

Hambuds FD 2012 and Mesh

Written by Jim Kinter, K5KTF -

A group from the North Austin area called the Hambuds do Field Day at the Williamson County Park on County Road 175 north of 1431 between Round Rock and Cedar Park TX.

We use N3FJP logging software (network version) and HSMM-Mesh to connect the stations.

The K5KTF laptop has the main database, and it's mesh node has the laptop's IP in the NAT Mode DMZ, just to simplify things. There are not many other wifi connections out there, so not really any worries security wise.

The other 2 laptops are connected to stock HSMM-Mesh nodes, nothing done as far as port forwarding or special setups.

Each of the other 2 laptops are then setup with a mapped drive (Z:) to the shared logging folder on K5KTF laptop.

Since the other 2 laptops do not have the Fully Qualified Domain Name (FQDN) information setup in their machine (the austin.tx.us.mesh 'appended' in the network setup in Windows), you have to connect by IP (START-RUN \10.X.X.X {enter}) OR by adding the FQDN when mapping (ex: K5KTF-104.austin.tx.us.mesh) and the drive mapped from there. Also, all firewalling was shutdown (again, no concerns out in the field).

Once the drive was mapped, the other 2 laptops' N3FJP was told, when it first starts, that its database was on the mapped drive Z: . And of course you enter the appropriate FD exchange info, hit DONE and poof, it all worked.

I had setup the nodes on the battery backups so when we switched from commercial during setup to the generator at 1pm CDT, and when refueling the generator, the nodes would not lose power/reboot. Unfortunately, my laptop's battery was not as robust, so when we did refuel, the laptop went to sleep after about 30 seconds, breaking the connection temporarily. To fix, All I

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had to do was (once my laptop was back awake) on the other 2 laptops, close N3FJP, open Windows Explorer and click on the Z: drive (which reconnected it immediately), close Windows Explorer, and reopen N3FJP and hit DONE. all of about 1 minute to fix. This is not a limitation of the mesh, but of my POS P-III 800mhz Windows 2000Pro IBM Stinkpad that is older than both of my youngest daughters, with it's original battery :-)

Once FD is all done, we shut down all equipment and packed it up and headed out. The logs are safely on 1 laptop, ready to generate the logs, summary, and EMPTY dupe sheet (empty since we were all 3 connected and could see any dupes live and in real time). The hardest part is digging to find every extra point possible.

Hope this helps others setup and use mesh for logging. It simplifies the logging so much, I cant understand why anyone would even try to use wifi AP/clients, with all the hassles that causes. I like to focus on making contacts, not futzing with the network (at least during FD :-)).

73
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