

Wouxun KG-UV3D Review

By: K4SGT

I recently picked up one of the new Chinese import portable radios by the manufacturer Wouxun. I bought my radio from HRO Atlanta for \$119.99 plus tax. There are currently three different models being offered through various ham radio dealers and they are all competitively priced as compared to the usual ham radio brands. The version that I have is the KG-UV3D which is the newest offering from Wouxun. My radio supports 2m and 70cm operation. It features dual RX and also an FM broadcast receiver. The radio has a lot to offer for it's \$119.99 average price tag. The menu system is not that difficult to learn although some of the menu item names are not intuitive, but either way I suggest that you program this radio from your home PC. There are some features that can only be accessed from the programming software and this is reason enough to never bother with programming the radio from the keypad. If you are traveling and you need to operate in VFO mode and enter different PL codes then be sure to bring along your manual (which is sometimes hard to read due to poor English translations). So, with that said it should be obvious that this radio is not a perfect product. Lets explore what is wrong with the radio.

The radio has some definite engineering issues. I guess that the Chinese have a ways to go yet in their quest to take over the world of radios. One of my biggest complaints is the scanning features. First, the scan rate is very slow. That is okay I guess since this is not a scanner, but it would be nice if it could scan at at least twice the speed that it does. At present if you scan a lot of channels then you are going to miss the first parts of most of the transmissions. Second, if you have the auto light feature enabled then the light comes on every time the radio resumes scan after pausing on an active channel. Can you say dead battery? Third, if you program a channel to only open with a RX PL tone in order to eliminate your radio breaking squelch when receiving computer or other interference on said frequency you will quickly discover that the radio still stops scanning on these frequencies and gets stuck there even though the squelch isn't opened. This renders the scan feature useless around a home PC no matter how you program the radio. In summary, my findings are that the scan feature is going to be mostly useless to most everyone out there. If these issues were to be addressed and a nuisance delete feature were to be added then this would go a LONG way to making this one of the greatest radios that is being offered to the ham radio community.

Even with the scan feature issues I still think that this radio has a lot to offer in the budget radio category. You get a lot for your money in this radio. It seems to be built fairly well. I do have some concerns about the battery mating to the plastic body of the radio. If the metal chassis of the radio were to be extended here and the battery mated to that instead it would go a long way for durability. As long as you do not abuse your radio then this will probably not ever be an issue, though. There are a lot of things to like about this radio. First, the price! Second, the radio comes with a nice lithium ion battery pack and a drop in charger unit. The accessories are affordable too and on par with other offering from other brands. If you want a more durable external speaker mic then the one Wouxun offers then check out the one that Prime makes. Other things to like are dual V/V V/U U/U RX, split V/U or U/V TX and RX capability, FM broadcast reception while simultaneous monitoring of another frequency (the unit will mute the FM broadcast when RX or TX traffic on the dual monitor), and a built in flashlight. The size of the unit is handy and compares with a Yaesu VX-7.

RX and TX audio quality seems fine. The unit also seems to be very RX sensitive which is a good thing. I can't say how well the unit rejects strong local interference yet as I haven't taken it to a tower site yet. I'll get back with you on that. Would I recommend this radio to my friends? Yes, with the

caveat that the scanning function is severely lacking. Would I pick up another KG-UV3D? I plan to due to the fact that it is such a bargain. Would I trust all future products from Wouxun to be great? No! Due to the extreme failure of the engineering staff to effectively implement the scanning feature on this radio, I can not trust that they will ever put out a perfect product. Honestly, this product is not ready for consumption due to the scan function issues (yet I want another one). I am highly interested in the new mobile that Wouxun is said to be working on, but I am afraid that there will be stupid quirks with it just as this portable has. As long as it's cost is ridiculously cheap, I will be picking one up to review. I hope that this review helps you in deciding if the Wouxun KG-UV3D is for you. Thanks for reading!

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Image stolen from andrewrlynch.com. He also has a review of the unit there.

