I wanted to comment on the power supply and filter capacitor issues you mentioned early on.  Often you will see, and especially with power regulator chips, the need for two capacitors, such as a 100 uF capacitor and a 0.1 uF capacitor.  You may ask "why do I need 100.01 uF of capacitance?"  This is a reasonable question, but the answer requires more of an explanation.  The short version is that the 0.1 uF is good for bypassing the RF energy that you are trying to get rid of.  The 100 uF is good for bypassing the lower frequency energy that you are trying to get rid of.  Neither is good at doing both things, so you need both.  
  
The moral of the story is that it's critically important to your success that you follow the data sheet's recommendations and also pay attention to what you see in the application notes.  Doing so will save you lots of headaches later on.  
  
Keep this in mind: the power supply is usually the only element that can cause a complete systematic failure.  It is often the part that gets the least attention, with tragic results (depending on the project, of course).  Good luck! and remember to RTFM.