How to Get Started in APRS

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How can a newcomer get started in APRS?

A web search produces mostly:

- Outdated information. (e.g, you must buy a legacy 1980s style TNC) or use applications that run on MS-DOS.
- Only talks about trackers and aprs.fi.
- Leads you to believe that buying a very expensive radio is only way to get started.
- Very brief description with a link to aprs.org.
- Overly technical information such as the protocol specification.
- etc.

If you search YouTube, for APRS, the top of the list is "APRS | The Most Worthless Mode in Ham Radio"

with **APRS =** 💩 (pile of poo emoji) in the picture. That's not a good first impression.

There are many interesting and informative videos, but where does the newcomer start without getting overwhelmed? How would the newcomer know which were outdated or giving bad advice?

I'm throwing this out as a challenge to the APRS community. Please help the newcomer to find the most useful resources to get started without spending a lot of money up front. Expensive purchases should wait until after gaining some knowledge and experience to make wise choices.

We are looking for **quality not quantity**. If this list gets too long the beginner will be in the same situation of having too much and not knowing where to start.

AUDIENCE: Someone who already saw a general introduction and wants to try something new. All languages are welcome; ham radio is an international activity.

REQUIREMENTS: Step by step instructions that can be followed. Low Cost. If a special $$$ radio is required, that will scare most people away.

FORMAT: Any - written or video.

Each entry should be in this format to make sorting and selection easier:

Title:
Author:
Date: (Updated in the past 5 or 10 years, please)
URL: https://
Category: general, specific type of radio, application, or activity
Medium: text, slideshow, video
Expertise Level: (beginner, intermediate, advanced)
Synopsis:

Good examples:

Title: Modern Introduction to Packet Radio - APRS BBS TCP/IP AX25 …
Author: KN4MKB
Date: 2024
URL: https://www.youtube.com/@ModernHam
Category: general
Medium: video
Expertise Level: beginner
Synopsis: This series of videos shows the beginner how to get started with APRS and Packet Radio on Windows and Linux with free open source software.

Title: OPiTracker – Présentation du projet
Author: F5KAV & F4FXL
Date: 2024
URL: https://www.f5kav.fr/articles/aprs/opitracker
Category: club project for 2 way APRS trackers based on Orange Pi
Date: 2024
Medium: text
Expertise Level: all
Synopsis: Lors d'une présentation sur l'APRS au radio-club un tracker bi-directionnel sur base de Orange Pi Zero a été présenté par Geoffrey F4FXL. Ce tracker permet de trafiquer en APRS FX25. Suite à la présentation certains ont manifesté un vif intérêt pour le projet car il permet à la fois de: …

Title: APRS Digipeater/iGate with Direwolf
Author: KI5GTB, Edmond (Oklahoma) Amateur Radio Society (EARS)
Date: 2021

URL: https://k5eok.org/2021/01/19/aprs-digipeater-igate-with-direwolf-entry-level/
Category: activity
Medium: illustrated text
Expertise Level: beginner
Synopsis: Step-by-step instructions for building a digipeater and IGate using Direwolf software on a
Raspberry Pi, a USB sound card and an HT.
(Note: a higher-powered, wider range digipeater/Igate can be assembled using a 2 meter or dual band
mobile radio along with a digital interface unit (Signalink, Digirig Mobile, etc.) with an appropriate cable
for the particular radio, albeit possibly at higher cost depending on what you already have.)
The instructions for installing and configuring Direwolf are invaluable. Prior experience with Raspbian or
Linux is a plus though not strictly required.
Submitted by: Jay Mottern, DV7GDL

Please send your suggested additions to the e-mail at the top.

Thanks!

73,

John WB2OSZ