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Source: Ian Greenshields, G4FSU, RSGB HF Manager

Subject: HF Mode Definitions

Committee: C4

Summary:

With the increasing use of digital technology on the HF bands, many new modes appear very regularly. Requirements for band plan harmonisation, contest categories, awards etc. mean that it is helpful to group all modes into some simple terms. Although this is largely understood, many different terms are in regular use across different regions, band plans, award schemes etc.

For band planning purposes, maximum bandwidth restrictions may be used to limit certain types of mode.

Although the definitions below are in common use, it is expected that new modes will be developed as technology progresses and it is helpful to have a common definition and understanding of the fundamental types of operation used on the HF amateur bands.

CW: morse telegraphy, including with electronic keyers or computer generated. Also including computer decoded CW, but noting that this may be classed as assisted operation for some contests or awards.

Digital: also variously known as digital data modes, DM, digimodes, M2M, MGM, datamodes. These are all modes that are presumed to be computer generated and decoded, so includes any mode that cannot be coded or decoded without computer assistance. Modes such as RTTY, PSK, FT8 fall into this category.

Band plans commonly sub-divide digital modes into those having a bandwidth of less than 500 Hz and modes with a bandwidth of up to 2700 Hz.

Phone: includes classic modes such as AM, SSB, FM as well as digital voice modes whether generated and decoded by an external computer or internally within the radio.

Proposal:

That wherever possible, the terms CW, Phone and Digital modes are used as categories to define modes of operation on the HF bands.

Financial Implications: To be managed within existing meetings structure.