

## CW TOOLS

From the Shack of KE7IET

I thought I might list some of the resources I've used while attempting to learn CW. I've been trying to learn CW for many years now. At this point, I think I could start getting on the air. I just need to work up the courage to do it. I guess I'll need some practice now if I want to do some SOTA activations later this year.

### **Koch CW Trainer Software from G4FON**

<http://www.g4fon.net/>

Free

This free Windows program uses the Koch method to teach letters, numbers, and punctuation. Basically, you start with the letters ðKö and ðMö at your desired speed. The computer sends the code for those two letters in a random order. It sends the letters in five-character groups for the time period you specify. You copy the code, then you can compare your results with the text printed on the screen.

Once you've become proficient with those two letters, you tell the software to give you a third letter. When you master that, you move on to four, then five, and so on.

When I used this software, I would type the code I heard into a program called WinMerge. (WinMerge is normally used to show the differences between two source code files.) When the computer was finished sending, I would copy the text it sent into WinMerge as well. WinMerge would then show me the differences between what was sent and what I copied.

### **Morse Toad (Smartphone App)**

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.mikelovesrobots.morsetoad&hl=en>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/morse-toad/id906586079?mt=8>

Free

This app may not be the best way to learn code, but it helped me when I didn't have time to sit in front of a computer. It's also based on the Koch method, but it only sends one character at a time. You touch the character you heard immediately after the app sends it. The app then gives you immediate feedback after each character. This probably won't help you increase your CW speed, but I liked the immediate feedback while learning the characters.

### **Morse Code Podcasts**

<http://www.morseresource.com/podcasts.php>

Free

This website posts new CW audio files each day, and they have separate podcast feeds for different CW speeds. The audio files contain a selection of quotes of the day sent as CW. Be aware that the podcast episodes are all pure CW (no voice). If you want to check your work, there's a link on the page listed above that shows the text of the quotes used in the podcast.

### **Learn CW Online**

<http://lcwo.net>

Free

This website is dedicated to learning CW. Admittedly, I only used a small portion of the functionality offered. The feature I used most was the page that converts any text into an MP3 file containing the CW for that text. I used that page to convert news articles to CW, then I would play the CW and try to copy it. However, the website offers many other services that may appeal to you.

### **RufzXP**

<http://www.rufzxp.net/>

Free

This is the tool I've been using lately. I believe it also supports Koch-method learning like other software on the list, but its differentiating feature helps you increase your CW speed. It sends actual amateur call signs one at a time. You type the call sign you hear into a box on the screen. It then compares what it sent with what you heard and shows you the result. The more call signs you type correctly, the faster the software sends the code. If you make mistakes, the software sends slower.

One nice feature of this software is its score-keeping ability. A score is assigned each time you type a call sign. The scores are added at the end of the 50-call sign session, and the software tells you where you fell in that computer's high-score list.

### **CW Studio**

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=net.infocamp.cwstudio.v1>

\$0.99

This app gives you your choice of simulated iambic paddles or a straight key on your smartphone screen. You can use the paddle or key to send CW, and the app will attempt to decode the CW you send. It's a way to practice sending CW, although tapping a screen isn't quite the same as using real paddles or a real key.

### **Fldigi**

<https://sourceforge.net/projects/fldigi/files/>

Free

If you have a computer with a microphone and a code practice oscillator, Fldigi will dutifully listen to you practice sending CW. Just configure Fldigi to listen for CW (instead of RTTY or PSK31), put your microphone near your code practice oscillator, and start sending.

There are also some tools I'd like to use, but I haven't yet.

### **Iambic Master**

<https://sites.google.com/site/korkowp1/iambic-master>

Free (software)

\$89 (Winkeyer USB hardware)

I learned about this software through a blog post (<http://ve3wdm.blogspot.com/2016/03/iambic-master.html>). From what I've read, this software can help you improve your fist by requiring you to send CW smoothly. Unfortunately, I haven't sprung for the necessary Winkeyer hardware, so I don't have any experience with it yet.

## **Pileup Runner**

<http://www.dxatlas.com/pileuprunner/>

Free

I haven't tried this software yet because it may be a bit beyond my ability right now. The software simulates a CW pileup calling you. From what I understand, you have to pick call signs out of the pileup and respond. I don't know whether it's possible to respond via CW key, but it appears that responses are normally done via keyboard.

This is by no means a comprehensive list. You may find other tools that work better for you than those I've listed here. I guess the best tool of all is the one I still haven't gathered the courage to use yet: getting on the air.

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