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Subject: Digital Principles

Committee: C5

Summary:

The increase in digital modes, their rate of change, innovative developments and on-air activity should be considered in a more strategic and less prescriptive manner. This short paper proposes a number of principles.

Background

There has been a trend by both IARU and national regulators to be 'Technology Neutral', particularly for high-level recommendations, to ensure they do not specify a particular mode. Indeed, IARU Region-1 C5 has led this by using general terms such as MGM or DV.

The increase in digital modes should be facilitated where possible by reviewing and relaxing Bandwidth restrictions that may have their origins in classical analogue modes (CW, SSB etc) – and may now impede new data modes.

The use of computing/automation can however undermine the criteria for valid QSOs for Contests, Awards etc. The IARU-R1 QSO definition should still be respected.

Proposals

- **Mode Neutrality:** The Band Plans in the VHF Managers Handbook shall remain Mode-Neutral as far as possible including for MGM, Digital Voice(DV), Digital Data (DD) and DATV, avoiding frequency designations for specific digital modes
- Whilst the IARU Band Plans should adhere to the 'Mode Neutrality' principle above, Member Societies remain free at national level to coordinate specific mode designations
- Bandwidth restrictions should be reviewed and relaxed where possible to facilitate experimental and emerging digital communications modes (but the need to be mode-neutral should still be observed)
- Digital Developers should be encouraged to avoid embedding or recommending spot frequencies, and instead to consult IARU band planners and incorporate flexibility
- Valid QSOs for contests and awards etc shall respect the IARU-R1 QSO definition and in particular the criteria that the human operator is responsible. This requires that such contacts are not invalidated by the use of automation – such as auto-completion, databases etc.

Financial Implications: None