

## What's the big Deal about D-Star Anyway?

So what is the big deal about D-Star? Why is everybody so excited? What am I missing if I don't get involved?

The short answer is that D-Star has just about anything you want from Amateur Radio:

- Local conversation
- World-wide conversation
- Emergency communication
- Portable battery operation
- Mobile and base operation
- Text messaging
- True static-free digital transmission
- Internet connectivity
- Geographically dispersed nets
- Easily find people by callsign regardless of location
- DPRS (digital version of APRS)
- Easily make new friends in other places
- Connect over the Internet (without a radio)
- Convergence of radio, computers and networks
- Callsign Squelch (opens audio only when transmission is directed to your callsign)
- Opportunity to participate in the evolution of a new system
- Repeater Linking
- Opportunities to learn and teach
- Repeater Building
- Experimentation

... All this and much more.

Whatever it is about amateur radio that makes your heart flutter, D-Star probably has it!

---

What does it take to get started with D-Star?

The obvious answer is a radio. But, wait; you don't actually have to have a radio for D-Star! The "starter kit" for a lot of people is a DV-Dongle. The Dongle is a small blue box that plugs into the USB port on your PC. That together with a headset and some software allows you to connect to a D-Star repeater via the Internet. As the lowest cost way to get on the air, many hams have used the Dongle to see for themselves what all the excitement is about.

While the Dongle is clearly not as portable as a radio, it really shines in some areas. Since it's right there with your computer, it's a dandy way to connect to that QSO you just discovered on the [dstarusers.org](http://dstarusers.org) website.

Speaking of websites, you'll definitely want to check these out:

[www.dstarusers.org](http://www.dstarusers.org) – who's on what repeater right now; what repeaters are available

[www.dstarinfo.com](http://www.dstarinfo.com) – information on D-Star, reflectors, nets, D-Star Calculator, D-Star Info newsletter

[w4doc.dstargateway.org](http://w4doc.dstargateway.org) – D-Star Registration (To communicate with linked repeaters and reflectors, you must register your callsign.)

[dvdongle.com](http://dvdongle.com) – Information and software downloads for the DV-Dongle

[www.icomamerica.com](http://www.icomamerica.com) – Information on D-Star radios

[ke4fov.com](http://ke4fov.com) – D-Star First Steps handout and other articles

[atlantaradioclub.com](http://atlantaradioclub.com) – repeater frequencies and other club information

Bert Bruner

[ke4fov@bruner.us](mailto:ke4fov@bruner.us)