



The

Broadcasters' Desktop Resource

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... edited by Barry Mishkind – the Eclectic Engineer

Broadcast Operations China – Land of Good Values



By Dana Puopolo

[January 2017] Although, at times broadcasters seem to have fewer choices these days for some products, at other times, the choices are as wide as the world. Dana Puopolo explains.

The great thing about online shopping is that it is not limited to just stores in the USA.

There is a quiet revolution happening in China, where major retailers are bypassing American companies and stores and instead offering their products direct to the American consumer.

Some of these stores even have warehouses *in* America. The only downside is that if they do not, it can take 2 to 3 weeks for your package to arrive.

That said, there are some major bargains to be had, including for broadcast use. All you have to do is take a look.

ANTENNA BARGAIN

For example, how about a one bay CP FM transmit antenna that works great, is in the FCC antenna database, is good for up to 500 Watts input, and costs under 200 dollars shipped?

Not only does this bargain antenna exist, but it is on the air at several LPFM stations and translators in the USA – and they all report it works as well as antennas costing 5 to 10 times the price. [The URL link is here.](#) The price has gone up a bit; this company used to have this antenna for \$152.00 – with a 7 Watt transmitter.

HEADPHONE PICKS

Are you looking for headphones? Gearbest.com is where you probably should look first.



For example they have clones of the AKG K-240 for sale that sound every bit as good as the original ones.

And the price: \$19.99, shipped. [Take a look, here.](#)

There are a couple tricks you should know about buying from Gearbest. First, they have multiple warehouses and the prices change by warehouse, so check them all. For example, when I checked the Chinese warehouse had the head-

phones for \$19.99 while the L.A. one was charging \$29.29.

Also, you will find their prices change during the day – you might very well find a better price at 3 AM then at 3 PM. If I want something then sometimes waiting a day or two can provide big dividends – prices can move about as much as 50%.

Gearbest also sells one of my favorite headphones: The [Superlux HD668B](#). These headphones are true reference units – good audio will sound incredibly good while bad audio will sound *incredibly bad!* They are brutally unforgiving, and as cheap as \$50 – or even as low as \$28 – shipped.

EARBUDS TOO

I also bought my favorite IEMs (earbuds) from Gearbest,



Like the Superlux headphones, [these Xiaomi dual driver earphones](#) also are unforgiving; great sounds great and bad indeed sounds bad.

As this is written, the cost, including shipping is just \$15.50. Even better, they make [a slightly lesser \(but still very good\)](#) version of these and at times they can cost under \$5.00! They are a bit more expensive today (\$5.13), but still quite reasonable.

Another hint when buying from Gearbest: different colors have different prices. For example today I found the pink ones are the cheapest. This is no problem if I am buying them for my daughters but for me I think I will buy the silver ones for 50¢ more.

CELL PHONES

Xiaomi also makes *killer-priced* cell phones at very good prices.



I know several people who have them and are more than satisfied with them. For example, this model has a 2 GHz 8-core processor, a 5-inch screen with 3 GB of OS RAM, 32 GB of program storage and 1080P video – [all for \\$179.00!](#)

Gearbest's 99 cent deals are pretty cool too, and they sell all kinds of cables and adapters for really good prices.

SOME GREAT QUANTITY BUYS

If you are looking for something in quantity then my suggestion is Ali Express' wholesale division, at Alibaba.com. They have some great deals on quantity stuff.

For example, a client needed some 450 MHz portables (walkie talkies) and I found a company on Alibaba that sold me six of their 2 Watt units (FCC Part 74 and business band Certified) for \$8.95 each! They have worked out great and are very well built.

An advertisement for COMREX BRIC-Link II. At the top left is the COMREX logo with the tagline 'BROADCAST RELIABLE'. The main text reads 'Point-to-Point Codec for Audio Over Internet'. Below this is a dark blue box containing the product name 'BRIC-Link II' in a stylized font. At the bottom right is a white button with the text 'LEARN MORE' and a right-pointing arrow. The background of the ad is a dark blue gradient with a faint image of the device at the bottom.

Most companies on Alibaba will also negotiate with you for single unit pricing too – just tell them that you need one or two units for evaluation. I have found the companies there are willing to bend over backwards to satisfy their customers, something that is actually quite refreshing!

These companies also offer interesting stuff not found anywhere else. Here is an example of [a matching balun](#) designed to match a random wire to a receiver. – for under 10 dollars shipped. They also have a pretty good primer on how to use it also – and check out the illustrations!

PARTS AND KITS

It is well worth an hour or two looking around on these sites. The variety of stuff is amazing – as are the prices!

One can also buy parts on these sites at great prices: How about [five 5532 opamps for 50¢](#)? Or maybe you need [100 of them](#) – that will cost you a whole \$5.50:

For those of you who like to build kits, here is one for [a three-tube regenerative receiver for under \\$40](#). You should also check out the other

offerings, there is a ton of other kits on the AliExpress site.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE CAUTIOUS

One caveat – if you decide to shop for clothing remember that their sizing is in *metric* and do your conversion, lest you find your clothes will be far too small.

I know that many have reservations about shopping offshore. I have been shopping with these companies for almost two years now and only once did something get lost. In that one case the company gave me the option of having the item reshipped or a refund, no questions asked. I asked for a re- shipment and had it in under a week – they shipped it express for free.

It is also worth recommending that you should use Paypal to pay for your order. That way you have additional recourse if any problems arise.

I hope this has been educational and informative. Enjoy your online trip to the Far East!

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