

FT-8 Notes - WCARC presentation

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1. System Requirements per K1JT

- a. SSB transceiver and antenna
- b. Computer running Windows (XP or later), Linux, or OS X
- c. 1.5 GHz or faster CPU and 200 MB of available memory; faster machines are better
- d. Monitor with at least 1024 x 780 resolution
- e. Computer-to-radio interface using a serial port or equivalent USB device for T/R switching, or CAT control, or VOX, as required for your radio-to-computer connections
- f. Audio input and output devices supported by the operating system and configured for sample rate 48000 Hz, 16 bits
- g. Audio or equivalent USB connections between transceiver and computer
- h. A means for synchronizing the computer clock to UTC within ± 1 second

2. Introductory Videos

- a. David Casler <https://youtu.be/zHXScGrsw-A>
- b. K5ACL <https://youtu.be/aAJq-0vks3c>
- c. There have been an explosion of YouTube videos, just search for your rig and "FT8"

3. Basic Software and Information from K1JT

- a. <http://physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/K1JT/wsjsx.html>
- b. Make sure you download the latest version, 18.0+. Available for Windows, Mac and Linux.
- c. Follow the link above to download the User's Guide, which is at <http://physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/K1JT/wsjsx-doc/wsjsx-main-1.8.0.html>
- d. Check your computer's time with <http://time.is>. Must be accurate to within 1 second; most Windows computers will fail this test. Try Meinberg program for NNTP, outlined here: <http://www.satsignal.eu/ntp/setup.html>

4. Sound card hardware

- a. Nothing. Hook directly to your computer's sound card. See the video at 2(b) above to see why this may not be a good idea.
- b. Cheap USB sound dongle. There are many different ones available, including this for \$7.25 from Amazon: <http://a.co/7pQ7FIP>
- c. Rig Blaster, or MFJ 1275 sound card interface, if you have one around. Unless you need it to control your older rig, you don't need it.

5. Bells & Whistles. The WSJT-X program produces an ADIF log file which you can import directly into your logging program, but if you want to do this automatically, download one of these:
 - a. JTX Alert for Windows <http://hamapps.com/>
 - b. AlarmeJT for Linux <https://sourceforge.net/projects/alarmejt/>
 - c. Ham Radio Deluxe, DXLab, Log4OM, the qrz.com logbook and N3FJP's Amateur Contact Log suite interface directly with JTXAlert. In addition, it will automatically upload your contacts to the logging program and can search the logbook database to determine which states, countries, zones, continents, etc. you need for awards.
6. Operating Tips
 - a. http://www.physics.princeton.edu/pulsar/K1JT/FT8_Operating_Tips.pdf
 - b. The WSJT program will automatically upload your contacts and spots directly Pskreporter: <https://pskreporter.info/pskmap.html>
 - c. JTX Alert will also upload your contacts and spots directly to Hamspots, which is real time: <http://www.hamspots.net>
 - d. The FT8 mode is perfect for the 2018 ARRL International Grid Chase event.