHz preamp was on (IPO set to off) and the attenuator was on (ATT not engaged)

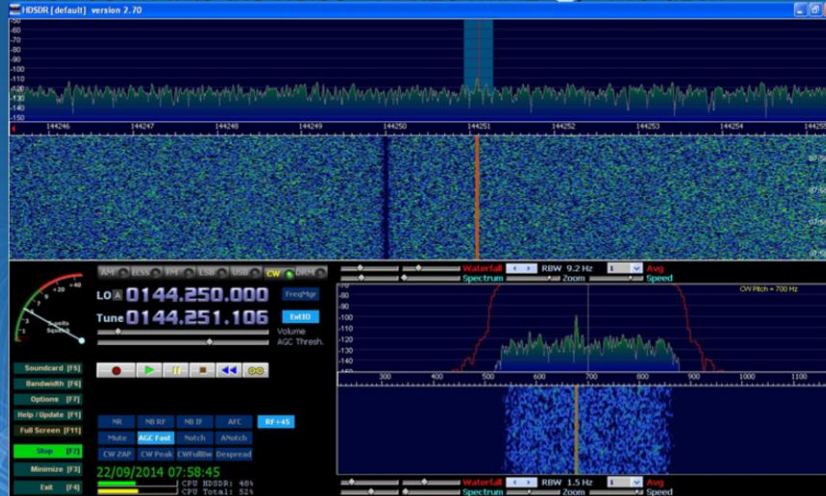
The average change in SINAD was -0.04dB

There was no difference in sensitivity noted when the SDR dongle was attached or removed from the panadapter output



# Sensitivity

SDR display with narrow FFT bins enables signal detection well down into the noise -144.251MHz @ -140 dBm



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Low Cost Panadapter

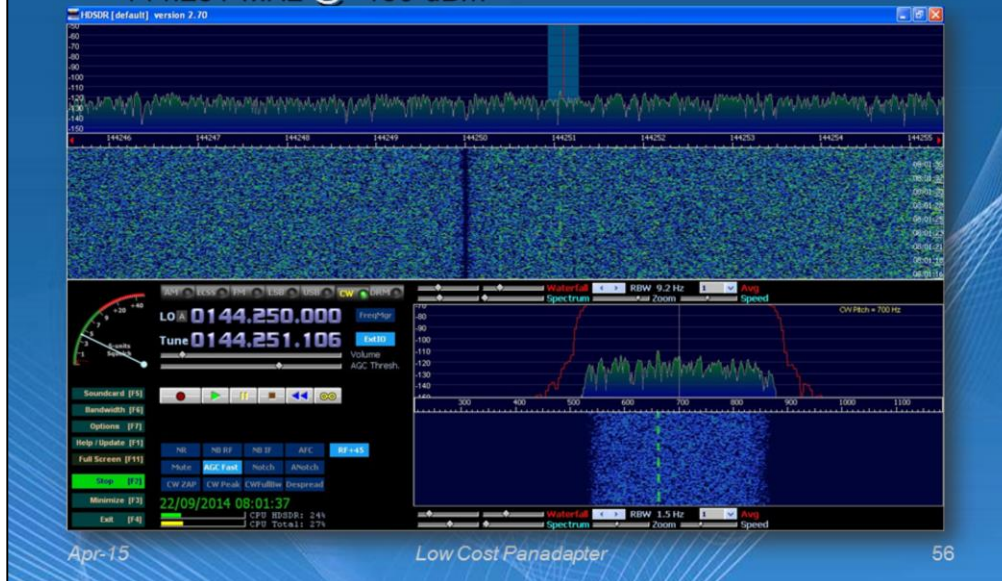
55

144.251 MHz at -140 dBm



# Sensitivity

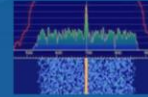
144.251 MHz @ -150 dBm



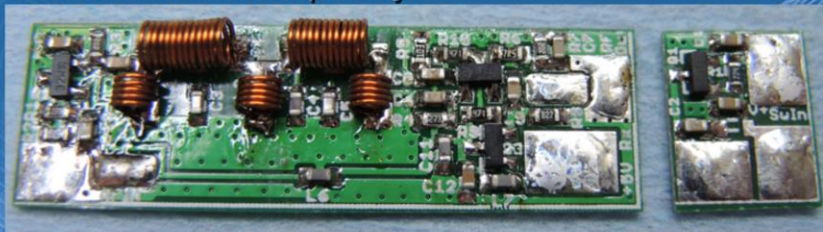
144.251 MHz at -150 dBm, signal is turned off and on to make the trace a little more evident.



# Supply Switches



- If switched V+ high on Rx isn't available or if it is but isn't capable of supplying the dongle then two switch boards can be used
- Both have the same height as the main PCB
- Simple inverting switch for rigs that have a signal low during receive and high during transmit.
- PCB with an selectable inverting switch that can be used with either control polarity



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Low Cost Paradapter

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This switch provides a voltage at Sw V+ O/P that is essentially the same level as the voltage applied to V+ I/P. requires the signal to sink about 50uA from a 12V supply when off and requires a

has the same PCB height as the paradapter and is 10cm wide. All components are on the top side and the bottom metal is ground plane so that the PCB can be soldered against any convenient ground for support. The switch provides a supply voltage at Sw V+ O/P that is essentially the same as the V+ I/P. requires the signal to sink about 50uA from a 12V supply when off and requires a





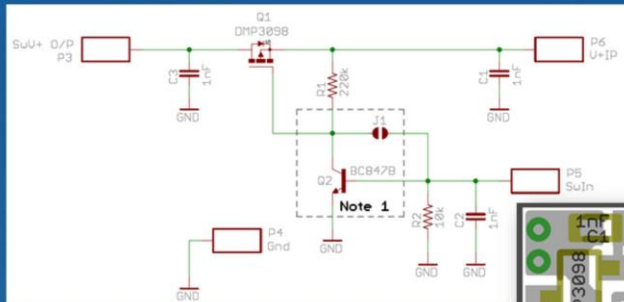
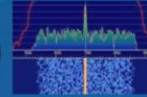
- 10 mm wide
- Switch input P5  
Low on Rx &  
high on Tx

## Low Cost Panadapter

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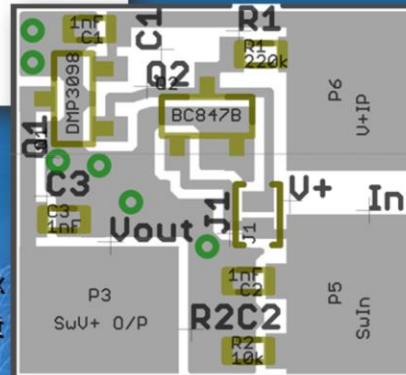


## Supply Switches (cont'd)



### V+ Switch

- 13mm wide
- J1 Shorted Q2 not installed  
P5 input low on Rx high on Tx
- J1 Open Q2 installed P5 input  
high on Rx low on Tx



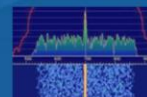
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# Application Software



## ***HSDR chosen as the best application***

- Feature rich
- Interfaces smoothly to radio IF's and CAT software
- Not too difficult to install
  - Links to examples can be found on the HSDR FAQ page

## ***SDR#***

- Nicest looking display
- Doesn't handle IQ swap correctly (version early Sept 2014) so wasn't usable with IF for this demo. Constantly updated so problem may have been solved

## ***Gqrx***

- Worked well but no time to fully evaluate

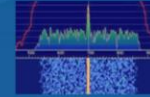
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# Steps to using HDSDR



## Install on a computer

- Navigate to the HDSDR Hardware page  
<http://www.hdsdr.de/hardware.html>



- Scroll down to the RTLSDR (DVB-T/DAB with RTL2832) line.

| Hardware                        | Website    |                   |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| RFSPACE SDR-IQ / SDR-14         | Download   | April 11, 2013    |
| RTLSDR (DVB-T/DAB with RTL2832) | DLL How-To | February 04, 2014 |
| SDR-1                           | Download   | April 05, 2012    |
| SDR MK1 / SDR MK1.5 'Andrew'    | Website    |                   |

- Click on the How-To which will download a PDF with good install instructions

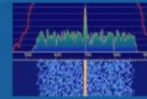
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# HDSDR -configuration



## Start the program

**HDSDR has a slew of options that can be confusing.**

- Start with the menu items lower left side.
- Leave the Soundcard [F5] alone.



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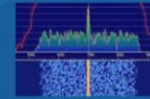


# HDSDR - configuration

- Bandwidth [F4] select the following:

Sampling Rate [Hz]

| Input   | Output                           |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| 12000   | 12000                            |
| 24000   | 24000                            |
| 48000   | 48000                            |
| 96000   | 96000                            |
| 192000  | 192000                           |
| <hr/>   |                                  |
| 11025   | 11025                            |
| 22050   | 22050                            |
| 44100   | 44100                            |
| 88200   |                                  |
| 176400  |                                  |
| <hr/>   |                                  |
| 8000    | 4000                             |
| 16000   | 8000                             |
| 32000   |                                  |
| 2400000 | <input type="button" value="v"/> |



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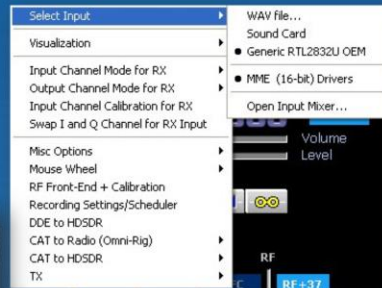
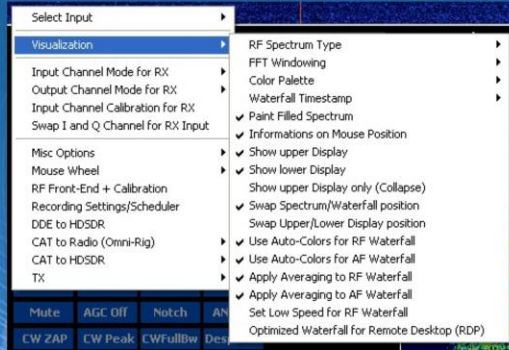
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# HDSDR - configuration

- Options [F7]
  - Select Input and visualization should look like the panels on this page
  - Don't change any submenus at this time



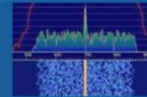
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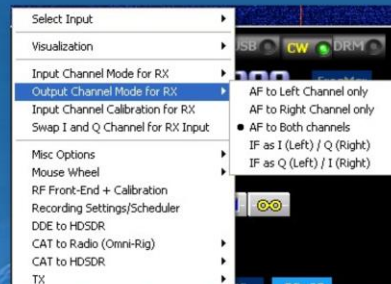
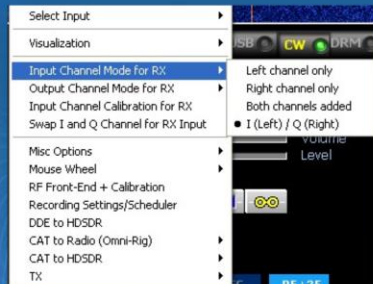
64



# HDSDR - configuration



- Options [F7]
  - Input channel mode for Rx
  - Output Channel mode for Rx



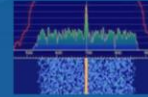
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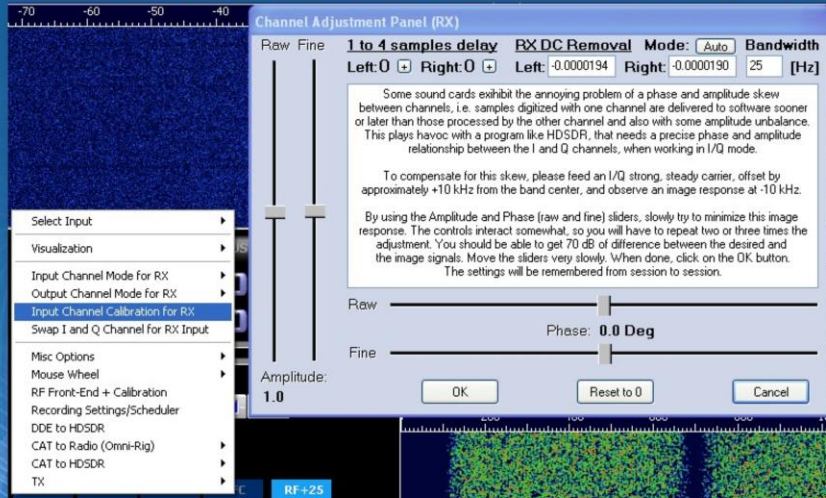
65



# HDSDR - configuration



- Options [F7] - Input channel mode for Rx
  - Select RX DC Removal Mode: Auto - leave the rest alone



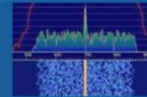
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Low Cost Paradaptor

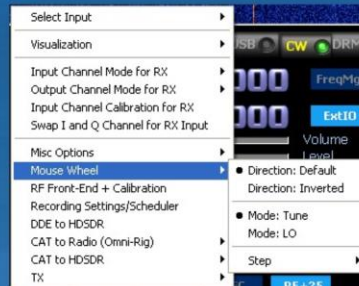
66



# HDSDR - configuration



- Options [F7]
  - Misc.
  - Mouse Wheel



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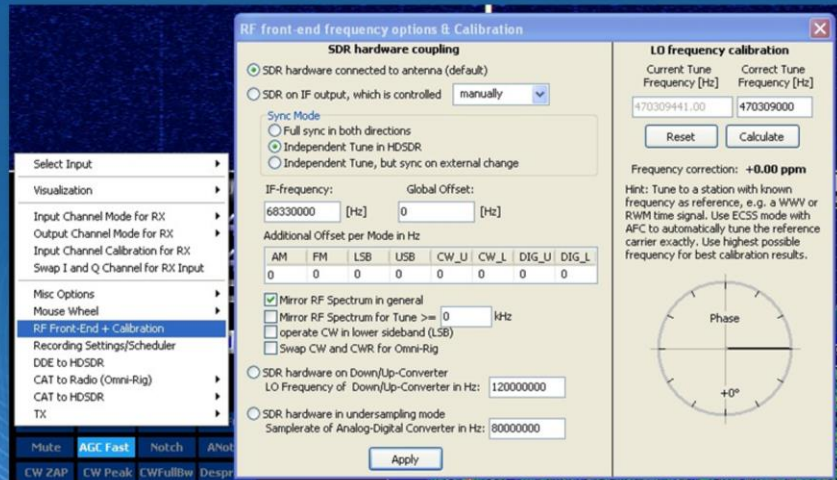
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# HDSDR - configuration

Now for the really important ones:



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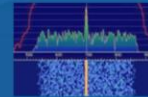
Set 'SDR hardware connected to antenna

IF frequency isn't important here but it's a good time to enter the radio's IF center frequency

Mirror RF Spectrum in general should be checked.



# HDSDR - configuration



## ExIO



- Click on the ExtIO button
- Increase the tuner gain slider to between 30 and 40dB.
- Turn off all AGC
- Check that the sample rate and buffer size match the window on the right.



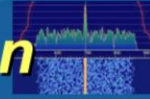
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# HDSDR – Freq. calibration

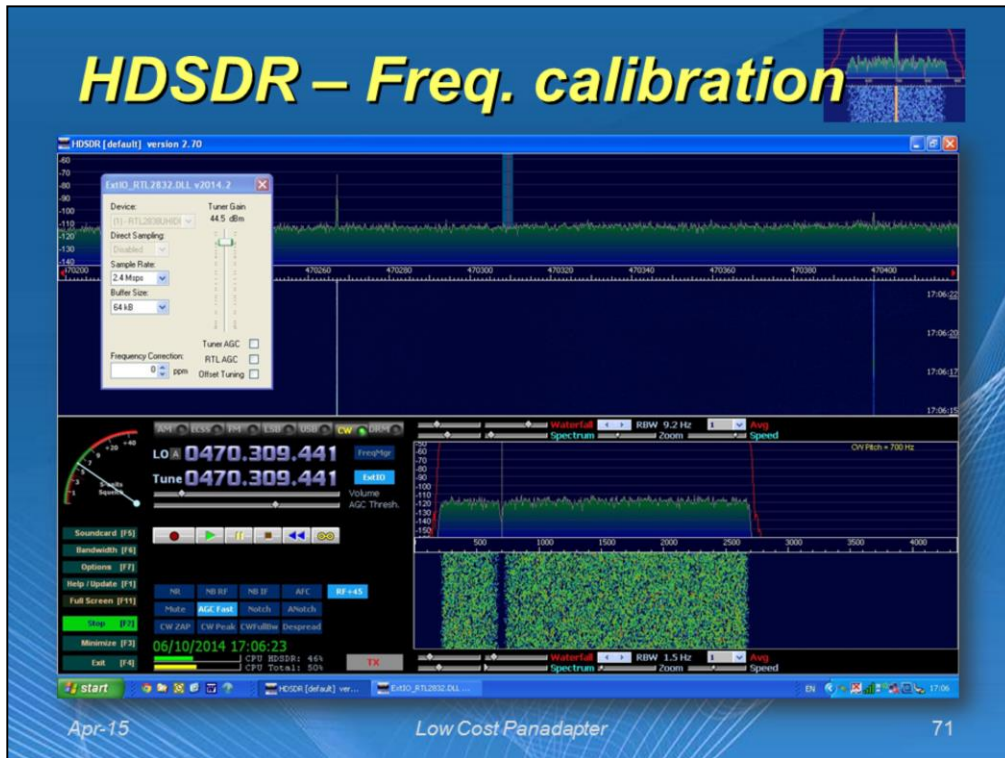


## Frequency correction – Part 1

- Connect an antenna capable of receiving a signal of known frequency to the DVB-T dongle
  - A good choice for this is often a local off air HDTV signal as they are typically quite strong.
  - A pilot tone can be easily identified. It's 309,441 Hz above the lower band edge. The lower band edge frequency for all UHF channels can be found here:  
<http://www.csqnetwork.com/tvfreqtable.html>
  - Enter the known frequency values in the HDSDR LO and Tune values



# HDSDR – Freq. calibration



Set the LO and tune to the known frequency. In this case the channel 14 pilot, 470MHz channel lower band edge plus 309.441Hz.

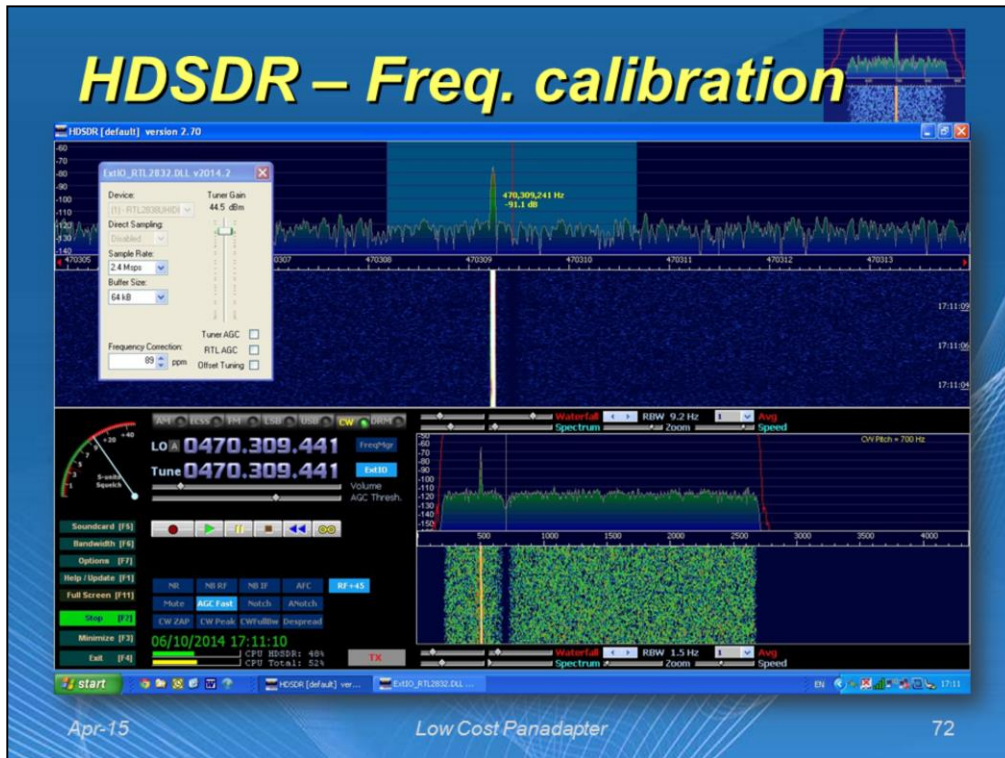
The pilot can be seen to the left of the set frequency.

Change the 'Frequency Correction' value in the EXIO window to bring the carrier to the set frequency.

Increase the zoom control to more precisely view the correction value as the pilot approaches the set frequency.



# HDSDR – Freq. calibration



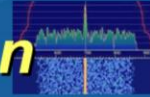
Note that the pilot is slightly below the desired frequency. The next frequency increment will place it above and further away from the desired frequency.

Get as close as possible. The value will be tweaked in the next step.

Record the value on the dongle for future reference as it's not likely to change much.



# ***HDSDR – Freq. calibration***



## ***Next account for any transceiver 1<sup>st</sup> IF LO error***

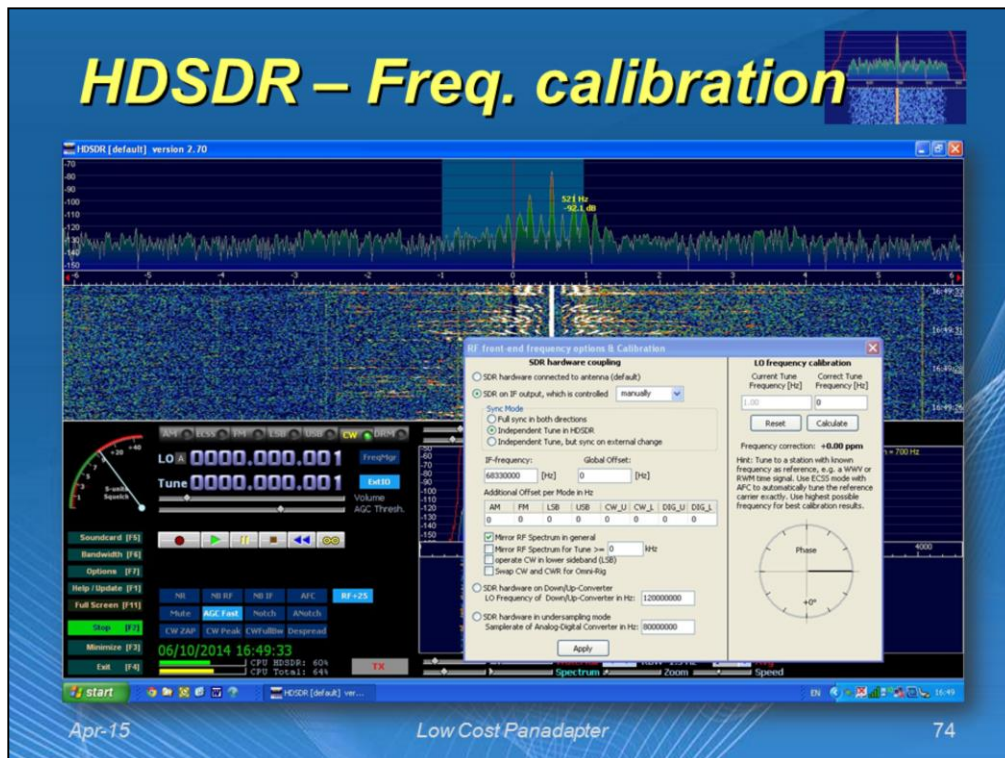
- Connect the DVB-T dongle to the radio's 1<sup>st</sup> IF interface.
- Tune the radio to a known frequency – WWV is good if it can be received. In Ottawa air band information channels can provide a good constant AM carrier. One such beacon is located at 132.950 MHz. Tune the radio to this frequency and set the mode to AM
- Set the HDSDR LO and Tune frequency to zero Hertz and the mode to AM.
- Change the RF gain as necessary to get a good display
- Zoom out if necessary to find the carrier. It should be within a couple kHz of the center frequency.
- Bring up the Options – RF Front-End & Calibration window

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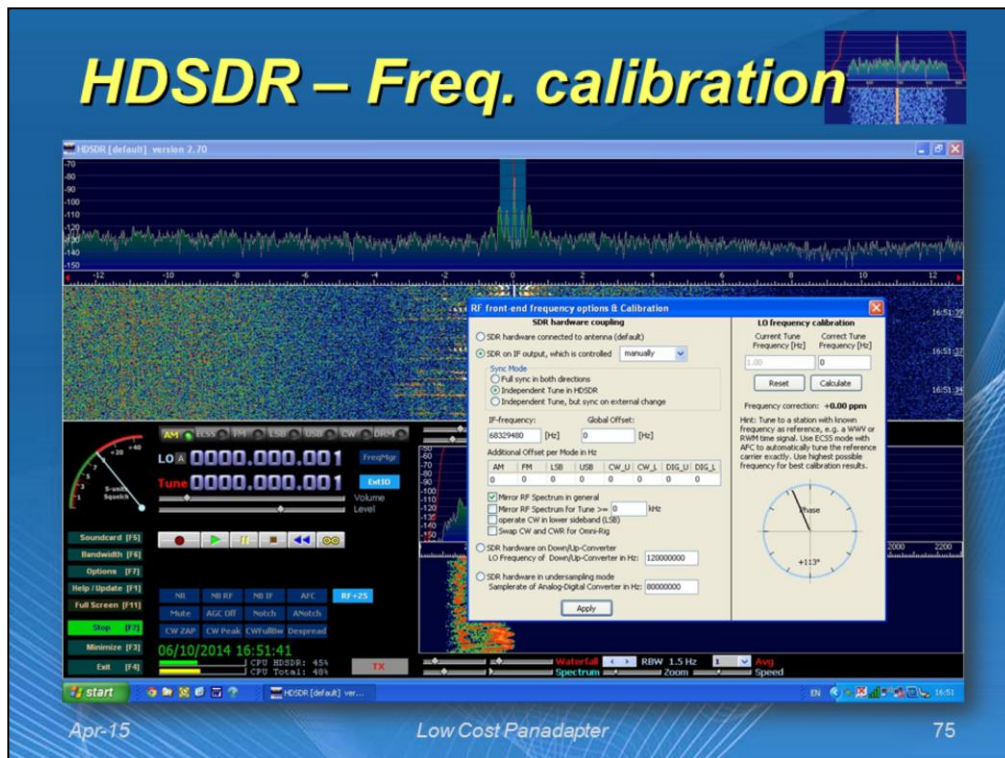
Again use the zoom slider to be able to see the two carriers with as much precision as possible.

Move the cursor to the carrier and note the frequency difference between the carrier and desired frequency.

If the carrier is below the desired frequency add the difference to the IF-Frequency value.

If the carrier is below the desired frequency subtract the difference from the IF-Frequency value.



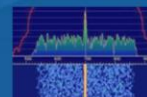


Corrected frequency.

Don't expect the frequency correction to remain stable. The oscillators involved aren't high precision. A one or two kilohertz drift over short periods of time is likely.



# Use without CAT



- There is no communication between the transceiver and HDSDR
- Set the 'RF front-end frequency options & Calibration. Don't change the IF-Frequency

**RF front-end frequency options & Calibration**

**SDR hardware coupling**

☐ SDR hardware connected to antenna (default)

☒ SDR on IF output, which is controlled manually

**Sync Mode**

☐ Full sync in both directions

☒ Independent Tune in HDSDR

☐ Independent Tune, but sync on external change

IF-frequency: 68331800 [Hz] Global Offset: 0 [Hz]

Additional Offset per Mode in Hz

| AM | FM | LSB | USB | CW_U | CW_L | DIG_U | DIG_L |
|----|----|-----|-----|------|------|-------|-------|
| 0  | 0  | 0   | 0   | 0    | 0    | 0     | 0     |

☒ Mirror RF Spectrum in general

☐ Mirror RF Spectrum for Tune >= 0 kHz

☐ operate CW in lower sideband (LSB)

☐ Swap CW and CWR for Omni-Rig

☐ SDR hardware on Down/Up-Converter

LO Frequency of Down/Up-Converter in Hz: 120000000

☐ SDR hardware in undersampling mode

Samplerate of Analog-Digital Converter in Hz: 80000000

**Apply**

**LO frequency calibration**

Current Tune Frequency [Hz]: 14000000.00

Correct Tune Frequency [Hz]: 14000000

**Reset** **Calculate**

Frequency correction: +0.00 ppm

Hint: Tune to a station with known frequency as reference, e.g. a WWV or RWM time signal. Use ECSS mode with AFC to automatically tune the reference carrier exactly. Use highest possible frequency for best calibration results.

Phase

+0°

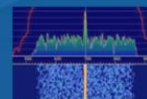
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# Use Without CAT



## Mode 1

- Tune the transceiver to a band edge i.e. 14,000,000.
- Set the HDSDR LO and Tune to the same frequency.
- Use the HDSDR as the receiver.
- On the HDSDR screen move the band edge to the left of the screen and use the zoom slider to get the desired frequency window.
- Then use the Tune entry or mouse click on the panadapter display to change frequency
- Do not change the LO setting.
- Note if the transceiver frequency is changed the HDSDR LO and Tune must also be set to the same frequency.

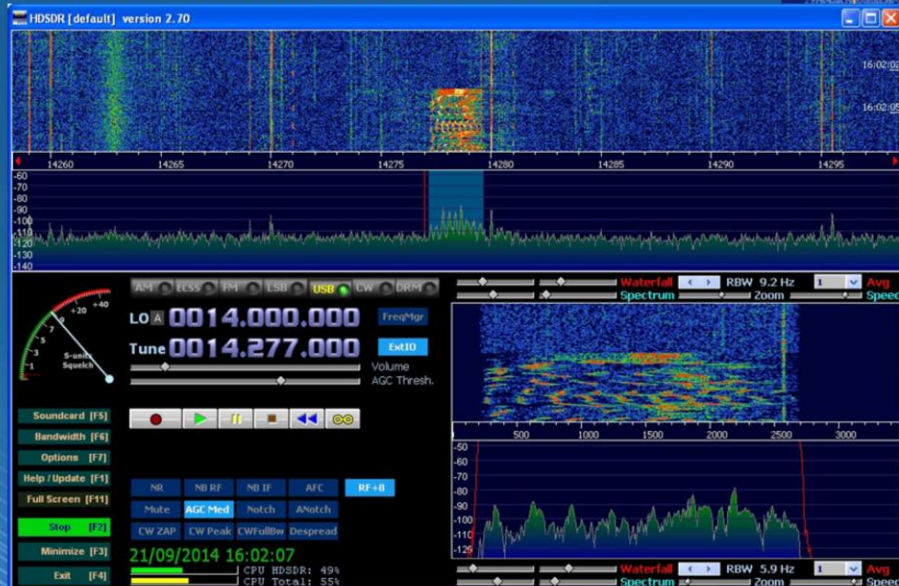
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# Use Without CAT



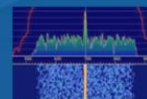
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# ***Use Without CAT***



## ***Mode 2 – tune to zero – useful for contesting***

- Tune the transceiver to a frequency of interest say 144.250 MHz
- Set the HDSDR LO and Tune to zero. 144.250 MHz is now the display center
- Set the zoom to a range of frequencies that should be monitored for activity
- When a signal appears on the HDSDR display tune the radio so that the signal is positioned at zero.
- Make a contact, the frequency can be read off of the radio
- Don't forget to retune the radio back to 144.250 after the contact

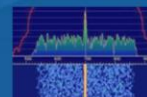
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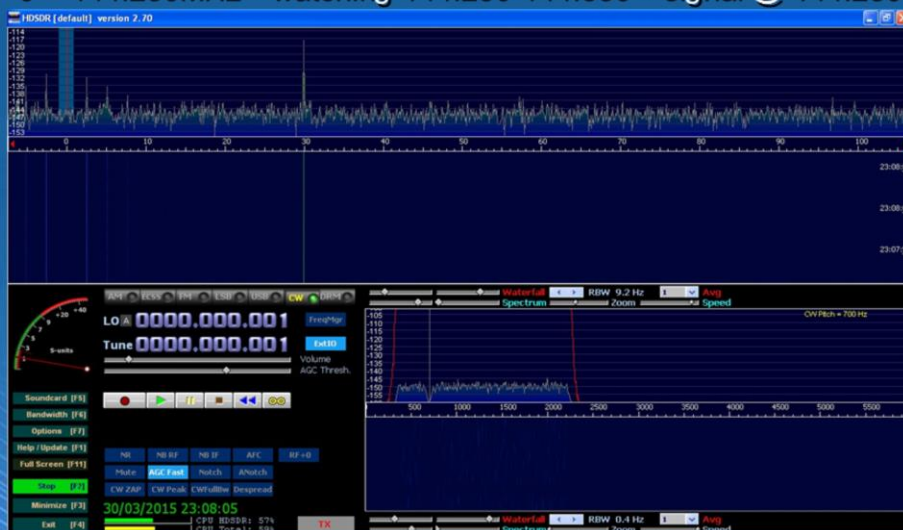
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# Tune to zero example



0 = 144.250MHz - watching 144.250-144.350 - signal @ 144.280



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Low Cost Panadapter


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# CAT-62 Cable

## On the cheap

- Buy one of these along with a male 8 pin mini-DIN connector



FREE SHIPPING

FT232RL FTDI USB to TTL Serial Adapter Module for Arduino

Item condition: **New**

Quantity:  More than 10 available / 102 sold

Was: ~~US \$4.59~~

You save: **US \$0.96 (20% off)**

Price: **US \$3.63**  
Approximately C \$4.09

[Buy it Now](#)

[Add to cart](#)

25 watchers

[Add to watch list](#)

[Add to collection](#)

|                              |                         |                    |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Experienced</b><br>Seller | <b>Free</b><br>Shipping | <b>102</b><br>Sold |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|

Shipping: **FREE** Economy Int'l Shipping | [See details](#)  
See details about international shipping here.  
Item location: Beijing, China  
Ships to: [Worldwide](#) [See restrictions](#)

Delivery: **Estimated Delivery within 12-23 business days**  
Seller ships within 1 day after receiving cleared payment.

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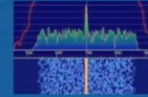
Low Cost Paradapter

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An FTDI USB - serial interface makes drivers easy to find and many operating system have them already installed



# CAT-62 Cable



## On the cheap

- Or one of these along with a male 8 pin mini-DIN connector

6pin FTDI FT232RL USB to TTL Serial cable Converter Adapter FOR Arduino

Item condition: **New**

Quantity:  More than 10 available / 32 sold

Price: **US \$5.99**  
Approximately C \$7.54

[Buy It Now](#)

[Add to cart](#)

4 watching

[Add to watch list](#)

[Add to collection](#)

**Free shipping** 32 sold New condition

Shipping: **FREE** Economy Int'l Shipping | [See details](#)  
See details about international shipping here.

Item location: Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Ships to: Worldwide | [See restrictions](#)

Delivery: Estimated Delivery within 10-23 business days  
Seller ships within 1 day after receiving cleared payment.

Payments: [PayPal](#) [VISA](#) [MasterCard](#) [AMEX](#)

Credit cards processed by PayPal

[See payment information](#)

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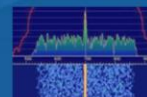
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Again an FTDI USB – serial IC is the heart of this cable.

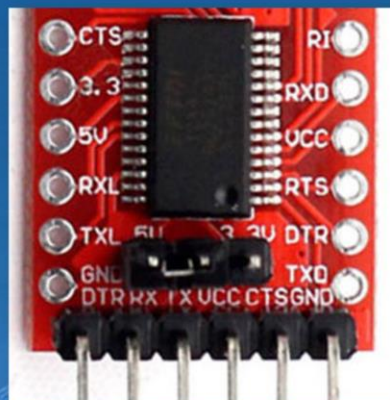
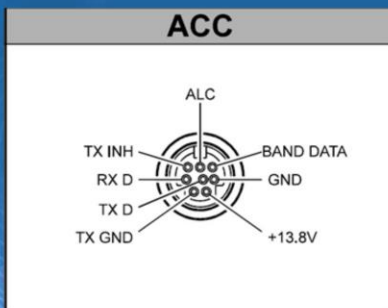


# CAT-62 Cable



**Wire it.... just a 3 wire cable ... no components**

- ACC FT232RL PCB
- RX D TX
- TX D Rx
- GND GND



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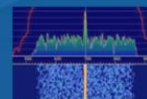
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But do watch the ACC plug pin out. On the male connector pin 3 is Gnd, Pin 4 is TX D and pin 5 is RX D



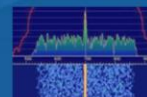
## Use with CAT



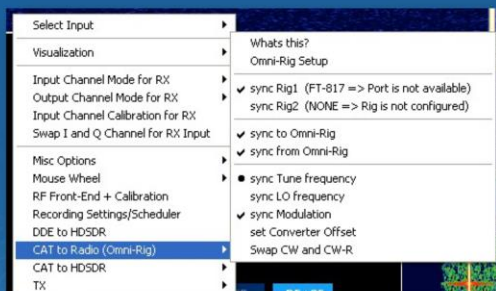
- Set the transceiver baud rate to match the application. The fastest rate reduces delays – 38,400 baud
    - The FT-817 does NOT autobaud, It must be configured manually
    - Download and install Omni-Rig with .ini files for the transceiver. Don't worry about the .ini files they're handled seamlessly during the installation.
- <http://www.dxatlas.com/OmniRig/>
- Configure Omni-Rig for use with HDSDR using the following



# Omni-Rig Configuration



- Click on HDSDR Options [F7] button



Also select 'Omni-Rig Setup' to bring up the 'Omni-Rig Settings' window and populate it with these values

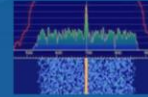
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Low Cost Paradapter

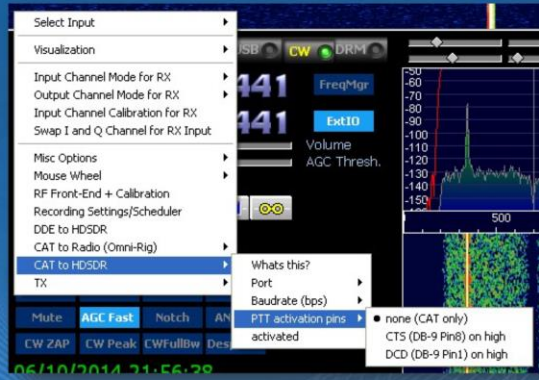
85



# Omni-Rig Configuration



- This choice enables the Tx button within the HSDR application



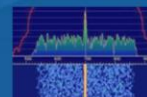
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Low Cost Panadapter

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# Omni-Rig Configuration



## And finally

- Plug in the CAT-62 cable
- Band change, tune, or Tx from either HDSDR or the FT-817. Either way settings follow you around like a puppy

**RF front-end frequency options & Calibration**

**SDR hardware coupling**

☐ SDR hardware connected to antenna (default)

☒ SDR on IF output, which is controlled by **Omni-Rig1**

**Sync Mode**

☒ Full sync in both directions

☐ Independent Tune in HDSDR

☐ Independent Tune, but sync on external change

IF-frequency:  [Hz]      Global Offset:  [Hz]

Additional Offset per Mode in Hz

| AM | FM | LSB | USB | CW_U | CW_L | DIG_U | DIG_L |
|----|----|-----|-----|------|------|-------|-------|
| 0  | 0  | 0   | 0   | 0    | 0    | 0     | 0     |

☒ Mirror RF Spectrum in general

☐ Mirror RF Spectrum for Tune >=  kHz

☐ Operate CW in lower sideband (LSB)

☐ Swap CW and CWR for Omni-Rig

☐ SDR hardware on Down/Up-Converter

LO Frequency of Down/Up-Converter in Hz:

☐ SDR hardware in undersampling mode

Sample rate of Analog-Digital Converter in Hz:

**Apply**

**LO frequency calibration**

Current Tune Frequency [Hz]:

Correct Tune Frequency [Hz]:

**Reset**      **Calculate**

Frequency correction: **+0.00 ppm**

Hint: Tune to a station with known frequency as reference, e.g. a WWV or RWH time signal. Use ECSS mode with AFC to automatically tune the reference carrier exactly. Use highest possible frequency for best calibration results.

**Phase**

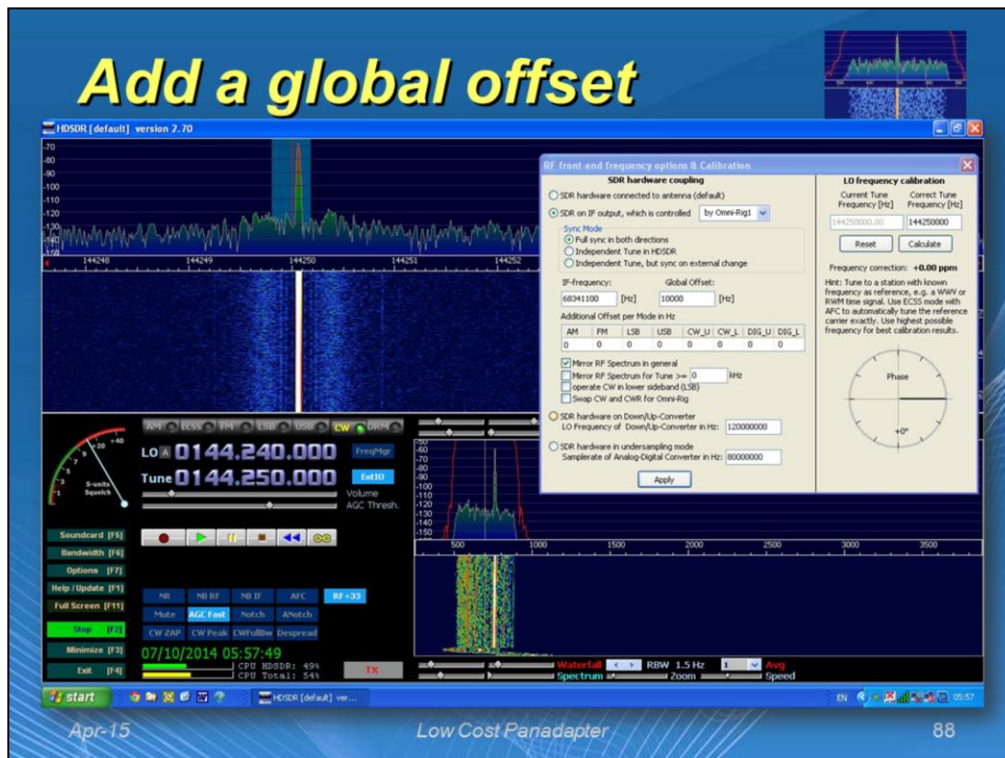
**+0°**

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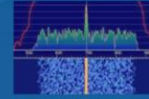




10kHz added here jut to shift CF signals away from DC as Rx DC removal was activated.



# Bibliography



## Web

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- G4HUP PAT <http://g4hup.com/PAT.htm>
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- HDSDR <http://www.hdsdr.de/>
- Omni-Rig <http://www.dxatlas.com/OmniRig/>