How to Get Started in APRS

John Langner, WB2OSZ [callsign<at>arrl<dot>net]

July 2024

How can a newcomer get started in APRS?

A web search produces mostly:

- Outdated information. (e.g, you must buy a discontinued 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 How would the newcomer know which were outdated or giving bad advice?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.

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:
URL: https://
Category: general, specific type of radio, application, or activity
Date: (More recent is better)
Medium: text, slideshow, video
Expertise Level: (beginner, intermediate, advanced)
Synopsis:

Good example:

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.

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

Thanks!

73,

John WB2OSZ