Frank Sumption: The Creator of the Frank's Box;

The Father of Ghost Box Communication

by Tim Woolworth, ©2010

Upon first meeting Frank Sumption, I was instantly surprised at how down-to-earth and congenial he was about life, work, and everything else. I had known Frank only through the posts and emails we had shared on the various ghost box forums. I wasn't quite sure what meeting Frank would be like, but I have to say that I am happy it took place. Not only did he answer my questions about ghost boxes, but we conducted a session together and had some amazing results.

During my time with Frank, I learned a lot about how he created the famous Frank's Box and hopefully I can represent its genesis properly here. Like most of the early ghost box pioneers, Frank had his electronics roots in grounded in ham radio operation. This background requires a bit of electronics know-how and that is precisely what Frank has. He is capable of combining the various electronic elements required in radio communication, but freely admits that he is by no means an electronics engineer. Regardless of his technical background, the ham radio hobby allowed Frank the ability to create the first ghost boxes ever made, the Frank's Boxes as they have come to be known. These are the boxes that spawned the field of sweeping frequency radio instrumental transcommunication.

Outside of ham radio operation, the paranormal has always had a special place in Frank Sumption's heart. One day in 1995, he was reading an article written about EVP in an issue of Popular Electronics caught his eye. Frank proceeded to conduct EVP sessions but to no avail and the magazine was shelved. Then one day, in 2000, he came across the magazine again and read the article one more time. He went back to practicing EVP and was startled by the results he was instantly obtaining. It was at this point that he knew there was something to this and he began his quest to figure out exactly what it was.

Searching the web for answers, he came across the story of a Danish researcher named Stein who practiced what is known in ITC as direct radio voice. In direct radio voice, an inter-frequency (a radio station without a signal) is found and through the white noise that the station generates, voices can sometimes be heard. Stein conducted his direct radio experiments through the unique process of sweeping an analog dial back and forth with his fingers in an attempt at instrumental communication. Frank tried to contact Stein for information, but the meeting of these two minds never happened.

Frank also got his hands on a copy of EVP Maker and started using it regularly. EVP Maker is software that was created by a German ITC researcher names Steffan Bion and it is still available free of charge through numerous sources. EVP Maker simply takes recorded audio and slices it up into very small sound segments which are then played back in random order and if all goes well, an instance of communication may occur. Impressed by the results of EVP Maker, Frank knew that there had to be something else which could do this process better.

Somehow, the seeds that the ITC work of Stein and Bion planted in Frank's mind germinated and one day in 2002 the complete concept of the Frank's Box appeared in his mind. Using his skills as a ham radio operator, he immediately began construction on his first box which was constructed inside of a computer tower.

The first Frank's Box was born. Because he had been using EVP Maker, Frank thought that the best way to achieve communicaton was through random bits of audio. The first generation of the Frank's Boxes supplied random audio generation to achieve communication. Until 2007, the Frank's Boxes used a white noise generator which fed a random voltage generator which in turn was connected to a pre built am/fm tuner from a car stereo system. As the random voltage was fed through the system, the frequencies on the tuner would jump all around in turn. The rate at which these frequencies jumped was later controllable by a rate knob.

In 2007, a member of Frank's web forum, [EVP-ITC](), had the idea of making the ghost box utilize a linear sweep with a rate adjustment. This allowed for continuous sweeping through the tuner frequencies and this was very successful in providing instances of instrumental transcommunication. The results were amazing. Communication from the other side blossomed from single word replies into sentences strung together from multiple words. This also opened the door for Frank to realize that the Frank's Boxes shouldn't be limited to car stereo tuners, but home stereos and portable radios were also a great source for tuner modules.

It was this linear sweep that gave birth to the ghost box phenomenon of today. An ITC researcher named Bill Chappell thought that a regular radio should be able to accomplish this same linear sweep. He tinkered around with a Radio Shack 12-469 in late 2007 and found a way to force the radio to constantly scan frequencies. He gave this radio to Stacey Jones for field research and when she reported positive results back to Bill, the ghost box craze was born.

Now, there are numerous radio's that can be hacked. Steve Hultay, Mike Coletta, Bruce Halliday, and Rich Georgina are all currently active in modifying pre-existing radios into frequency sweeping radio ITC devices. These devices are all linear in sweep, but the linear sweep is divided into steps so it does not provide the clear frequency shifting that a Frank's Box does. Steve Hultay has taken the step frequency modification one step further with his Steve's Boxes which were started in 2010. The Steve's Box adds a control for sweep rate to a Radio Shack 12-589 hack which allows for variable speeds to

facilitate better communication. When he ran out of 12-589's, Steve began applying his sweeping circuit to other radio models with varying degrees of success.

The ghost box phenomenon did not stop with the Shack Hack. Frank Sumption's first and foremost interest is having his boxes be used for ITC research. To facilitate this, he has graciously published the bulk of his schematics online for others to read. Ron Ricketts of Paranormal Systems and a retired electronics engineer named Joe Cioppi have used Frank's schematics as a basis for the Minibox line and the Joe's Boxes respectively. Frank has not rested on his laurels. With every successive Frank's Box he has created, he tries something a little different. Some of the Frank's Boxes are linear only, and some are random, and a few boxes allow for a choice between random or linear frequency sweeping. He has added filters, short wave converters, and tone generators. In a select few instances, Frank has created what he calls a "history box" which incorporates all of his work into a single Frank's Box.

To create better audio, Frank designed an echo chamber that is in internal in some boxes and external for others. An echo chamber takes the audio generated by the frequency sweeping and corrals it into a tubing only to be captured by an electrets microphone at the other end and exported out through the boxes main speaker for listening. This adds the sound of reverberation which makes the voices a little softer on the ears and hence easier to discern for some people. It is the electronic equivalent of singing in the shower which always sounds better because of reverberation. Frank does not use his boxes on paranormal investigations with the sole exception of the occasional conference. He creates his boxes, uses them at home, and disseminates them into the hands of instrumental transcommunication researchers who will make good use of them. Strange as it sounds, the boxes themselves typically dictate to Frank who it should go to by calling out a researcher's name that is known to Frank!

There are, as of this writing, there are only 97 Frank's Boxes in existence. These boxes are to be cherished and used because they represent the genesis and changing technology of ghost box communication. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Frank for letting this technology out into the public to further instrumental transcommunication.