

Continuing on in the use of IRLP. Last month we discussed the basics to get you up and running. We spoke about connecting to a node and the protocol required to make that connection and the how to contact somebody at the other end.

IRLP nodes have time outs on them just like any normal repeater. These time outs vary between 1 minute and 4 minutes, so if you speak too long you time out and drop off. The time out facility on the IRLP node is controlled by the software on the nodes associated computer, not necessarily by the repeater itself. Therefore, if the node is set to time out after 3 minutes and the repeater is set to time after 4 minutes you will time out after 3. The time outs for the repeaters and nodes are affected by the times set on both receive and transmit repeaters and nodes.

Occasionally when you try to disconnect at the end of a session the system will not disconnect. If this occurs, then the system will automatically disconnect after 15 minutes of inactivity. This is not an ideal situation as it means that repeaters at both ends of the connection are still connected and that can then interfere with any local communication that may be wishing to use the repeater. The auto time out is really only a last-ditch fail-safe fix, so I suggest that if you can't disconnect immediately leave it for a minute or so and try again.

In your reading about IRLP you may have come across the term "reflector". A reflector in IRLP parlance is a computer that is connected to multiple nodes. It allows many nodes to be interconnected simultaneously. The time out process is overridden by entering a sequence of codes known to the reflector's administrator. A normal IRLP connection gives you a one-to-one connection whereas connecting through a reflector gives you a one to many connection. To connect to a reflector, you use a four-digit number the same as you would for a normal node. These reflector node numbers are found on the IRLP web site.

Most IRLP communication is through repeaters that use 2m or 70cm. Occasionally you will find a node that uses 6m or another frequency. Foundation licensees need to be aware of what frequency the nodes they are calling is on. If it is a frequency that under their licence rules they are not permitted to use then that is what applies except if it is in another country. Therefore, if I, as an F call contact a node that is on 6m in Australia I am outside my band allocation and should not use it, but if I contact a node in the USA that is on 6m I am permitted to use it. Note that currently I am not aware of any nodes anywhere in the world that use anything but 2m or 70cm.

That's it from me for this month on IRLP. Next month we will look at the actual physical side of the IRLP network. Where the computers come into it, is it really Amateur Radio or is it just a different form of Skype.