

Regarding the use of 'cut numbers' on CW...

Interesting, thanks Greg. I didn't realize that there was an actual convention for these. But I still say that in all my years of working CW, the only 'cut numbers' that I have ever heard used are N, and T (which admittedly are frequently used). Actually when sending the number 0, many guys will send an extended length 'dah', to differentiate between that and the letter T. I recognize when that cut number is being used (even though I didn't realize it was called a 'cut number'), but seldom send it myself, since I cannot do an extended dah with an iambic paddle...it only comes out as a string of 'dah's. So I figure I might as well just send 5 of them. I must admit, in that situation I often wish I could send an extended 'dah', since it is even slightly more of a pain to have to send the number 0, than it is to send the number 9 (hence the reason that those are the two most commonly used, I suspect).

Granted I'm not much of a contester, but even during those that I do take part in, I've never heard anything other than N, and T being used. The pro-signs and abbreviations though are a different matter. I recognize and use all of the most common ones of those. When I tell people that CW "is a language of its' own", it is in fact the use of the pro-signs and abbreviations that I am referring to. For me they are what provides a lot of the pleasure in making a CW contact with an experienced operator...especially the pro-signs since they all have a unique sound.

During Field Day, after just about every contact I made, I would send 'dit dit', even if the other station went right into sending QRZ FD since 'dit dit' takes no time to send...not even long enough that it is going to screw up his copying another call, should someone come back to him immediately. By sending him 'dit dit' I'm saying "I copied all of your transmission. Don't need any repeats. Thanks for the contact. CU later, 73 and enjoy the contest. I will get out of your way now, and will let you carry on with using this frequency" (pretty quick way of saying all that).

Pretty sure though if I sent A U D instead of 128, that 99.9 % of CW operators would come back with '?' And many, if not most, CW operators seem to have more trouble copying the numbers than the letters. So my philosophy would be to use the actual numbers in an effort to maintain some proficiency in receiving those.

So there you have it...my opinion on the use of pro-signs, abbreviations, and 'cut numbers'. I bet you knew you would get some kind of response from me on this, right?

73 (GV),

Rick