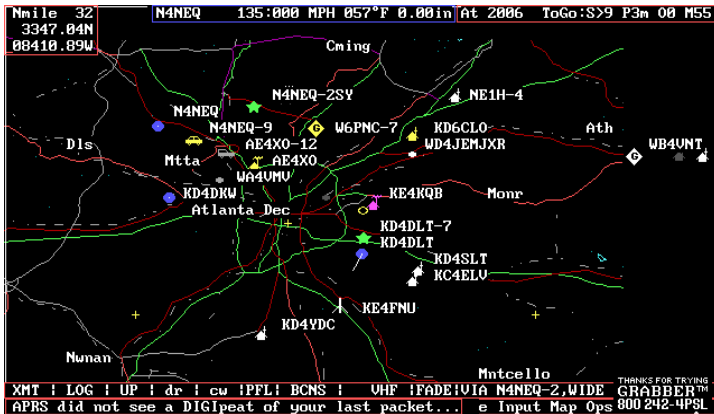


## Is your packet TNC GATHERING DUST? Then dust it off and try APRS!



## Automatic Position Reporting System

For DOS, Windows, Mac & Delorme Street Atlas 4 & 5

## Tracking and Data Relay for Public Service

Welcome to APRS. We hope that you will find this brochure helpful in learning about APRS! Other local users are always available to assist you by answering questions, helping set up equipment and help you find the best applications for your needs!

APRS originated as a Shareware program authored by Bob Bruninga, WB4APR. No charge is made for use of the software, however a one-time registration fee gets you a validation number, giving you the ability to store an automatic start-up configuration so you don't have to re-enter lots of user information each time you start the software.

The information contained in this brochure will give you, the potential user, an overview of the capabilities of APRS and will, hopefully, encourage you to join us in the Atlanta and South East APRS network!

## APRS in Atlanta

Local VHF Frequency 144.39 MHz  
HF Gateway Frequency  
10.151 MHz (LSB)

## What exactly is APRS?

In a nutshell, APRS is a graphical means of disseminating real-time position information in a "broadcast" format using standard Unnumbered Information (UI) packet frames in an "unconnected" mode. By sending latitude and longitude or grid-square location information, stations are placed on a high-detail map. In addition to actual location, course, speed and altitude can also be included and the object may be tracked by "dead-reckoning" by the program until an updated position is received.

## What are some applications for APRS?

Locally, APRS is used for several purposes: Among them are Weather reporting, tracking mobile stations, and Radio Direction Finding.

There are several automatic weather stations operating and you can set one up yourself for less than \$200.00! You can almost always see vehicle mounted stations on the move in our area too.

APRS has been used for the last two years to track incoming parade floats for The Tournament of Roses Parade. It is used Nationwide to track resources in many walkathons, marathons, and in other events. Units are placed on critical resources (Ambulance, buses, Police cars, water truck) and displayed on monitors in various locations for emergency personnel. We'd love to support more events, too!

APRS was used throughout the 1996 Summer Olympics to track TV broadcast camera equipped helicopters and motorcycles. (<http://www.bsrq.org> for more details)

## What area is covered?

Our Regional APRS network now covers most parts of N GA, North West SC, Northern AL, Most of TN, Western NC and many times we see FL and KY. Most major Interstates are now covered.

Recently, many of the APRS areas of the USA have been linked via the Internet. This allows users on the 'net to see other users Nationwide. Live Georgia and US APRS activity may be seen on the Internet by accessing the following address: <http://www.aprs.net>

## Do I need any special equipment to use APRS?

NO! The only equipment necessary for DOS APRS is standard packet radio equipment (a computer with CGA graphics, a TNC a radio and an antenna!). PC requirements are more stringent for the Windows versions, of course.

### **Somebody said that I had to have a GPS unit to use this software! Is that true?**

NO! While a GPS unit MAY be used, the detail of the maps visible on your monitor is such that any can place himself, or any other object, on the network by merely selecting a spot on the map and using the INPUT MY POSITION command. If you plan to use a GPS unit mobile with a laptop and TNC, you'll need an optional GPS registration number.

### **Do I need a hard-drive?**

NO. A working, MINIMAL, system can be configured that can be run off of a single 720K diskette.

### **What can I expect to see on APRS?**

Once you start the program, your software will request other APRS stations active at that time to beacon their position sometime in the next two minutes. Objects should begin appearing on your screen fairly quickly. You will see stations with various symbols displayed. Most home stations will appear as a small house, digipeaters will show up as a star (green indicates a WIDE-area digipeater), weather stations will appear as blue dots with white wind barbs.

### **Can I communicate with others on the frequency?**

APRS offers both one-line, automatically acknowledged, messages and a direct station-to-station connect using a built-in terminal emulator..

### **How does GPS come into play with APRS?**

Any GPS receiver capable of outputting its data in standard NMEA-0183 format can be connected into your APRS system directly and the position information indicated by the GPS to the computer will automatically place you on your map. A second method of GPS tracking is also being used: direct interface of a GPS unit to the serial port of your TNC. This creates what is known as a "stand-alone" tracker and enables the user to be tracked without need for a computer or operator intervention! No GPS registration number is required for this sort of use.

### **What kind of software support is available?**

The authors are constantly working to improve the APRS software. Upgrades are released often and once you register your software you merely re-enter your validation number as necessary to save a new configuration. Program upgrade files are available on many amateur radio bulletin boards or through the Internet.

### **Where is the APRS info found on the Internet?**

TAPR (Tucson Amateur Packet Radio) sponsors a Special Interest mailing list called APRSSIG. It works through Email and is free. To sign up, visit TAPR's Web page at <http://www.tapr.org>. There will be a section allowing you to sign up. Once on the SIG, please monitor the traffic for a few days before posting anything. The folks on the SIG welcome newcomers but would rather you try to solve your problem locally before alerting the whole World.

### **How do I get on APRS RIGHT NOW??**

It's simple! Just pick up a disk from an APRS user, grab one at a hamfest or download the software from a landline BBS or the Internet. Load it into your computer, print off the README files, read and follow them and you should be able to be up and running in short order!!!

### **Is APRS available for other operating systems?**

APRS is available not only for DOS, but also for Windows, Windows 95 and NT, and MacIntosh. There is even a version that works with Street Atlas 4 and 5 by DeLorme.

Links to all versions are available at the Atlanta APRS web page at <http://www.BSRG.org>

### **How much does it cost?**

APRS is shareware. You may use the program without charge, however to realize the full capabilities of the system you should register your software. The registration fee varies with the operating system, but runs between \$29 and \$65.00. This gets you a validation number which will allow you to save a your configuration and eliminates the logon procedure each time APRS is initialized. Weather Stations, GPS, or Direction Finding systems can also be added to your configuration.

**Welcome to APRS!!! Load it and try it. You'll like it!!!**

Please direct inquiries, comments or questions regarding WIDE-area digipeaters, nodes and so forth to:

Place Contact Info Here

Thanks to Jim Duncan KU0G for some of the original info in this publication