



The

# Broadcasters' Desktop Resource

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... edited by Barry Mishkind – the Eclectic Engineer

## Checking it Out

### A New Favorite: C. Crane's CCRadio2



*By Kevin Raper*

*[September 2011] Kevin Raper has been out looking for good radios. Recently, he took a look at the [C.Crane CCRadio-EP](#); now he has his eye on the CCRadio2. Being the big radio enthusiast he is, he just had to have one. Did he like it? Please read on.*

I caught myself using the CCRadio2 for DXing again last night, instead of monitoring the ARES Repeater.

The original reason I wanted this radio was for its 2-meter reception. I am an active Amateur Radio Operator, and I wanted to be able to monitor the SKYWARN and ARES repeaters without tying up my other 2-meter radios.

So far, it has not quite turned out that way.

#### FIRST LOOK

When my CCRadio2 first arrived, I eagerly opened up the box to see what it was like.

I was very pleased to see that this radio still has "The Look," with knobs having the quality "feel" that I have come to expect from C. Crane. The unit runs via a real AC line cord. Still, I was fully expecting the company had just slapped

the 2-meter band into a CCRadio and called it "good." Boy was I in for a surprise!



**C.Crane's CCRadio2**

After I put four D cells into the battery compartment, I noticed the LCD Display was greatly improved over my original CCRadio. On my old radio, you have to look at the display from a weird angle, or it is washed out. The display on the CCRadio2 is sharp and clear no matter how you look at it.

The dial light has also been greatly improved. The new CCRadio 2's display light is nice and even over the entire display, and has four levels

of brightness to choose from. It also stays on when operating from AC Power – and that is a big Plus in my book.

## **CHECKING 2-METERS**

As I said, the main reason I wanted this radio was for the 2-meter reception. I am right on the fringe of the SKYWARN Repeater's coverage area, so I was concerned that the radio might not pick it up well.

Well, I am happy to say it was picking up signals much better than my Alinco DJ-180 handheld. Then I took the radio out to my van and, just on the built-in whip, it was getting distant repeaters that my Icom 2200 on a K-40 2-meter antenna could not receive. That is impressive!

I did notice that the CCRadio2 has a strong birdie on 145.835, but that was the only problem birdie on 2-meters. By this point I knew I had a winner.

## **DIGGING DEEPER**

As you likely have realized by now, I am pretty fanatical about my radios and their performance.

In fact, I bought my original CCRadio because it was being marketed as the "Ultimate AM Radio." Unfortunately, it did not prove to be so. While the CCRadio was much better than average, my Panasonic R-2200 and GE Superadio II still could blow it away.

Still, when I punched up an AM station on the CCRadio2, I quickly saw that its tuner has been greatly improved. Up until this point, my best AM Radio was my CCRadio-EP, but the CCRadio2 seems like it is a bit hotter, although there is a bit more internal noise.

When I hook the radio to my Alpha-Delta SWL Sloper antenna, it really drags the stations in. But, honestly, it is not worth the trouble since the built-in 8" ferrite does just as good at pulling in stations. In fact, as I write this I am listening

on the built-in antenna to 1240 WKDK from 27 air miles away, and it sounds as if it was a local.

Another example of the sensitivity and selectivity: the CCRadio-EP and the CCRadio2 were the only two radios I have that can pull WLTQ out of the background noise (QRM).

At the time, WLTQ was on low power at 101 Watts – 165 miles away. The CCRadios were the only two radios that would get WLTQ. Not even the G5, G8, Superadio II or Optimus "Long Range" radios could get anything out of the noise. However, both of the CCRadios, "naked," with no external antenna, did.

## **AUDIO NOTES**

The audio has also greatly improved over the original CCRadio and is better than the EP.

I just wish the CCRadio2 had a selectivity switch to go from High Fidelity to High Selectivity. Still, what you get is a good compromise between the two. As with the original CCRadio, the PLL does tend to create a ringing in the speaker when the tuning dial is rotated in the presence of signals or when approaching the sidebands of a station. This is pretty typical of other Sangean-built radios.

The radio also has Line In and Line Out jacks. These will allow you to listen to your iPod (or other audio source) over the CCRadio2's speaker.

## **OVER ON FM**

The CCRadio2 is very good on FM as well. On the built-in whip it is as good as any portable radio I have.

I do wish the radio had an external FM antenna jack. I tried using alligator clips to hook my big FM antenna to the radio, and it really drags in the stations. In fact, when the warranty expires, or maybe before, I plan on installing a BNC connector to hook an external antenna to it.

Still, on the built-in whip, it brings in every station that the EP does, in fact it has slightly better sensitivity, but not as good selectivity. Like the EP, it puts out stereo audio if you plug in external headphones



The rear of the radio has AM antenna screws, Aux In (green jack), Line Out (red), and a timer switch (black). The battery compartment holds 4 D Cells.

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## WEATHER, TOO

The Weather Band performance is astounding. I get a different Weather Station on each of the seven channels. In fact I can get two different stations on several channels if I move the radio around. I think DX performance on the Weather Band is very important, so that you can hear another station if your regular NWR is knocked off the air during a storm.

The CCRadio2 is hands down the best Weather Band radio I have. It is far better than my dedicated weather radios – and even Ham

radios.

Another neat feature this radio has is a recording timer that you can connect to an external digital recorder such as the CC Witness, and use it as a "Poor man's Tivo for Radio," and recording your favorite shows while you are away.

## IN THE TRANSMITTER ROOM

Like most radios I have tested for DX use, I wanted to see what it would do in a High RF Environment, so I took it to the WCKI Transmitter Room.

I found that if you need a DX Radio to get your LP-1 or LP-2 EAS station, this just might be the radio to get. While sitting right under the 1300 WCKI Transmitter, it was bringing in 1330 WYRD from 12 miles away!

On FM it had no problem bringing in the signals from my LP-1 and LP-2 stations, and brought in many out-of-market stations too. It did have a few birdies, but they did not seem to affect the FM reception too much. Similarly, the AM Transmitter seemed to have no effect on Weather Band performance.

My other "Torture Test" for FM radios is to park just outside of the gates of the WSSL 100.5 FM tower in Gray Court, SC and see if the radio will pick up 99.9 WKSF from 67 miles away. Yup, the CCRadio2 passes that test, too.

## EFFICIENT OPERATION

Battery life should be good since the radio uses 4 D-cells, and only pulls about 41 mA no matter what mode at normal volume – reaching a maximum of 50 mA at full volume with the display light turned on.

OK, here is my one big gripe about the CCRadio2: the clock. After a few seconds, the display drops the frequency readout and displays the time.

I think there should be a switch to turn that "feature" off. Or better yet, have it display the Time and Frequency at the same time, like most of my other digital radios.

That said, over all, *I love this radio*. In fact, it is now my favorite AM/FM DX radio, although that is *not* what I got it for.

The CCRadio2 is everything I wanted in my original CCRadio – and much, much more.

But now I have a new problem: I have to tie up my favorite AM/FM radio to monitor ARES and SKYWARN.

The only solution might just be to get a second CCRadio2 so I can get back to ARES and SKYWARN.

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