

Howto: Installing FT-817 Commander under Linux

Installing FT-817 Commander on a Linux computer

Simon Brown, HB9DRV, has written an excellent piece of software called FT-817 Commander, to complement the Yaesu FT-817 HF-UHF portable transceiver. This software is currently freely available and can be obtained from the Yahoo! FT-817 interest group and from other locations. This article refers to software version 2.2 Beta build 739.

FT-817 Commander is 'Windows only' software – but it will install and run just fine under wine, the free, open-source, Windows compatible API that is available for most Linux distributions.

I have installed and tested FT-817 Commander under Ubuntu 12.04LTS workstation on a 3.0GHz P4, on a 2GHz Centrino and on an Asus EeePC (1.6GHz Intel Atom) . All machines were running wine 1.7.

Installation

FT-817 Commander can be downloaded as a windows self-installing package. The package file in the version that I use is called “FT817Build739.exe”. With most wine installations you should be able to double-click that file and have it run directly. If that does not work, use your terminal to cd to the appropriate directory and type:

```
wine ./FT817Build739.exe
```

The Windows installer will run.

The installer does not put a link to the FT-817 Commander application on your desktop (with or without the icon, depending on your distribution – during installation I suggest that you take the option to start the application once it has installed).

NOTE: For any windows help files to work, you'll need to ensure that wine-gecko is installed. This is worthwhile and can be done using the System/Administration/Synaptic Package Manager tab. It doesn't seem to matter if this is installed after the application.

Running & Setup

FT-817 Commander is a pretty simple application and does not require many specific settings. However, you will need to connect the radio to your serial port and select a COM port before the machine will talk to the radio at all. The application has an auto-select feature which appears to work well as, once the COM ports are properly set up to work under wine, you just need to use the automatic feature and the port and speed will be selected automatically. Of course your Linux machine doesn't know about the limitations of memory-addressed i/o imposed by primitive Windows so a mapping needs to be made in order to make the COM ports work.

I used USB-FT-817 adapter from eBay. This was inexpensive and cost about £5 and

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works well with any machine running Windows, Linux or Mac OS X. The supplied driver is only needed for Windows owing to its very primitive i/o arrangements.

Once such a device is plugged in to your Ubuntu based machine, you will find that a new device is automagically created in the /dev directory. To find this type:

```
ls -al /dev | more
```

and use the space bar to tab through what might be an unfeasibly long list. You are looking for a device (or more than one) with the name:

```
/dev/ttyUSBx
```

where 'X' is an integer.

In my case, the first serial port was called /dev/ttyUSB0. You then need to find your wine devices directory thus:

```
cd ~/.wine/dosdevices
```

Most likely this directory will be empty which you can check by typing:

```
ls -al
```

You need to create a special symbolic link to support the device under wine. This should be done using temporarily assigned root privileges:

```
sudo ln -s /dev/ttyUSBx com1
```

There you have it. Go back to the running FT-817 Commander and select '1' in the COM port panel and, if your radio is connected, you should have a view of your radio keyboard and display on your screen. If this doesn't work, try quitting the application and running it again. You'll then be able to use the auto-finder utility.

Running the application

So far, I have not found any features of FT-817 Commander that do not work. I had no problem saving my settings nor restoring the settings or importing settings from a third party file. The application gives the user the option of creating a desktop link (Tools:Add Desktop Icon), which is recommended.

Disclaimer

Your mileage with this may vary. The author shall not be held responsible for any damage, disruption, misoperation or other dysfunction whatsoever howsoever caused as a result of following or attempting to follow the instructions in this note. The reader is reminded that FT-817 Commander is copyright software and credit should be given to the author for making it freely available for use.

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