



From the Founder – December 2022 Inclusivity Audit

It is my belief that growth in ham radio can't happen without also increasing diversity in ham radio. This idea is reinforced by the fact that researchers in the commercial world have found time and time again that the more diversity an entity has, the more successful it is.

One of the shortcomings ham radio has experienced in this area, is that diversity efforts have generally been few, or focused on some very narrow subsets of individuals that have been deemed 'acceptable' (either explicitly or implicitly) by amateur radio's core demographic. Increasing diversity in ham radio means being open and inviting to *everyone* who is interested in ham radio, and *actively* encouraging participation, regardless of race, color, sex, range of abilities, affectional or sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, fursona, age, national origin, marital status, socioeconomic status, or physical characteristics.

Everyone should feel welcome in ham radio, and organizations in the hobby should be willing to publicly state this on their websites', in their mission statements', in their bylaws, in their codes of conduct, and other covenant documents. When conducting our first ever audit, we hoped to easily find basic statements of non-discrimination in these places. It was also our hope that in addition to basic statements of non-discrimination, some organizations would be more explicit in their statements to make it clear that in addition to non-discrimination, groups that are often disadvantaged are specifically welcomed. We also hoped to find organizations that take these ideas to their next logical step, and do regular outreach, activities, or events, to promote these values.

Fortunately, there is some outreach already happening in ham radio, and you will find some organizations that do things like:

- Issuing scholarships to young hams, diverse hams, and those with a financial need
- Running special interest nets designed to help hams with different abilities
- Running special interest nets as gathering places for hams who are members of disadvantaged or regularly discriminated against groups
- Running on-air contests or events to bring awareness to diversity groups

Unfortunately, these outreach activities are concentrated in a small percentage of the clubs and organizations that represent ham radio. If clubs and organizations want to grow, they need fresh ideas. If they want fresh ideas, they need new participants that have a different worldview from their own. They need diversity.

What We Found During Our December 2022 Review

December 2022 was the first time that the the Amateur Radio Inclusivity Pledge conducted a review of organizations, to determine how much diversity and inclusion (D&I) outreach is happening within ham radio. We did this by first creating a scoring system, and then reaching out for feedback on the scoring system itself.

What we ended up with was a scoring system designed so that all an organization needs to have in place to meet the minimum level (Bronze), is a basic statement of non-discrimination, or inclusion. The Silver and Gold levels are awarded based on meeting specific scoring levels as outlined on our website.

For our first ever effort, we ended up reviewing the public facing websites and media of 58 different entities, on a scale that scored them from 0 to 143 possible points. The breakdown of these organizations was as follows:

- 35 National Clubs which serve as IARU member societies
- 6 Technology Organizations
- 5 Manufacturers
- 4 Online Communities
- 4 Special Interest Groups
- 1 National Club that is not an IARU member society
- 1 Amateur Radio Media Organization
- 1 Repeater Operations Group
- 1 Individual (Individuals only evaluated upon request, and scores are not made public)

The highlights

I'd like specifically highlight 2 of the organizations that earned our "Gold" rating. This is not an easy rating to achieve because it requires frequent, visible outreach, and taking multiple recurring actions. These organizations actively participate in amateur radio, and live their values by providing regular outlets and forums promoting diversity and inclusion in amateur radio, including on air nets, always available public informational forums, and strong statements of inclusion. Congratulations to the Pride Radio Group and Handihams!

I would also like to give special acknowledgment to the Radio Club of America. They were the highest scoring "national organization" in the group reviewed, specifically due to their activities around the scholarships that they provide, and for their "Women in Wireless" program.

The final entity that I would like to highlight from our first round of reviews is Kenwood (JVC Kenwood Holdings Inc.) Of the manufacturers reviewed in this group, they are the only one that has a statement of inclusion that we were able to find. They also appear to go beyond just having a statement, by providing resources and sponsoring diversity interest groups within their company and the communities they work in. Thank you Kenwood!

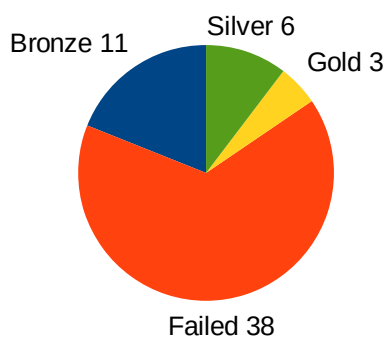
Some Numbers

Based on averages for categories where there was more than 1 organization reviewed, the most inclusive organizations are Special Interest Groups with an average score of 76.3. This is not unexpected as this group consisted primarily of organizations who's specific mission or interest is one that promotes advancement and participation of individuals who are regularly disenfranchised.

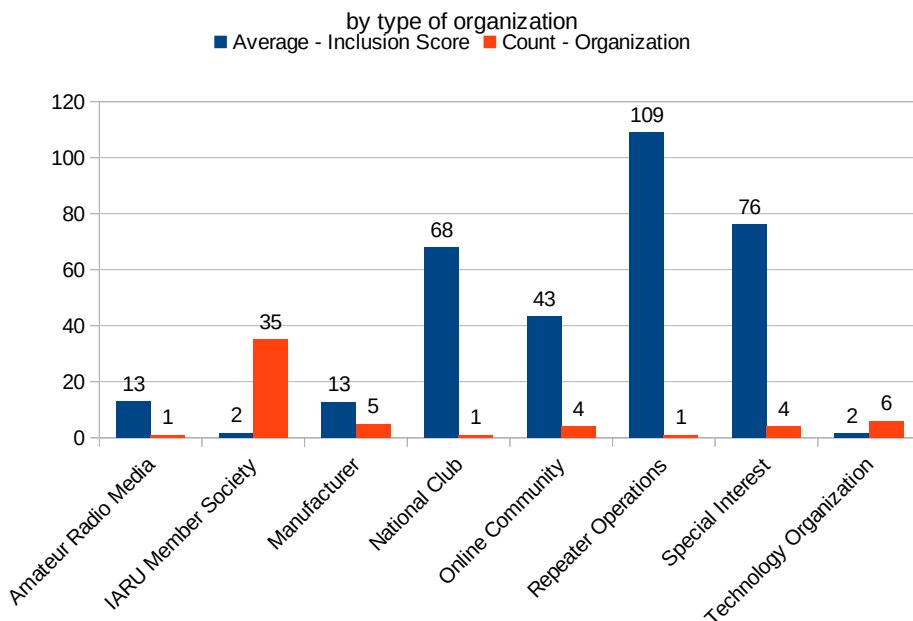
For me personally, the most disappointing finding was the group that on average scored the lowest; IARU member societies. These organizations as a group scored an average of less than 2 points. In fact, of the 35 organizations in this group, 29 scored zero points. The organizations in this group that did earn some inclusivity points did so mostly due to their engagement with youth activities, meaning that while they did earn some points, they still did not have basic non-discrimination statements. Of the 35 IARU member organizations reviewed, 32 do not have statements of non-discrimination, or inclusion. This means that the national ham radio clubs and organizations that represent the amateurs in their

country on the international stage, do not have even the most basic non-discrimination statements that are considered best practice in many types of organizations all over the world.

Count of Entities by Scored Level



Inclusivity Score & Number of Organizations



Responses from Organizations scoring a '0'

Our primary goal is to get organizations engaged in making sure they have a clear stance on non-discrimination. We would love to be able to give every organization we review credit for having at least 1 point, earned by having a clear statement of non-discrimination. For this reason, we contacted, or attempted to contact, every single organization reviewed. For organizations scoring a 0, we offered to update our findings if they could point us towards information we missed. We also offered that we would update our findings if they added their own statement of inclusion, or simply linked to ours, from their websites or other media.

The majority of the contacted organizations simply did not respond, and several had contact email addresses that appear to no longer be valid. Of organizations initially scored as '0', we only received 2 responses.

Flex Radio responded, and referred to some additional materials, but did not provide links. After some basic searches of the referenced items did not find any additional information in the area of Diversity and Inclusion, a request for links, and information about whether or not the items they referred to had a Diversity and Inclusion component, went unanswered.

We initially had QRZ scored as 0, but after some messages back and forth with the founder of QRZ (Fred, AA7BQ) we did locate their non-discrimination policies in their Forum Code of Conduct, which we had missed during our initial review of the website. In the course of those conversations with Fred he reinforced these values as his own, and those of QRZ.

On a personal note, I'll also share that QRZ is somewhat of a unique case. As the largest forum specific to ham radio, it attracts a very significant portion of active hams, which unfortunately means that you will likely find statements by users of QRZ that are the antithesis of our values, and I personally have had some negative interactions there along these lines. Fred has a moderation team that does their best to stay on top of these activities, but it is a very large task simply because of the number of users of their service. I believe that QRZ is in a rather unique position to influence the discourse in ham radio, and I hope that their Code of Conduct, and some of their newer forum policies will prove to be a benefit to the community.

Shortcomings of Our Method

As these initial evaluations came to a close, one hard to address concept became clear. How do you score organizations that don't check many of the boxes in the scoring system, but have been very successful at Diversity and Inclusion? As an example, Open Research Institute, who was not included in this scoring because they aren't an Amateur Radio Organization (They're a research group that has done some Amateur Radio projects), would not have scored as highly as some other groups because by their nature they don't have 'members', they don't run repeater systems or public forums, etc. As was pointed out to me in a message on the topic, they have been very successful at putting diversity and inclusion into practice. They have a very diverse staff and community, and have found that "...enforcing repercussions for bad behavior, recruiting and retaining underrepresented people, and making objective measurements of the effect of organizational policies over time." has had the greatest benefit for them. Having diversity in your staff, your club, or your entity is absolutely the ultimate goal, but it is also something that is very hard to measure from the outside looking in. Determining a way to consider these types of things in our scoring will be important as we move forward.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Based on these findings, it would appear that as a community, we need to first pressure our representative bodies, to make sure they are representing all of us. An excellent community goal for 2023 is for all of us to contact the organizations that represent us, and ask them

1. if they have a statement of non-discrimination or inclusion
2. if they don't, ask them why, and if they will add one

For organizations that have these statements in place, or for organizations that have them, we then need to hold them accountable to the statements they have made.

While starting with the major representative bodies is an excellent place, don't feel like you need to stop there – ask the same of your local clubs, organizations you interact with, and activity based groups you participate in. The more organizations hear from us that this is important to us as licensed amateurs, the more likely they are to start making the updates to their rules, values, codes of conduct, and other governing principals.

Measuring Success

Success in these areas can be very hard to measure, but moving forward we would like to try to use a concept common in the business world, to see how we are doing as a community.

The strategy we would like to use is the idea of 'leading' and 'lagging' Key Performance Indicators.

In our case, the most obvious thing to measure is the participation of diverse hams in our hobby. In the business world however, this would be considered a lagging indicator, because it measures a result. If you want to influence and change a result, you need to identify the things that cause that result (the leading indicators) and try to influence and measure those factors, in order to change your result.

It is my belief that active inclusion activities (or the lack thereof) is a key leading indicator to whether or not diverse hams decide to participate in the hobby. We plan on measuring the results of these audits over time, to see if we are successful in improving this leading indicator. Ultimately, we still want to measure the result (participation by diverse hams) but this is much more difficult. Fortunately Michelle, W5NYV, has done some excellent research and created some open source tools that use machine learning to get an approximation of diversity in the hobby, since actual collected data to this effect is somewhat sparse. It is our hope that we can either use Michelle's work, surveying, or a combination thereof, to attempt to measure the ultimate results of these efforts.

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