

# The Uncertain Future of Ham Radio

An interesting article on the [IEEE Spectrum website](#) describes some of the current challenges that ham radio faces.

One of the big questions is: what could draw younger people to ham radio? People used to be drawn to ham radio for its ability to:

- Contact others while mobile or away from the home. Now we have cell phones.
- Communicate with others around the globe. Now we have the internet.
- Tinker and build equipment using the latest technologies. Now kids learn to program computers.

“Instead, many [younger hams] are interested in the capacity for public service, such as providing communications in the wake of a disaster, or event comms for activities like city marathons.” Since the radio spectrum that ham operators use is a finite resource (in greater demand today), this raises a debate as to whether ham radio should be seen as a hobby or a public utility (see this [previous post](#)).<sup>1)</sup>

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My personal opinion on this debate is that ham radio should be both a hobby and a public utility, but it should stay “open” in the sense that every transmission intercepted should be easily decodable.