

"Flea-Speak" Translations of the things you hear in the Ham Radio Flea Market

"This rig puts out a BIG signal!" (The rig flat tops and distorts so bad, your signal will be at least 50 kHz wide!)

"The signal quality of this rig was easily recognizable in its day." (The high distortion and bad audio quickly identified this rig.)

"This rig has wide frequency coverage." (It drifts up and down the band, and sometimes drifts out of band.)

"The tubes used by this rig are worth the asking price." (The rig uses a rare 7360 beam deflection tube for a balanced modulator, but it's blown so you'll have to spend \$80 to get a new one.)

"This rig will bring back the feelings and atmosphere of vintage ham gear.." (The bypass capacitors to the AC line put enough voltage on the chassis to give you a shock in the lips through the microphone, and it smokes so bad when you turn it on that you'll probably start coughing and wheezing.)

"This is a really good CW rig." (It doesn't work on SSB.)

"This is a really good SSB rig." (It doesn't work on CW.)

"This is a really good rig." (It doesn't work on CW or SSB.)

"The transmitter is outstanding." (It doesn't receive.)

"The receiver is really hot." (It doesn't transmit.)

"This rig is really hot." (It is stolen.)

"It seems to be a vintage regenerative type." (It oscillates.)

"Frequency stability is great." (The VFO doesn't work - you'll have to use crystals.)

"I just retubed it." (Got 'em from questionable used tube stock.)

"I just aligned it." (All the slugs on the transformers are now snugged down real tight.)

"This is the rig of my dreams. I really wanted one of these as a kid, but now I've got to let it go." (As I've gotten older, I've learned what a hunka junk it is.)

"Real popular rig in its day." (Yeah, there were whole HF nets on the repair and maintenance problems.)

"I'd keep this baby, but my wife is making me clean everything out." (I finally got around to giving this thing the proverbial heave-ho.)

"QST gave this one a really great review." (The language in the article broke literary ground for profanity.)

"I don't know if it works." (Translation: it doesn't work, probably never has.)

"It might need a bit of tweaking." (Translation: Marconi himself couldn't fix it, much less align it.)

"It was used in government service." (Translation: after the govt. technician tried to solder the loose connections with an acetylene torch, it was stored outdoors on a wooden pallet during hurricane season.)

"The dial drive may need lubricating." (Translation: the gears are stripped and all the setscrews are hopelessly frozen.)

"I plugged it in to check that it lights up." (Translation: the light came from the two foot high flames.)

"It doesn't chirp." (Translation: it doesn't chirp because it doesn't transmit.)

"The audio sounds great." (Translation: the 60Hz buzz is faithfully reproduced.)

"I'm selling it because I have two of them." (Translation: I'm getting rid of my parts radio.)

"You won't find one at a better price." (Translation: "Better," in this case, meaning from the point of view of the seller.)

"There are a couple of other people interested in it." (Translation: someone sat on it to tie his shoelaces while walking past the table.)

"This has become a collector's item." (Translation: the manufacturer went belly up six months ago and won't honor the warranty.)

How to understand the flea-market seller

"You'd better buy it now, because I'm leaving soon." (Translation: The previous buyer and his brother, Guido, are heading back toward the table and they aren't smiling.)

"It came from an estate sale." (Translation: If you have any problem take it up with the owner.)

"I had it on the air just last night." (Translation: And you thought the "woodpecker" was gone.)

"I only use it for ragchewing with friends." (Translation: He was the guy on 3898 whispering "Rod....neeey" into the microphone for two hours.)

"I just had it serviced." (Translation: his kid brother opened the lid and sprayed WD-40 over all the wiring.)

"It comes with the original box." (Translation: Just brush out the kitty litter and hold your nose when you open it.)

"Better buy it now, cause it won't last." (Translation: none needed)

"I just gave it a thorough cleansing" - (And still failed to remove thirty years worth of accumulated cigarette smoke...)

"Is equipped with all options" - (Besides the ones I removed to sell separately...)

"I cannot find a blemish or fault with the unit" - (Other than the fact that 3/4 of the case is rusted and/or oxidized...)