



International Amateur Radio Union Region 1
General Conference - 16th to 21st November 2008 - Cavtat, Croatia



SUBJECT	Foresight Project		
Society	IARU	Country:	
Committee:	C3	Paper number:	CT08_C3_I_58
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This information paper is written to brief participants to the Foresight Workshop, planned for **Monday evening, November 17th, 21:00 - 22:15 in the Congress Hall**. The objective of the workshop is to gather and exchange views on the future of amateur radio. I strongly encourage **ALL** conference delegates to attend.

1 Why should you be part of the Foresight project?

"Foresight" aims to build a shared view of what amateur radio is, and will be in the future. By taking part in the Project, you will be working with other people to help shape the future of amateur radio. The project is a great opportunity for you to hold discussions about how you can develop amateur radio in your country. You can get ideas from all sorts of people - your local school and university teachers, managers of your best telecommunication companies, emergency services, your national radio administration and local radio amateurs. And in speaking with them, you will be strengthening the public view of amateur radio and helping to create the support we need.

"Foresight" provides a framework for these discussions, and makes sure that we do not prejudge the outcome. We need to take views from as wide a range of groups and individuals as possible including those outside amateur radio. "Foresight" does **NOT** aim to predict the future but rather to lay out issues and options which we will all need to consider as we manage our future development. More options will help us make better decisions.

The discussions need to cover both the current issues for amateur radio but also must think ahead to new and emerging challenges and opportunities. In this respect a timescale of 3-10 years would seem about right. The value you get from "Foresight" depends a lot on your level of involvement.

Why not start right away to collect ideas so that you can take an active part in the workshop in November – your fellow radio amateurs need your ideas.

2 Background.

The IARU conference at Davos recommended that member societies collaborate in a Foresight Project with the objectives:

2.1 To promote a series of structured discussions and debate between IARU R1 societies and their radio amateur members with administrations, industry representatives, emergency services, education and local communities.

2.2 To provide an opportunity for a new dialogue with potential and existing partners.

2.3 To generate an overall view of those issues which will shape the amateur service and hence affect IARU R1 policy.

2.4 To show to Administrations and international groups that the radio amateur service is thinking strategically about its direction and how it can provide the best service to its broader community.

2.5 To identify examples of initiatives and best practice, which can be transferred between societies.

The way for member societies to make their contribution was described earlier in the note 'A suggested way to do the Foresight project. (G3PJT July 2006)'. A copy is available from g3pjt@btinternet.com on request.

The framework table it was suggested be used was:

Participants:	Telecoms administrations	Emergency services and communities	Industry	Military and defence	Education Schools and universities	Amateur radio clubs	Individual radio amateurs
Factors							
1 Demography							
2 Environment concerns							
3 Technology change							
4 Spectrum pressure							
5 Resistance to change							
6 Access							

This provides a framework for discussions with other interested parties. In each "box" we should try to capture the views of the organisation we are talking to, against the 6 headings (1 – 6) shown

This framework will form the basis of the discussion at the workshop. You are strongly encouraged to have discussed this project with as many interested parties as possible. There is still time to do this before the conference in November.

3 Progress.

Despite the interest and support expressed by many Davos delegates, progress has been rather limited. The two most complete studies were from ESR, Sweden¹ (very well worth reading) and Lebanon.

A meeting was also arranged at the Friedrichshafen Hamfest in June 2006 which was attended by a number of societies and representatives of the Swiss and German telecommunications administrations. Many thanks for these inputs.

4 Observations.

The following is a summary of some of the views expressed so far.

Administrations. De-regulation and cost pressures may lead to reduction in licence standards. This must be resisted as maintenance of radio amateur technical standards seen as very important, go for 'quality not quantity'.

Emergency services. Some national services see little necessity for radio amateur contribution. However we see this as being an important part of our service and very visible publicly. To be developed as far as possible.

Industry. Key skills include radio/RF technology/digital/analogue. Electronics knowledge is an asset. Many amateurs do not have pride or confidence to be open about their interest – inhibits demonstration that skills help companies and also does not send a message that radio amateurs have been innovators and successful in business. Amateur radio very relevant to technician skills shortage.

Military and defence. No comments.

¹ ESR Experimentierande Svenska Radioamatorer. Copies of their excellent report from G3PJT@btinternet.com.

Education. In smaller countries, lack of examinations. University clubs have almost died, resulting in loss of a focus for technically interested students and a weakening of the technical base. Students often lack hands on experience with electronics and a poor understanding of fundamentals. Schools etc. seen as key access route to new amateurs and new initiatives planned.

Radio clubs. Issues include, lack of leadership to take initiatives, and weak finances caused by being too small.

Individual radio amateurs. Very diverse range of backgrounds, age ranges and interests. Many are slow adopters of new ideas. Inherent 'resistance to change' especially by 'older' amateurs is seen as a major problem.

Demography. Seem to be two sorts of age profiles, 40+ years old with disposable income and time for pastimes and 10-30 years old – mostly new entrants with telecommunications or technology interests. New generation is seen as bringing in new thinking.

Environmental concerns. Dense urban environments with high levels of electromagnetic noise demotivates radio amateurs and reduces their activity on the air. Both in-bound and out-bound EMC issues are at critical levels. Out bound caused by proximity effects and poor product design. In bound caused by new digital systems which emit high levels of noise in the amateur spectrum. Situation made worse by poor policing by Administrations of standards and domestic products.

Technology change. Rapid and all pervasive. Some new technology not properly covered by regulation. Amateur radio a good way to learn about new comms. techniques and there is plenty of freedom to do this for the technically aware radio amateur.

Spectrum Pressure. Increasing problem at microwave as the demands for new telecommunications services continues. Made worse by Administrations selling off spectrum access and taking a laissez faire attitude to future use.

Resistance to change. See comments above in 4. Part 7. Need to encourage those who wish to try new ideas especially as noted in 4. Part 6.

Access. Although respondents all claimed to have reasonable access to their local Administrators, emergency services, education managers, teachers etc. it is not very clear if this is a general situation.

5 Summary. This project is still very much 'work in progress' and the goal of the Conference workshop is to discuss how we can progress "Foresight" and link this to the future policy of IARU Region 1.

But the main benefit will be to your society and radio amateurs in your country through the generation of better ideas to make us stronger and dynamic.