Wireless systems

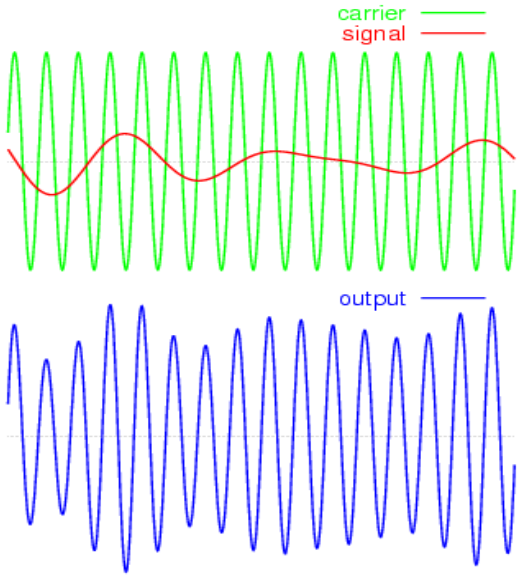
- **includes issues of**
  - hardware
    processors, storage, peripherals, networks, ...
    representation of information, analog vs. digital, bits & bytes
  - software
    applications, operating system
    organization of information, file systems, ...
    algorithms: searching, sorting, compression
  - communications,
    Internet, Web, TCP/IP, protocols
    bandwidth, speed, caching
    compression, error detection and correction
  - security and privacy; cryptography
  - intellectual property and ownership
  - social & legal & policy concerns

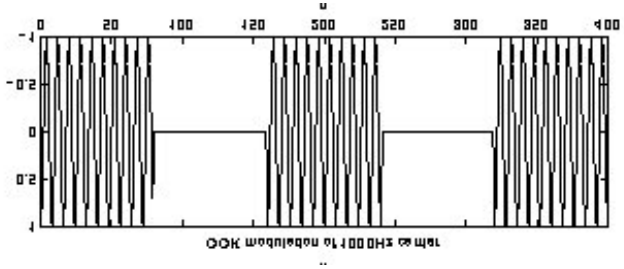
Wireless systems (2)

- **how radio works**
- **radio spectrum allocation**
- **examples**
  - cell phones
  - 802.11 (WiFi)
  - Bluetooth
  - GPS
  - RFID: prox, E-ZPass, store tags, passports, ...
  - ...
- **tradeoffs**
  - spectrum, power, range, size, weight, mobility
- **non-technical issues**
  - regulation, competition, ...

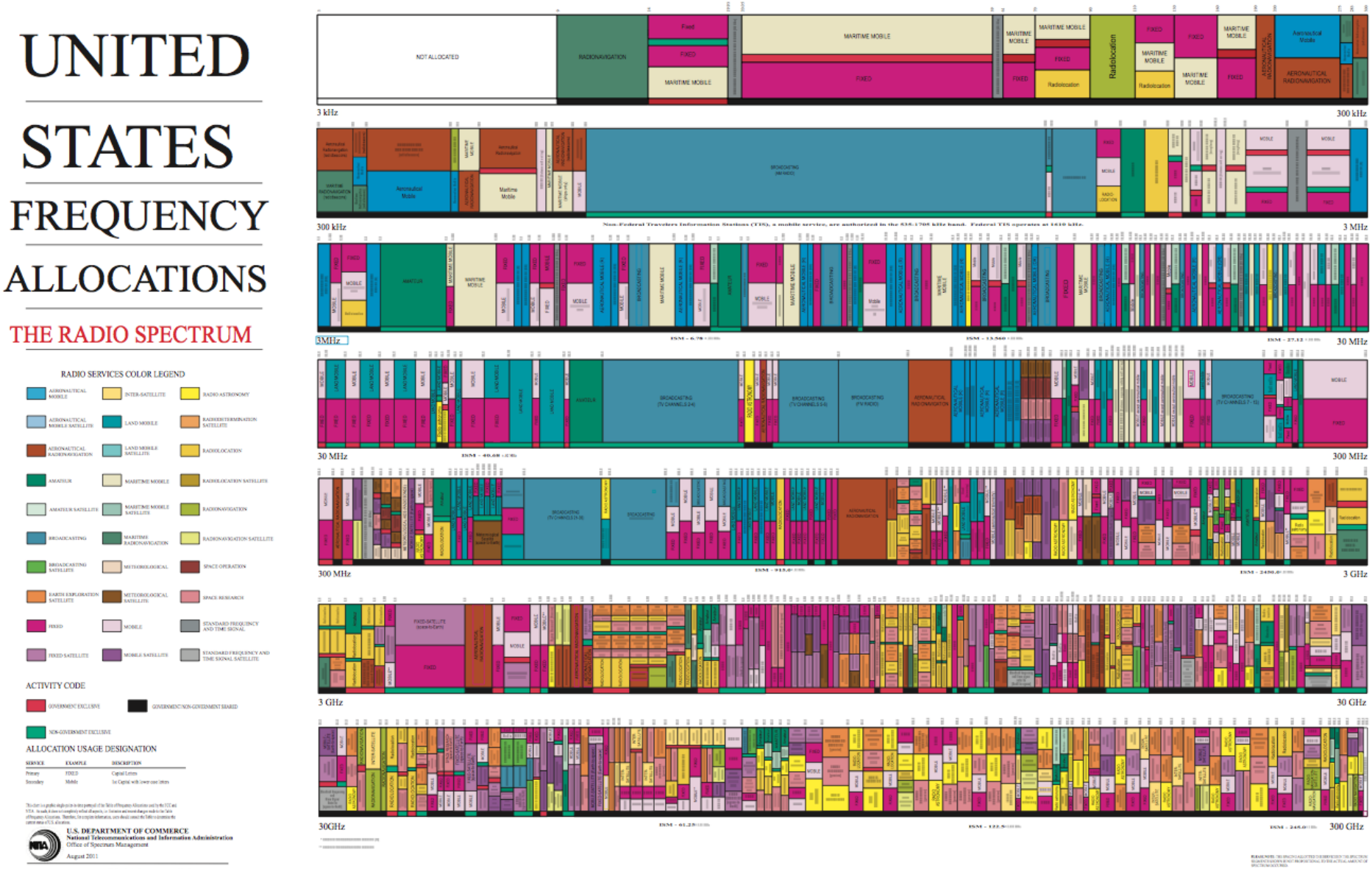
Radio

- **electromagnetic radiation to carry information**
  - without wires => "wireless"
- **radiation is a wave of a particular frequency (in Hz)**
- **transmitter "modulates" the wave to impose information on it**
  - amplitude (AM): change the power level
  - frequency (FM): change the frequency around a central value
  - digital: on/off
  - …
- **receiver demodulates to recover the information**
  - received signal strength varies directly with power level, and decreases with square of distance ("inverse square")
  - higher frequencies (shorter wavelengths) go shorter distances, penetrate obstacles less well





RF spectrum

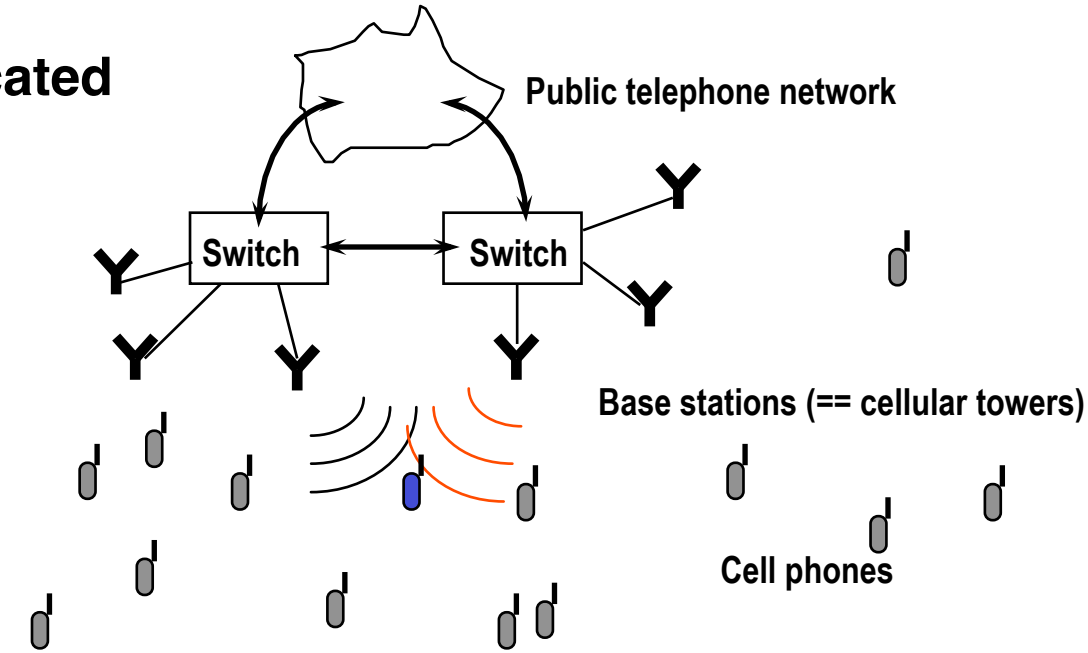

UNITED
STATES
FREQUENCY
ALLOCATIONS
THE RADIO SPECTRUM
RADIO SERVICES COLOR LEGEND
ACTIVITY CODE
ALLOCATION USAGE DESIGNATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Office of Spectrum Management
August 2011
3 kHz
300 kHz
3 MHz
30 MHz
300 MHz
3 GHz
30 GHz
300 GHz

Cell phones 101

- all phones are part of the public switched telephone network
- a cell phone is connected by radio instead of wires

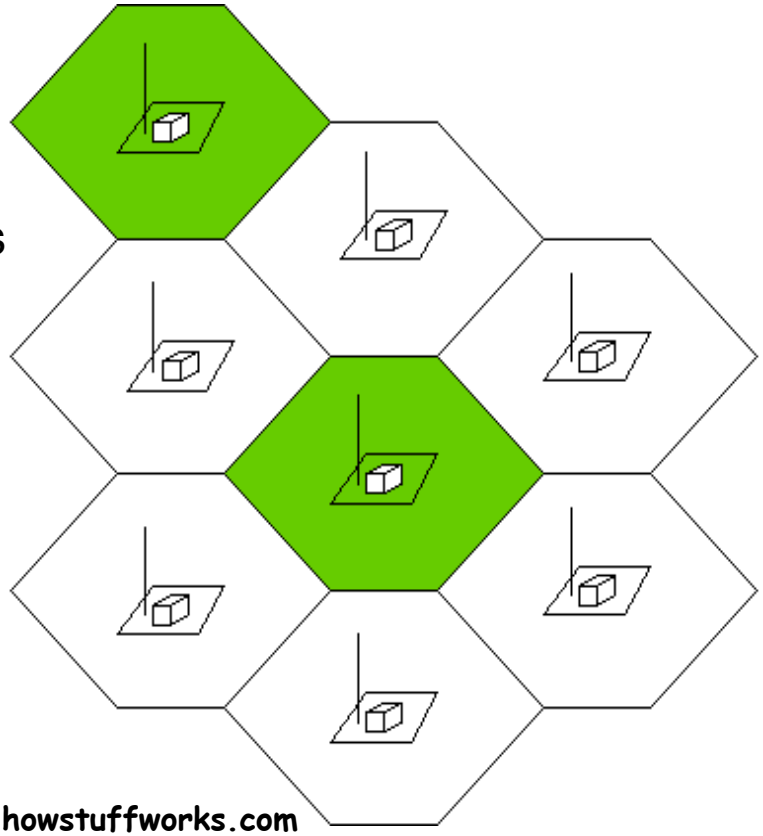
- moves long distances, at high speed, appears out of nowhere
- shares a very limited radio frequency spectrum with others
- operates with low power because it uses batteries

- this makes life complicated



Cells (a very idealized picture)

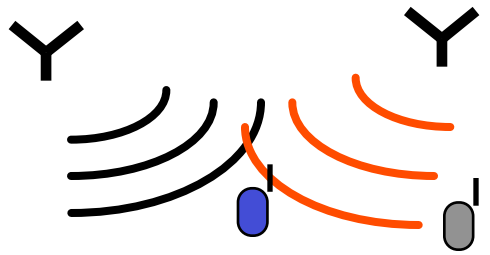
- **divide geographical area into cells (notionally hexagonal)**
- **each cell has an antenna, handles all cell phones in its area**
- **available radio spectrum is divided into channels**
  - two channels for one conversation, one for each direction
  - competing carriers operate on different frequencies
- **each cell gets 1/7 of the channels**
  - adjacent cells can't use the same channels because of interference
  - non-adjacent cells can re-use channels



from www.howstuffworks.com

How it works

- **when a phone is turned on, it broadcasts its ID ("registration")**
  - nearest base station notices, validates with home system
    registration uses encryption for fraud prevention
  - phone keeps broadcasting enough to keep in touch
- **when the phone is called, the home system knows where it is**
  - home system contacts base(s) where phone is
  - bases broadcast to where phone was last seen ("paging")
- **phones talk to base with strongest signal**
  - base and phone communicate over 2 agreed-upon channels (up, down)
  - phones continuously adjust power level to signal strength at base
    uses less battery, creates less interference for other phones
- **phones move from base to base and from system to system**
  - base initiates handoff when signal gets weak
  - phone picked up by base with strongest signal
  - elaborate protocols at all levels



How it works, continued

- **multiple frequency bands (different in different parts of the world)**
  - divided into channels (frequency multiplexing)
    digital phones multiplex several calls on one channel (GSM)
    or spread calls out over the whole spectrum (CDMA)
  - phones usually support multiple bands
- **channels carry both voice and control information (including data)**
  - digital speech is highly compressed (~1 bit/speech sample)
  - elaborate coding & error correction for speech & control information
  - power turned off when nothing is being sent
- **phones store user info on removable flash memory card**
  - SIM (Subscriber Information Module)
  - may be able to replace card to use in a different environment
- **most of the world uses GSM**
  - in USA, AT&T & T-Mobile use GSM; Verizon & Sprint use CDMA

Technology meets politics again

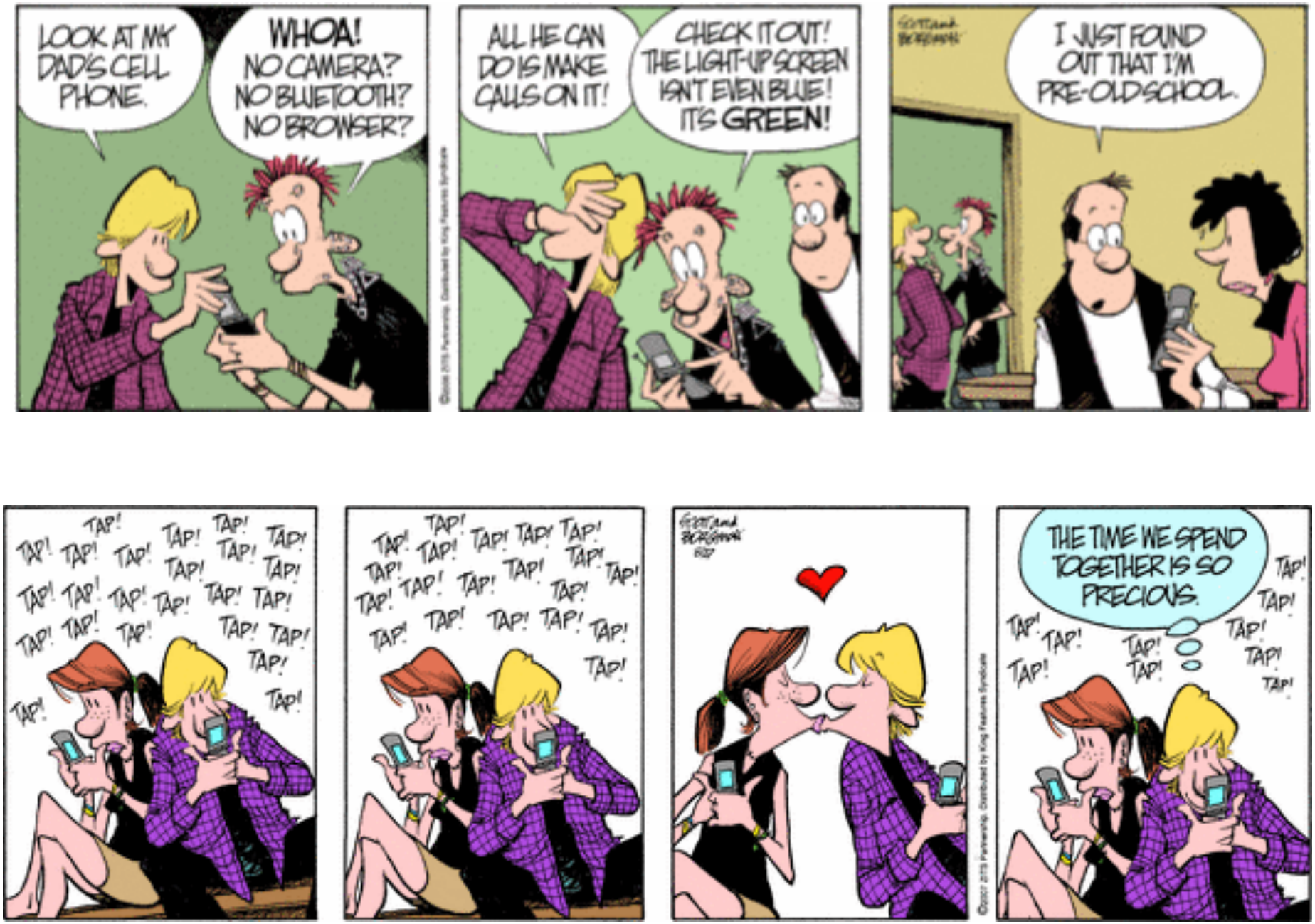
- **should texting while driving be illegal (and enforced)?**
  - how about just talking on a phone while driving? (Walking?)
- **who determines where cell phone towers are permitted?**
  - property rights versus eminent domain
- **should cell phone jammers be legalized?**
  - in theatres, trains, etc.
- **should StingRay devices be legal?**

- **location tracking and surveillance**
  - FCC mandates that cell phones can be located within 125 meter radius
  - should real-time location info be available to law enforcement, etc.?
  - how should this evolve as GPS becomes universally available?
  - who can have access to what phone records under what circumstances?

GPS (Global Positioning System)

- **31 satellites, each broadcasting time & its location**
  - altitude ~ 20 km, frequency ~ 1575 MHz
  - at least 6 are visible at any time

- **receiver calculates its position using distances to 3 or more satellites**
  - distances computed by careful measurement of time
  - accuracy typically within 15 m for civilian systems
  - additional inputs or use of encrypted info reduces this to < 1 m


LOOK AT MY DAD'S CELL PHONE.
WHOA! NO CAMERA? NO BLUETOOTH? NO BROWSER?
ALL HE CAN DO IS MAKE CALLS ON IT!
CHECK IT OUT! THE LIGHT-UP SCREEN ISN'T EVEN BLUE! IT'S GREEN!
I JUST FOUND OUT THAT I'M PRE-OLDSCHOOL.
TAP!
THE TIME WE SPEND TOGETHER IS SO PRECIOUS.