Common Dstar Question

This is a series of non-technical questions and answers to give you some information on the options to consider if you decide to experiment with D-Star. While it does not cover everything in terms of hardware and software, it will give you some idea of what you need to get started

We suggest you read the documentation and view some of the YouTube Videos pertaining to the D-Star option you choose; it will make the process easier. It is also a good idea to join some of the many Yahoo Users Groups. They are an excellent resource when you have questions.

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1. What is the difference between Reflectors and Xreflectors?

"**Reflectors**" are effectively internet Gateways that would allow multiple repeaters to communicate with each other and is vendor specific (ICOM). Check out REF001C (its considered the Mega international reflector) and REF0030C they are good starting points.

Xeflectors are internet Gateways developed and maintained by hams and are a vendor neutral approach to the Icom based Reflectors. Some ham operate them from a internet cloud or a old 1 ghz pc sitting in the shack. While its not a common practice they allow the capability to interface to non-ICOM D-Star systems such as IRLP and Echolink.

2. Do I need a radio to get on D-Star?

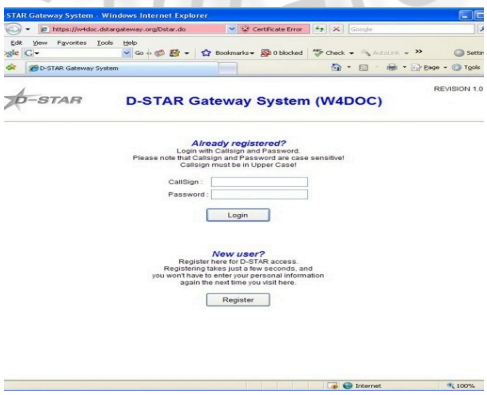
No, See Question #4 for options

3. Is there a registration fee to get on D-Star?

No

http://www.dstarusers.org/repeaters.php

All that's required it that you locate a D-star repeater from the link above that allows registration. The registration page should look like the one below.



4. What are some of the least expensive way to get on D-star with out having to purchase a radio?

Thumb DV $119.00
http://nwdigitalradio.com/products

With the Thumb DV and a internet connection, a ham can plug it into their Windows computers or Windows tablet USB port, install some free software enjoy all the fun on Dstar. This item can be purchased on line at the website above.

Star DV $129.00
https://www.moencomm.com

With the Star DV and a internet connection, a ham can plug it into their Windows computers or Windows tablet, USB port, install some free software enjoy all the fun on Dstar. This item can be purchased on line at the website above.

DV3K $140.00
http://www.dv3kdongle.com/DV3K_Dongle/Home.html

The DV3K Dongle connects to your PC or Apple Mac via a USB port and provides encoding and decoding of compressed audio using the DVSI AMBE3000 full duplex vocoder DSP chip. AMBE technology is used in all D-Star radios to provide efficient voice transmissions. It is also used in some HF digital protocols by vendors like AOR. The DVTool application used with the DV3K Dongle may be installed and run on Microsoft Windows XP/Vista/7/8/10, Mac OS X, or many flavors of Linux. This item can be purchased from HRO.

Prices listed above may change

5. Do I need to purchase special software to use the Thumb DV, Star DV or DV3K ?

For the Thumb DV and Windows you can download a free copy of WinDV from the link below (the StarDV for this software is not yet ready):
http://www.dutch-star.eu/

For Star DV and Windows you can download a free copy of the software from the website where you purchased the item.
https://www.moencomm.com

For the DV3K and Windows you can down load the software from the link below:
http://www.dv3kdongle.com/DV3K_Dongle/Home.html

6. Are there special procedures to operate on D-star?

a. Listen for about a minute to make sure no one is talking and then put out your call. Even though your call is displayed on the screen, it is still a good idea to say your call when you first key up (you may be talking to someone who is mobile and you want them to keep their eyes on the road).

b. Check the status of the repeater or reflector you are working through before transmitting.

c. If working through a reflector, leave at least a 3 to 5 second gap between overs so that other users can call in or disconnect.

d. If all stations in a QSO are working through a local repeater and it is connected to a reflector, disconnect the repeater from the reflector.

e. Don't run radio tests, microphone tests, etc., over the main reflector; use one of the chat modules.

f. Most Xreflectors have an E module that will echo back your transmission. This is very useful for audio checks.
XRF295 E or XRF748 E

6. How can find out who is on Dstar repeaters and reflectors?

With the exception of the Xreflectors use the link below:

http://www.dstarusers.org

7. How can I find more information about specific reflectors and xreflectors?

For regular reflectors use the link below:

http://www.dstarinfo.com/reflectors.aspx

For xreflectors use the link below it maintains the most current list of xreflectors along with some additional information:

http://xrefl.net

8. How can I view who is on a particular reflector?

Each reflector has a dashboard that provides the following information; What reflectors, repeaters, and users are linked to it, and when was the last time a particular user transmitted on a specific reflector module. Go to the link below and check out the information it provides.

http://ref001.dstargateway.org

9. How do I find the dashboard for a particular reflector?

As of this date every reflector is identified by its number then dstar gateway .org (REFXXX.dstargateway.org or REF001.dstargateway.org)

10. What are some of the most commonly used reflectors?

Ref001A is a very useful if you like to make international DX contacts as well as stateside. It is considered a Mega reflector.

Ref004B is another good reflector through out the day and on Tuesday's at 8.00 CST they have an excellent net.

Ref004C is another good reflector for rag chew through out the day.

Ref012A is a very useful if you are free on Thursday nights an 8:00 PM PST. There you'll find a excellent round table discussion about Dstar.

Ref030C is active through out the day , late night rag chew with international and state side hams using the reflector.

Ref058B here you'll find the Alabama Nets and Emergency Communications. There is some good technical information shared ate the end of the net on Tuesday night.

11. What are some ways I can access the Internet to get on D-star?

Access to most reflectors requires Internet access, below is a list of Internet options to consider:

Home Internet access for D-star can be done through a network cable connected directly to the computer or a Wi-Fi connection.

Mobile Hotspots: Most smartphones have a built-in mobile hotspot function allowing you to work on the go and browse the Internet anytime. With a mobile hotspot, you can create an Internet connection for up to five mobile devices on a 3G phone and up to 10 on a 4G LTE smartphone.

12. Are there any web groups I can join to learn more about Dstar?

The groups listed below can be found on the Yahoo Group website.

D-Star Development
This group is dedicated to discussing and sharing information about implementing end user D-Star systems using non Icom D-Star hardware.

DVDongle
This group is for the discussion of the DV Dongle used for D-Star ham radio communications.

Raspberry_Pi_4-Ham_RADIO
This is a place for Amateur Radio Ops to discuss the Raspberry Pi and how it can be applied to Ham Radio.

D-Star Software radio
Group dedicated to software for receiving and transmitting digital voice (D-Star).

PC Repeater Controller
This group exists to distribute and support PC-based repeater controllers that are able to provide analogue, D-Star or combined repeater controlling.

DVAPDongle
This group is for discussions of the DV Access Point Dongle.

ircDDB Gateway
This group is to support the G4KLX ircDDB Gateway package. This program when used with either an Icom ID-RP2C based repeater stack or one or more homebrew repeaters (sound card, dummy, GMSK modem, DV-RPTR modem, and DVAP)

13. What are some web resources I can use to find more information about Dstar?

DVMega Hotspot
http://www.papasys.com/showthread.php?t=1652

W6KD Dstar Forum Board
http://w6kd.boards.net

DStar Commander and G4KLX Image Support and Discussion
http://w6kd.boards.net/board/4/dstar-commander-g4klx-support-discussion

D-Star related downloads and How To's
http://www.westerndstar.co.uk

Downloads for DVtool software,, Repeater list and D-Star nets.
http://www.Dstarinfo.com

This site contains general D-star information.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D-STAR

This website contains information about setting up the GMSK Modem
http://www.k6jm.com/hs-setup.htm

This website contains software you can download.
http://www.opendstar.org/tools/

This website contains just about all you would want to know to get started with D-Star.
http://www.dstar101.com/

This website is about D-STAR, and, really, about making your own equipment for the D-STAR communications system for Amateur Radio operators, ranging from simple GMSK node adapters ("modems") to complete transceivers, repeaters and so on.
http://www.dutch-star.eu/

14. What are some You Tube videos I can view to get more information about Dstar?

DV Dongle D-Star Installation and Operation How To Windows XP
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTv1o-XGfIg

D-Star Radio on a USB Stick - The ThumbDV
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRjMZWqCyN0

How to Use a DV Dongle with DV Tool Software to Access D-Star
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDRxnNUs3hY

Icom D-STAR Gateway Registration
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPp8DHB9arQ

How to Setup a Raspberry PI and DVAP for D Star
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKjHw3xVnsw

Raspberry Pi running G4KLX ircDDB Gateway software
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wMwEU2rqRc

D-Star Hotspot part 1 & 2
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-u8IWqpZU1k
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0R137uEE-oA