



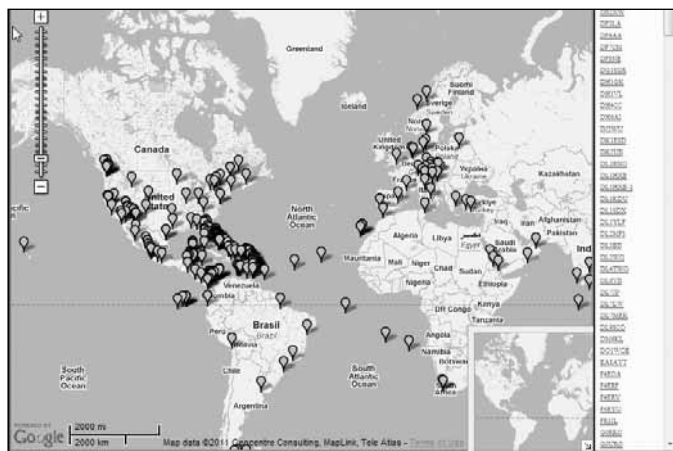
Last month I discussed the merge of Amateur Radio and the internet using the IRLP system. With this issue I hope to outline several methods of receiving email while you are cruising.

One common thread that I hear is the importance of using the Amateur Radio HF bands while cruising to communicate with the world at “home” via email.

The **General Class** license privileges will allow operation on frequencies that will allow communications where the cellphone is not useable. A series of amateur developed software programs take advantage of this capability by making it possible to send and receive emails and weather charts for no service charge, other than the cost of the equipment that makes up the amateur radio station. Many members that cruise the west coast of Vancouver Island find these capabilities important parts of their adventure.

Airmail is a Windows based messaging program, similar to Outlook, specifically designed to connect to an HF radio mailbox station. It was written by Jim Corenman, KE6RK a local cruising sailor for just this purpose; low speed data rates and variable radio noise conditions. This software has been transformed for use with two primary organized networks around the world.

Winlink2000 is an Amateur Radio based HF Email system for boaters and RV'ers. There are no service fees required, but no business traffic is allowed. The worldwide network is designed to provide your position report (with a gps connected in the hardware configuration) and the capability to download “bulletins” with weather, news, instructions, piracy information, etc.



*WinLink User Position Report Map on Thr 3 Mar 2011
20:01:41 UTC*

It uses the Airmail email client software or can direct messages to Outlook or Outlook Express. When in port it can be used with dial-up or direct internet connections such as WiFi. So far a \$1,000 radio modem by SCS provides the best performance over the air. Within the last few months a sound card “Pactor” software product called Winmor was introduced that may replace this expensive modem and use the microphone and external speaker connection on your computer to connect to your SSB radio.

Built into the software is a propagation chart that recommends which of the 47 (from the 03-03-2010 list) land based remote hosts from around the world are most likely available to you at that time.

At our February 9 SYCARC meeting our speaker was Scott Honaker, N7SS and he spoke on this topic. He also described how the Airmail Client software could be loaded on a flash drive and carried with you. When you need to download your email on an external computer you simply plug in the flashdrive and the Mail Client will configure itself for use and download the emails.

The second network is a commercial service called **SailMail**. On a paid membership fee (\$250) basis it is available for use by Iridium or Inmarsat satellite network customers, or on the Marine SSB frequencies. The use of the SailMail network of SSB coastal stations in the Maritime Mobile Radio Service frequencies proves to be the most cost effective method. Other than the membership fee and the cost of the required hardware (same as Winlink) there is no cost per message to use the network.

In both services GRided Binary or GRIB files can be received. They are data files containing weather info, usually surface winds and surface pressure on a 1 or 2 degree grid. There is a file size limitation dependent on the type of modem you are using. The file must have a .grb file extension to be passed. There are other weather services that can package information of your choice as you may require.

Get your General Class license and give it a try. ⚙️

W7SYC – For more information about Radio Rendezvous, the SYC Amateur Radio Committee or getting an amateur radio license, send an email to Dan Withers, dwithers@rodaxwireless.com or call (206) 947-2303.

