

D-Star DONGLE FAQ

What is it?

When a DV Dongle is connected to a PC or Mac and used with DVTool software, an amateur radio operator can connect to the international D-Star gateway network and receive/transmit just like a D-Star radio user.

How does it work (basics)?

Each D-Star radio includes an AMBE2020 voice compression chip provided by Digital Voice Systems Inc (DVSI). The DV Dongle includes an AMBE chip and logic to connect it to a USB port on a PC or Mac. This allows the computer to "speak" the same voice protocol as D-Star. The DVTool software connects to participating gateways and encodes/decodes the voice using the DV Dongle.

What kind of computer is needed (what ports)?

A minimum suggested configuration includes a PC or Mac with 2.0GHz processor with 512MB of RAM and a USB 2.0 full speed port.

What software is needed?

The DVTool software runs with Windows XP, Windows Vista, Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard), or most Linux distributions.

Operating system notes:

Ubuntu Linux distributions include a braille terminal package, `brltty`, that must be removed for proper use.

Windows and Linux users must download Sun Java JRE or SDK 6. A compatible version is included with Mac OS 10.5 Leopard. Mac OS versions earlier than 10.5 cannot be used due to the lack of compatible Java software.

Windows and Mac OS users must download an FTDI USB device driver. Linux includes a native driver that is compatible with the DV Dongle.

Who/How does one get started or who does the authorization?

If you are already registered on the international D-Star gateway network, you are ready to go. If not, please contact your local D-Star repeater manager for registration. If you don't have a local D-Star repeater, please send an email to dongleinfo@opendstar.org.

What other costs for authorization?

There is not fee for registration.

Can Non Licensed Operators use it?

Users must be licensed and registered in the gateway system. Are there limitations as to how many Gateways you can access? Local gateway admins must permit the connections from dongle users. There are currently over 30 gateways around the world that allow connections from dongle users.

What Mic/headset to use?

There are several good headsets on the market. We've tested many from Logitech and Heil and they work well. Be sure to test your mic using the "Audio Loopback Only" function in DVTool before you try to transmit on a repeater.

How/Where do I buy the DV-Dongle?

The DV-Dongle is distributed and sold by all 12 Ham Radio Outlet stores and on-line at www.hamradio.com