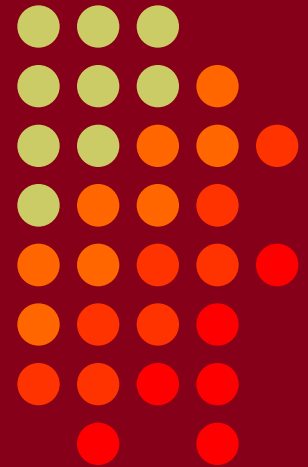


CTU Presents

Contest Hints and Kinks –
for Operators
Ward Silver, NØAX



• CTU •
CONTEST
UNIVERSITY

ICOM®

Goals of the Session



- Provide tips, suggestions, and guidelines
- Give you ideas for your own circumstances
- Find “Score dB’s” and “low-hanging fruit”
- Develop confidence in your own abilities
- Laff

Assumptions about you



- Contesting for a couple of years
- You feel comfortable with CQ or S&P
- Maybe a Division, State, or Regional winner?
- Decent radios and antennas
- Taken and given some lumps
- Want to give some more lumps
- What's the best way to get better?

How To Use This Course



- Not a how-to cookbook
- Follow in the text
- Take short notes
- Record those ideas!

Continuous Improvement



- When asked what was the most powerful force in the Universe, Albert Einstein replied, “Compound interest.”

Continuous Improvement



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- Incremental improvement, applied relentlessly, is unstoppable.

Continuous Improvement



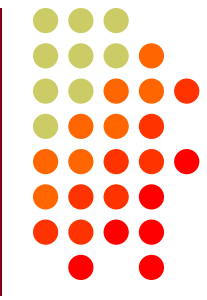
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Continuous Improvement



- When asked what was the most powerful force in the Universe, Albert Einstein replied, “Compound interest.”
- Incremental improvement, applied relentlessly, is unstoppable.
- Plaques are won a dB at a time
- Hints & Kinks are the ham radio equivalent of incremental improvement.

Cycle of Life



Observe

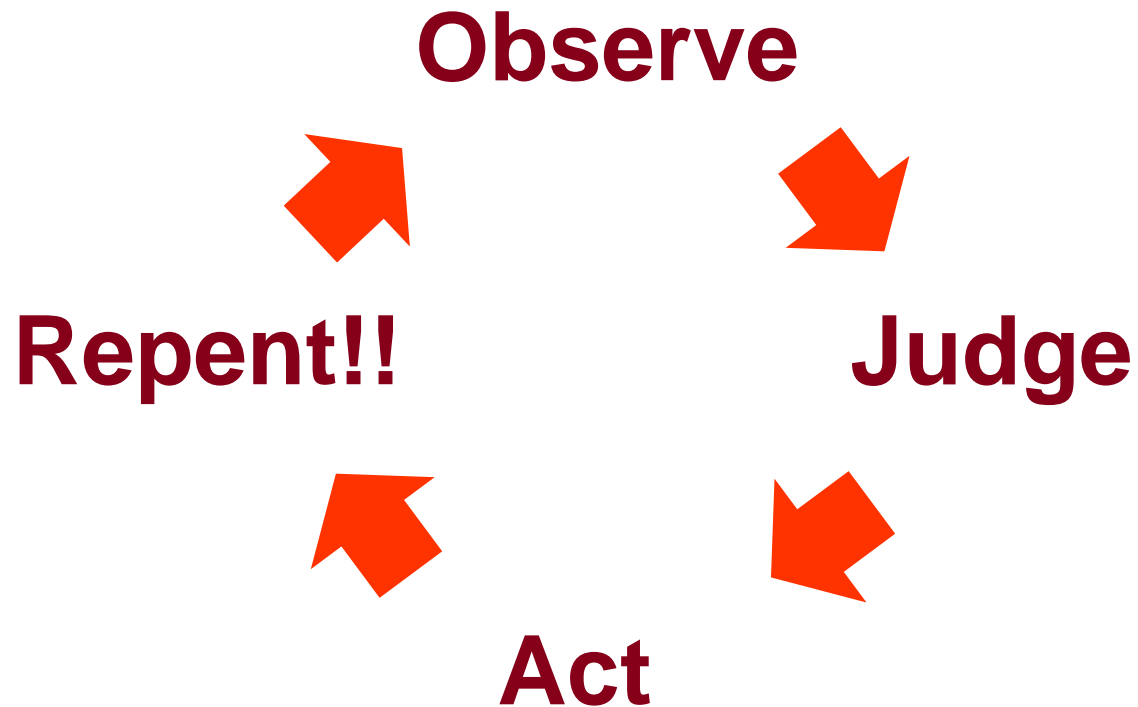
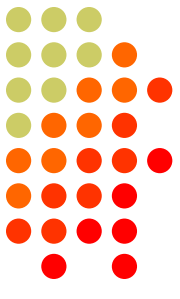


Judge



Act

Cycle of Life



Layers



- Contest success is incremental
- Peel the onion
- Operator improvement is continuous
- Study and analyze and plan
- Address the obvious deficiencies first
- Choose wisely, grasshopper...

Ergonomics



- Ergonomics
 - Incredibly important
 - Fun or Slog? – Choose!
 - Maintain concentration, remove distractions
 - Make it **EASY** to do the right thing!
 - Especially when you are tired...
 - Labels and logical layout
 - Preserve and enhance accuracy

Ergonomics



- Head and Eyes
- Back & Arms
- Your Butt
- Fitness (Before and During)
- Stay Alert & Engaged
- Caffeine – manage your body

Fitness



- Personal fitness
 - Blood flow and stamina
- Techniques for remaining alert
 - Diet, Catnaps, Breaks
- Understand your body rhythms
- Pacing - trade low-rate periods for sleep
 - Review old logs to find the right off-times
- The 90-minute magic

Knowledge



- Know your station equipment
- Study propagation – include possible events
- Learn your software
 - Turn OFF unneeded features and options
- Recognize calls
- Learn the goofy prefixes and zones
- Memorize approximate bearings by zone

Plan



- What is propagation likely to be like?
- What is propagation Plan B?
- What did you do wrong last time – fix that
- Set goals on a time line
- Look for active station lists and recent spots
- Set break times in advance

Technique



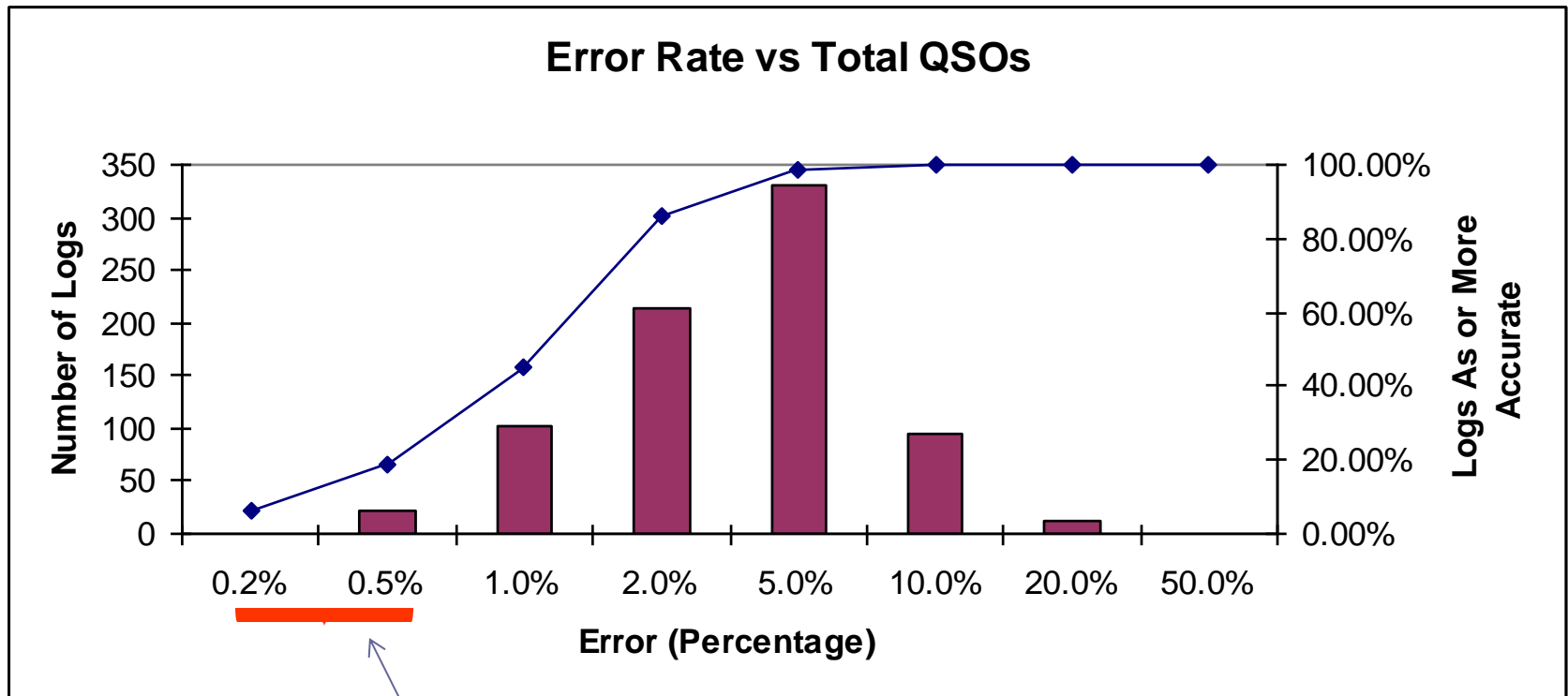
- Number one source of score dB's
- Practice makes the master
- Listen to the masters – up close and personal
 - Start working with multi-op teams
 - Or start one!
 - Ask them questions!
- Trade recordings or listen live

Technique Gimme's



- Run more and whenever you can
 - Find propagation that allows your station to run
 - You don't have to be on the band edge!
 - Think signal-to-noise on both ends
- Learn when **NOT** to log it! Avoid penalties!
- Type – send – speak – copy accurately
- Breathe, be consistent, find a rhythm
- Keep your BIC (Butt In the Chair)

Accuracy



Here are the Top Ten – get there!

Accuracy



- Go for world class accuracy (<1% error)
- Study that LCR/UBN report
 - What do you consistently miss?
 - What do others consistently miss from you?
- Pull out full calls
- Avoid databases and be wary of prefill
- Don't trust spots from any source
- Learn not to guess and when to move on

Resources



- Your club, other contesters, public logs
- Record your operating and review (painful)
- Review your LCR and compare to the log
- Use analyzers like *CBS*, *SH5*, *LogView*, etc
- NCJ and other magazine/web articles
- Study other brain-intensive sports and games
- Use simulators like *RUFZ* and *MorseRunner*

Thanks!



- And go get 'em!