

## DIGIs VS NODES VS BBS

WHAT IS A DIGIPEATER?

WHAT IS THIS “V” OR “VIA” ABOUT?

A Digipeater is simply a “SIMPLEX REPEATER.” Just like a Voice Simplex Repeater. They are not stations you can connect to, they are just repeaters. It is a computer program, placed usually in something called a TNC, to Encode/Decode packet framing information. It doesn't care what is inside the framing info; it will resend the transmission anyway no matter how many rejects you get.

You could say this is like a voice repeater without a tone or any noise filtering method. Noise appears and the transmitter resends it anyway. Rather sparse on the error checking side, but you can still talk on it. Digipeaters are the same way. Great for backup links and when you need them, but mostly not much use until there isn't a NODE, then they are gold.

**To use a Digipeater to make a connection (for all):**

Do a connect as normal, but add the “via” or “v” after call:

“C AD7DY via KC7USS”: or  
“C AD7DY v KC7USS”

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## WHAT IS A NODE?

A NODE is simply not just a “SIMPLEX REPEATER” except an intelligent one. Some are more intelligent than others, just like voice repeaters. Unlike a repeater, though, you have to connect to a NODE and let it control the flow of traffic (does much better job than humans).

It is a computer program, which can be in a computer or in a TNC, which Encodes/Decodes packet framing information. Unlike the Digipeater program, however, the NODE cares what happens inside the framing information and the addressing information (who are you sending to or trying to contact). Before you get upset, the NODE is looking only for the proper formatting, not any content. It cares nothing about the content will not reject you on that basis.

The NODE establishes a one-on-one relationship with you and the next station in line. It only talks to the two of you. This helps prevent something called “crashes.” This happens when two packet stations send at the same time and their packets collide and wipe each other out.

The NODE is like a guardian to make sure that each packet is sent out when it should be and that each packet has the correct formatting. If it receives a “bad packet” it calls back and says send it again. This continues until a “good packet” is received or the NODE gets tired and times out.

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### HOW MANY KINDS OF NODES ARE THERE?

There are numerous types of NODES and they can be almost and new ones seem to come along all the time. One that seems to be universal is that of the computer itself. There are DOX, Linux, Windows, and WinXP. I've heard that in Europe they even have one for the McIntosh. The most used programs include G8BPQ, Xrouter, and FlexNet. These are usually identifiable because they have only one SID (sub-ID), the number on the rear. For instance, the SHELTON Node uses only "W7SMC-8."

There are also NODES independent of computers such as the Kantronics "KA NODE," (singly or in a stack) or the AEA or MFJ and other units. We have several different makes and models operating from high peaks in the area. Some may call themselves "GATEWAYS," but they are all the all work about the same, just with different commands.

One of the versatile is the "STACKED NODE" which uses TNCs with the main chip replaced with the "X1J" Program. The NODE gets its name because TNCs are easily stacked one on top of the other, in a stack, and connected by a diode matrix. It does not need an external computer to run it. Each TNCs internal "X1J Program" allows each of the TNCs in the stack to talk and route connections to each other. This is because each TNC has its own call (SID) making different from the others.

There are also combinations where the "Stacked Node" and the computer are used together.

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A BBS is basically a Post Office and Bulletin Board Message Storage Unit.

BBSs are great for storing messages and waiting for the receive to come around and pick them up. Its sort of like having a Post Office Box where you go pick up you mail every day.

A BBS can be set to auto deliver mail to your station after a period of time like a mail carrier. There are technical and programming things that have to be done on both ends before it can work.

In and emergency/disaster situation the BBS should be the farthest thing from your mind. The idea is “get the message to the addressee” not have it hung up in a mailbox somewhere.

BBSs also have other features to them. Most of their owners have Call Sign programs, some have satellite calculations, and some have the ability to figure grid square/latitude/longitude/locations, along with other features that match the type of computer systems they are using. More Later.