Subject: Building a crystal radio
Posted by JazzHog on Fri, 06 Jul 2018 19:50:43 GMT
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I am thinking of building a crystal radio for my neice who is ten. I think it would be a great project for us to do together, and my sister is full of enthusiasm for the project!

My Dad said that when he was a child it used to be possible to buy "crystal sets", and that he used to listen to his in bed at night before he went off to sleep. I wonder if you can still buy these crystal sets. If not, we can just put it together ourselves from components - time to do a bit of research!

Subject: Re: Building a crystal radio
Posted by gofar99 on Fri, 06 Jul 2018 23:54:15 GMT
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Hi You probably can get kits...but you can diy your own as well. Google for circuits for crystal radios. I seem to recall there is a site dedicated to them. A book as well. Some are quite simple and some rather complex. Obtaining parts can be an issue. Things like the crystal (high sensitivity) headphones and tuning capacitor if it uses one can be a challenge. The crystal itself is often now replaced with a germanium diode...often a type 1n34 or 1n34a.

Good luck

Subject: Re: Building a crystal radio
Posted by JazzHog on Sun, 08 Jul 2018 11:26:08 GMT
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Thanks, gofar99. I did a search online, and it seems that on Amazon you can still get crystal radio kits. I also saw that on eBay they have a number of vintage crystal sets that people must have put together at home years ago.

We will probably go down the road of putting our own together from components. eBay have books on how to do it - one of these could be worth investing in.

Yes, our "crystal" will most likely be a germanium diode.

Subject: Re: Building a crystal radio
Posted by Wayne Parham on Sun, 08 Jul 2018 17:18:07 GMT
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I grew up in Tulsa, which has a 50kW "boomer" station.

When I was a kid, I built a crystal radio and had no trouble receiving that powerful station as well as one other.

But I now live in a rural area, and there are no such stations. So a crystal radio doesn't capture anything here. Gotta have a little amplification here.

But you can buy kits of either type - germanium diode "crystal" radio or simple transistor radio.

I would suggest getting a "100-in-1" electronics kit, which will allow you to build both kinds of radio as well as many other projects including a radio transmitter, light activated switch, sound effects, digital electronics and more. They are designed to allow you to build-up and tear-down easily using spring terminals to capture the wires for connections.

Subject: Re: Building a crystal radio
Posted by Floyd on Mon, 09 Jul 2018 16:43:53 GMT
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It sounds like you can learn a lot from those 100-in-1 electronics kits. I wonder why they don't use them in schools - or do they? I have certainly never heard of them being used in UK schools, and I think I would have learnt a lot about electronics and physics if they had. How is it in the US with education about electronics?

Subject: Re: Building a crystal radio
Posted by Wayne Parham on Mon, 09 Jul 2018 20:26:23 GMT
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In America, there are vocational/technical schools that teach electronics, and of course there are engineering level classes in the universities. There isn't much beyond concepts in the high schools - usually as a part of physics classes - but some high schools provide or allow vocational/technical training as an elective.

Subject: Re: Building a crystal radio
Posted by Floyd on Sat, 14 Jul 2018 23:12:43 GMT
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Thanks for the information about the US education system, Wayne. The UK used to have high schools that focussed on technology and "vocational" skills, but these were often seen as less

than the "academic" high schools.

I am sure that current 11-16 years education in the UK does not cover much electronics, although I may be mistaken. However I think it can then be studied in 16+ education.

I think the UK has always been a bit funny about technical skills and apprenticeships, and valued preparation for university more highly. This is a mistake, I think. Certainly, electronics can teach you loads: how to build things, the physics behind it, and so on.

Subject: Re: Building a crystal radio
Posted by The Noise on Sat, 08 Sep 2018 16:47:18 GMT
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Tech. schools in the states are starting to get looked upon more highly than in the past. Mainly because most poeple see the folly in spending so much on college for a degree that might be useless by the time you graduate.
