

FOCUS ON Radio Control

by Dennis McFarlane

Futaba FASST WTR-7 Wireless Trainer System

The “buddy box” training system goes wireless

In this age of rapidly changing electronics, it is easy to miss a new product. Many times dealers who do their best to stay abreast of the market have inventoried the latest and greatest electronic device only to have it superseded, even become obsolete, before the product receives much consumer exposure. Many dealers have become somewhat hesitant at putting new electronic products into inventory for this very reason.

Every now and then a new product comes along that is simple, won't become obsolete in the foreseeable future and fills a position in the hobby market. The Futaba FASST WTR-7 Wireless Training System appears to be one of those products.

The “buddy-box” system of training radio control aircraft to pilots has been around for years. In fact, the buddy-box hard wire link between two transmitters revolutionized the way model airplane pilots are instructed. Gone forever are the days of reaching around a student's arms or passing a transmitter back and forth trying to teach a student how to fly a radio control airplane. As a club instructor, I know how well the buddy-box system of instruction works. I've linked many a student to my transmitters over the years. As much as I like the buddy-box system and would never consider going back to the good ole days of instruction, the system does have one shortcoming—the hard-wire link. When new, the buddy cords are fine, but as time passes they seem to somehow become entanglements of twists and knots. Oftentimes, as much effort is spent on getting to the flight-line without tripping over the cord as is spent in getting the student ready to fly. All instructors go through this and have just learned to accept it.

The Futaba WTR-7 Wireless Trainer System is exactly what the name says. It is a small, compact, lightweight device that eliminates the hard-wire link between student and



instructor. Included with the WTR-7 is the wireless device itself, a mini screwdriver – for linking the system to the master transmitter - and a piece of Velcro tape. Putting the WTR-7 into operation couldn't be simpler. The instructions are printed on one side of an 8.5 x 11-inch piece of paper. There is more time spent on specifications and precautions than on actually explaining what to do, which can be summed up in a very short time.

What you do is to plug the device into the back of a Futaba FASST transmitter, turn the transmitter on and link the WTR-7 to the transmitter. That's pretty much it. Once linked to the student's transmitter, the device gets moved to the instructor's transmitter. From then on everything works exactly the same as if there were a cord linking the two transmitters. The included piece of Velcro is used to hook the WTR-7 to the instructor's transmitter so it doesn't dangle.

Although the student's transmitter must be a Futaba FASST transmitter, the instructor's transmitter can be any Futaba transmitter with a square plug receptacle. 2.4 GHz, 72 MHz, FM-PPM, PCM, PCM-G3—it doesn't matter what the mode of operation of the instructor's transmitter is. There are only two requirements. One, the transmitter has a square receptacle, and, two, the transmitter is set to 7channel mode; something that is easily accomplished in the “parameters” section of the programming menu.

My first demonstration of the WTR-7 was at the regular monthly

meeting of the Fox Valley Aero Club. I had brought a Great Planes Nieuport XI along for what the club members thought was going to be a “show-and-tell” of the model airplane. As I was explaining the airplane to the club members I handed the chief club flight instructor, Dan Compton, a



The first real test of the WTR-7 came when Ed Rogala and I got together for an indoor photo shoot using a Great Planes VFO. The WTR-7 is easy to set up, and there are no bulky cords connecting the transmitters.



Futaba 10CG transmitter while I also held a 7C transmitter in my hands. Without telling anyone what I was up to I simply looked at Dan, who was staring in wonder at the transmitter he'd been handed, and said, "By the way Dan, it's your airplane to fly." Dan began to wiggle the sticks. At that point I went into an explanation of the wireless system and how it worked.

Don't let these units languish on your shelf. Attend club meetings and bring one with you to demonstrate how the system works.

There was an immediate amount of interest. A question and answer session followed the demonstration. Dan had a huge smile on his face as I flipped the trainer toggle switch off and on between the two transmitters while walking around the meeting room floor. After years of tripping over cords, Dan unquestionably saw the advantage of wireless instruction.

The Futaba FASST WTR-7 is one of those new devices that dealers should consider for inventory. Like the buddy-box system itself, the WTR-7 is an idea that may take a little time to completely catch on, but after seeing the reaction of my club's chief flight instructor, there is definitely a place in the market.

If I may make a recommendation, do not simply order a couple of these devices and let them sit on the shelf. Take one to the various flying clubs in your market and demonstrate how it works during a show-and-tell session. This is one way to put this product in the minds of your customers, especially club flight instructors. Once demonstrated, selling the product to the customer, instructor or club should become a regular part of your business. **HM**

We Have The Answer To All Your R/C Model Power Boating Needs!



Octura® Models, Inc.

7351 N. Hamlin Ave. • Skokie, IL 60076
(847) 674-7351



Guillow's
www.guillow.com
P.O. Box 229, Wakefield, MA 01880-0329 U.S.A.
Tel: 800-216-1773 Fax: 800-789-9891

skyfly max
maximum flying fun



Everything a trainer should be...and more

- Powerful brushless motor system
- Full 4-channel 2.4GHz radio control
- Completely equipped — ready to fly

Wingspan: 47 in (1195 mm)

Flyzone™
how high will you soar

flyzoneplanes.com/94n