

CW Operation:

Now simply called "CW", radio communication by Morse code was the only way to communicate for the first decade or more of Amateur Radio. Radiotelegraphy, the proper name, descends from landline (wired) telegraphy of the 19th century, and retains some of the old culture, including a rich set of abbreviations and procedures. Morse sent by spark gap transmitter was the first wireless communication mode. These "damped waves" were very broad and inefficient for communication. They were soon replaced by "Continuous Wave" (CW) transmission, using vacuum tube oscillators that were capable of a very pure note. Today, modern Amateur Radio transceivers use solid state components and microprocessors to support a variety of communication modes including CW, voice, image and many digital data modes. Traditional and current CW consists of the dots and dashes of Morse Code, which represent individual letters, numbers, and punctuation. These symbols can be sent by straight key, which is what most of us envision when we think of code. It can also be sent with a keyer, which generates the dots and dashes, and is what is being used at our station now. The code can also be sent by computer. Let's face it, ham radio operators were the first texters.