# Adaptive Coding and Modulation for Phase 4 Ground

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Traditional communications design assigns a fixed **mod**ulation and forward error correction **cod**ing (MODCOD) to a link. The MODCOD is selected to provide reliable communications under worst case conditions. For example, a microwave link that points down off a mountain is often designed to be good enough to work through rain fade and summer foliage. During clear conditions in the fall with no leaves, plenty of excess link margin is available, but a fixed system designed to work through summer thunderstorms cannot take advantage of it. In the Digital Video Broadcasting (DVB) world, this technique is called Constant Coding and Modulation (CCM).

Since it makes sense to adjust our link to better match observed conditions, one can design a system that has a variety of MODCODs. An operator can then observe the link and then adjust the MODCOD to take advantage of better conditions. This technique is called Variable Coding and Modulation (VCM). VCM requires intervention of some sort to accomplish. In general, there is no feedback path from the receiver to the transmitter. But what if there was?

Adaptive Coding and Modulation (ACM) is a technique where the modulation and forward error correction are automatically changed in response to link conditions. As the link improves, higher order modulations and less coding allows increased throughput. Throughput can increase to take better advantage of available link margin. Challenging link conditions are responded to by lower order modulation and more coding. The throughput will decrease, but the link is maintained. The adaptation is enabled by establishing the set of MODCODs to be used, listing the metrics that control the decision to change MODCODs, and defining the algorithm that produces the decision.

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