



# ITUWRS

GENEVA2024

2-6 December 2024  
Geneva, Switzerland



# ITU World Radiocommunication Seminar

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**History of ITU's role in radiocommunication development**

2-6 December 2024, Geneva, Switzerland

## Humans need to communicate



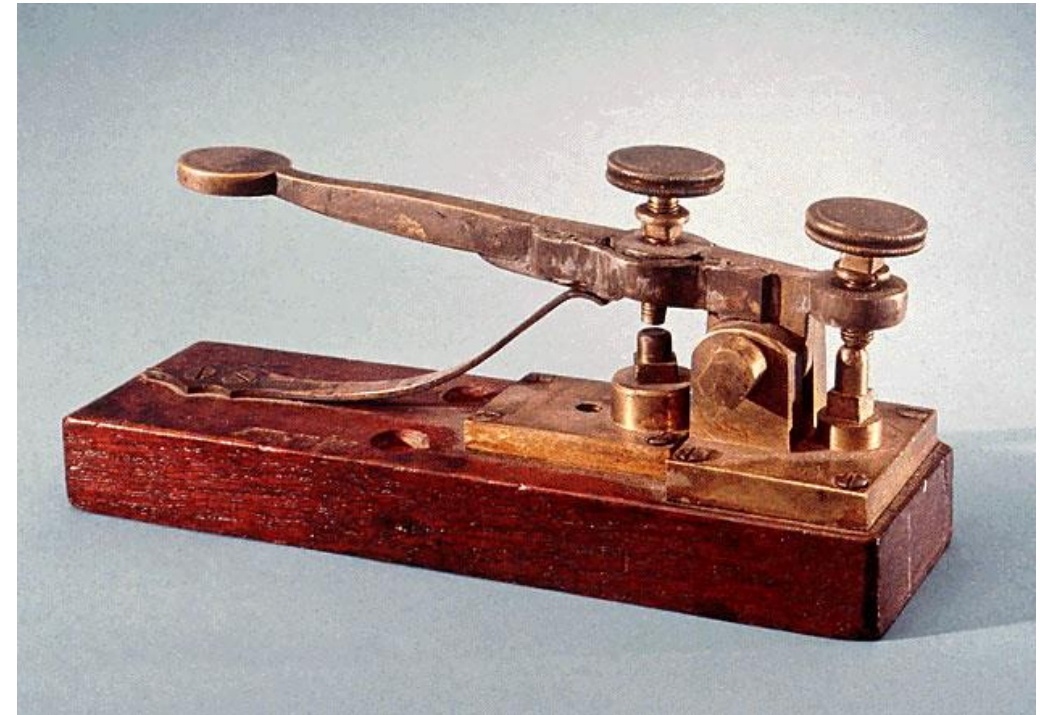
The means of communication before technology were slow and limited



Today we are constantly connected

## Early telecommunication technology

The invention of the electric telegraph in the early 1800s transformed long distance communication



- Representatives from 20 states met in Paris
- Signed the first *International Telegraph Convention* on 17 May 1865
- Created the International Telegraph Union (ITU)





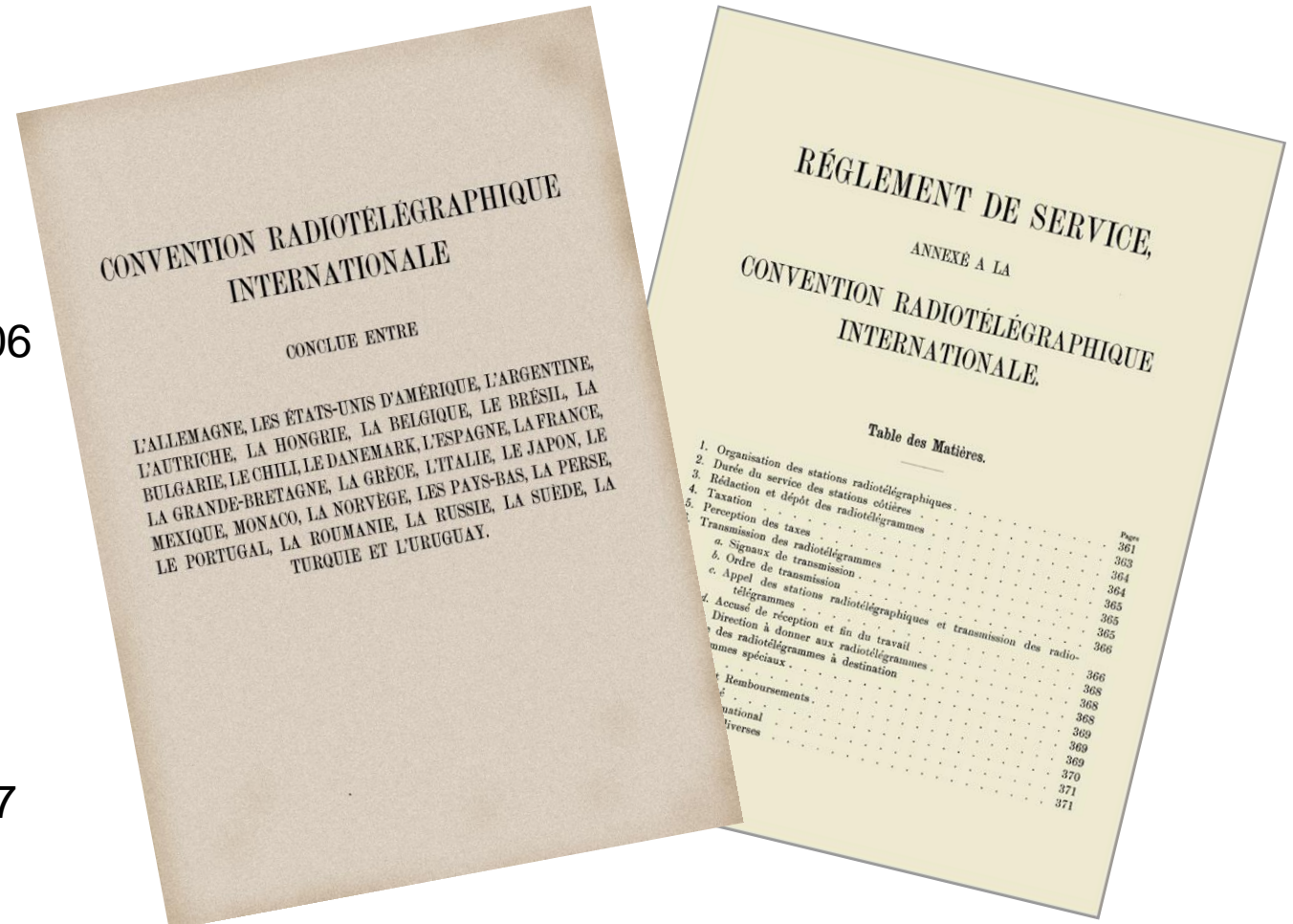
# The beginning of radiocommunications

- 1890s: Radio development began as “wireless telegraphy”
- The new technology was quickly adopted for ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communication
- However, the incompatibility of equipment created problems



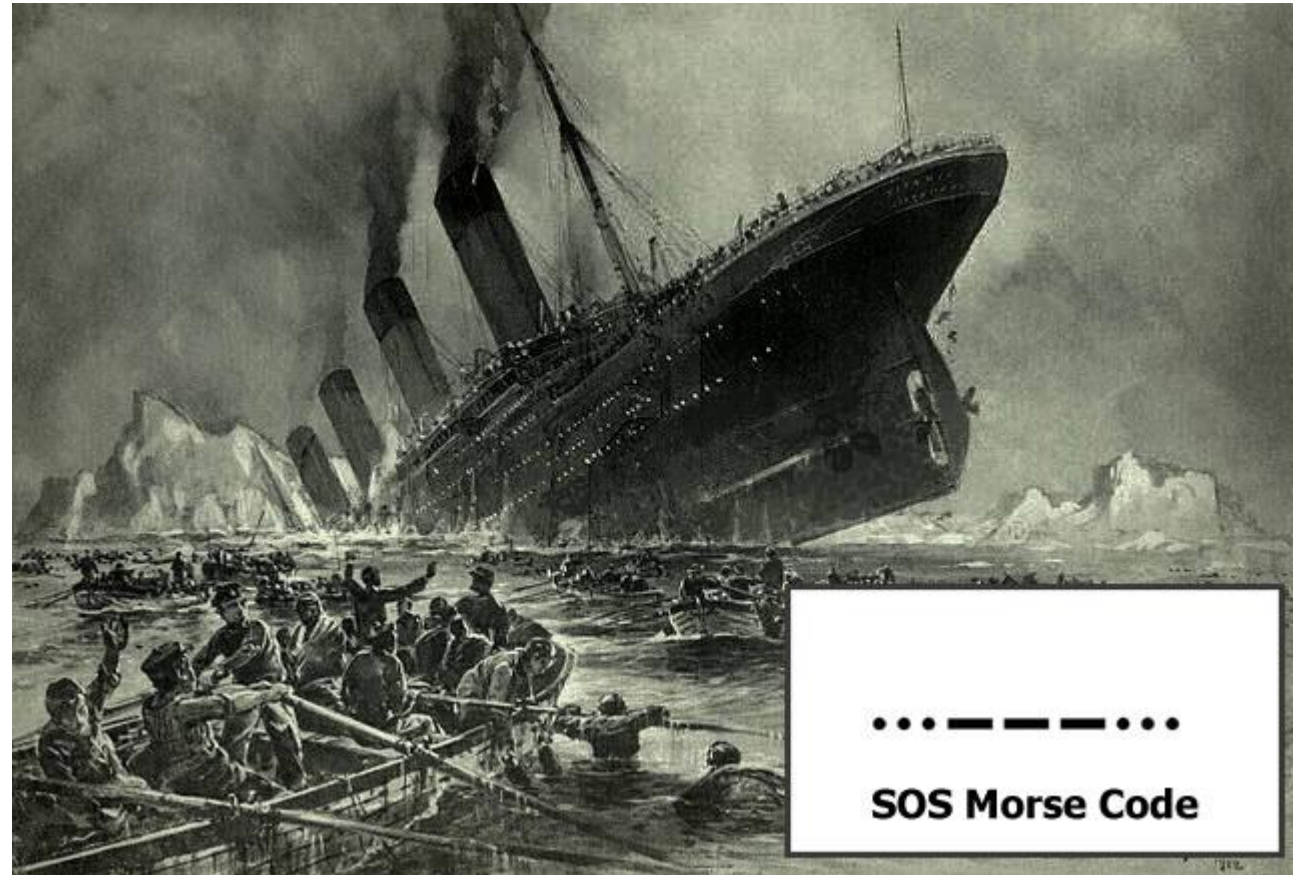
# 1906 International Radiotelegraph Conference

- Representatives from 30 maritime states attended the conference in Berlin
- The first *International Radiotelegraph Convention* was signed on 3 November 1906
  - Annex contained the first radio regulations (15 pages)
- The Bureau of the International Telegraph Union to designated to administer the Convention
  - The Radiotelegraph section of the Bureau began operation on 1 May 1907



## Radiocommunications for safety at sea

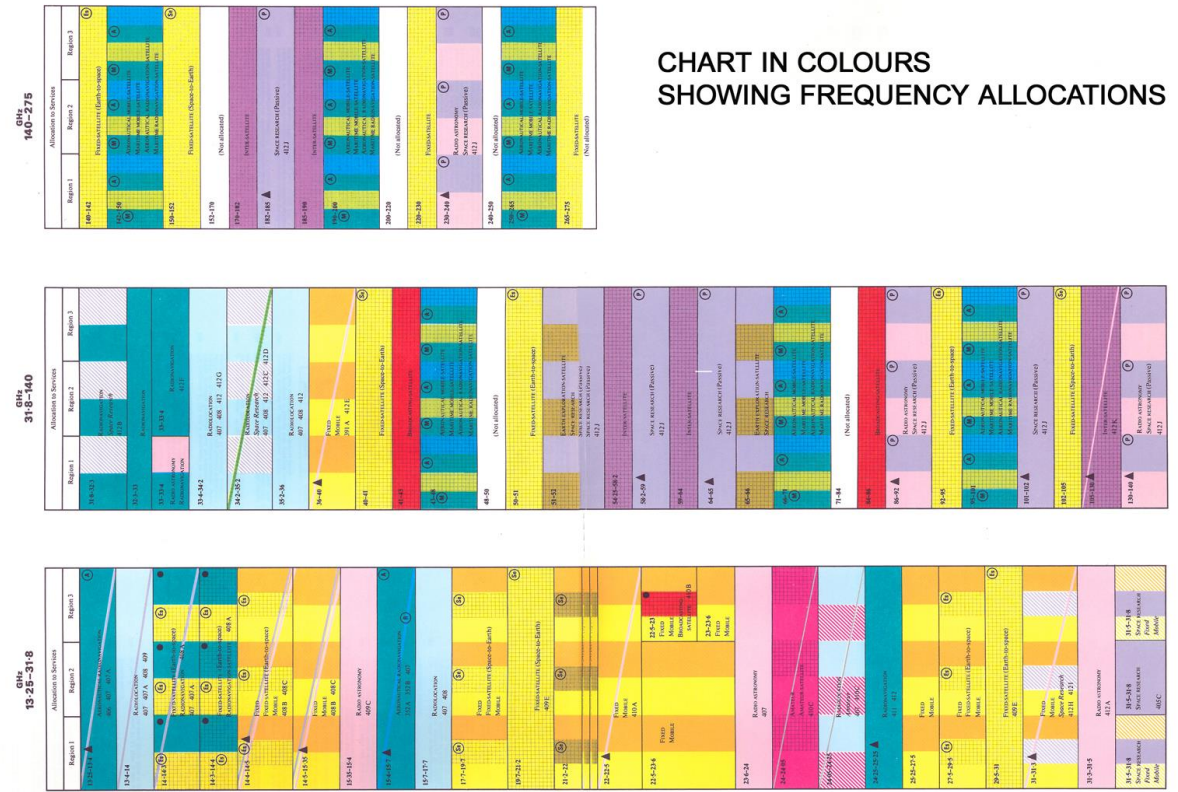
- 1906 International Radiotelegraph Convention (Berlin)
  - Required wireless telegraph stations to prioritize distress signals
  - “SOS” was established as the international maritime distress signal
- 1912 International Radiotelegraph Convention (London)
  - Standard wavelength for distress signals
  - Ships must listen for distress calls at regular intervals





# Allocating frequency bands

- 1927 International Radiotelegraph Conference (Washington)
  - Adopted the first table of frequency allocations
  - Established a system for notifying frequencies



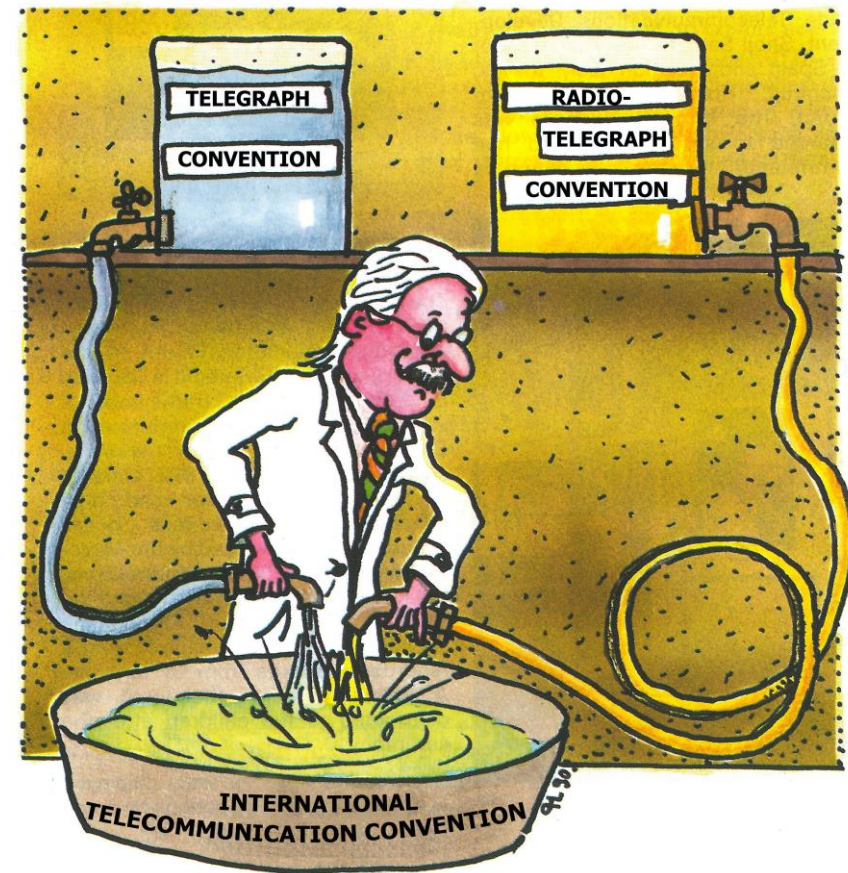
## Creation of CCIR

- The International Radio Consultative Committee (CCIR) was created by the 1927 International Radio Conference (Washington)
- First Plenary Assembly was held in September 1929
- 1948: CCIR introduced Study Groups with specific terms of reference



# International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- 1932: The International Telegraph Convention and the International Radiotelegraph Convention were merged into one treaty
- The Union adopted a new name to reflect the full range of its responsibilities: *International Telecommunication Union*





# International Frequency Registration Board (IFRB)

- Created by the 1947 International Radio Conference in Atlantic City
- Tasked with regulating radio frequencies
- Established a master frequency list
- Published first Circular with frequency assignment data in October 1952
  - Predecessor to today's *BR-IFIC*

GENERAL SECRETARIAT  
INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION

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RADIO DIVISION

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I.F.R.B. Circular No. 1

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Notification of Frequency  
Assignments to the I.F.R.B.

Geneva, September 23rd, 1952

By Air Mail

SECTION I. NOTIFICATIONS DE NOUVELLES ASSIGNATIONS					SECTION I. NEW NOTIFICATIONS						
	2a	2b	2c	3	4a	4b	4c	5	6	7	
18.2			9.5.29.	WEO20	NEW YORK, N.Y. 72 56 W 40 55 N	USA	London Tanger Balboa Honolulu PNZ		FX CP	0.1A1	MR
18.8			AV 28	WEO40	NEW YORK, N.Y. 72 56 W 40 55 N	USA	London Tanger Balboa Honolulu PNZ		FX CP	0.1A1	MR
18.8			16.1.43	WEV70	NEW YORK, N.Y. 74 22 W 39 34 N	USA	London Tanger Balboa Honolulu PNZ		FX CP	0.1A1	MR



# The Space Age and satellite communications

- 1957: Sputnik-1 marked the beginning of the Space Age
- Satellites became integral to telecommunications
- 1963: the first ITU Space Conference (Geneva) allocated frequencies for space radio services



## Reorganization of ITU (1992)

- Additional Plenipotentiary Conference (Geneva, 1992)
  - Restructured ITU into 3 Sectors
  - CCIR and IFRB were merged to form the Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R)
  - The Radiocommunication Bureau (BR) serves as the specialized secretariat for the Sector
  - Radio Regulations Board (RRB) was created



ITU-R  
Radiocommunication



ITU-T  
Telecommunication  
Standardization



ITU-D  
Development

## Past, present, future

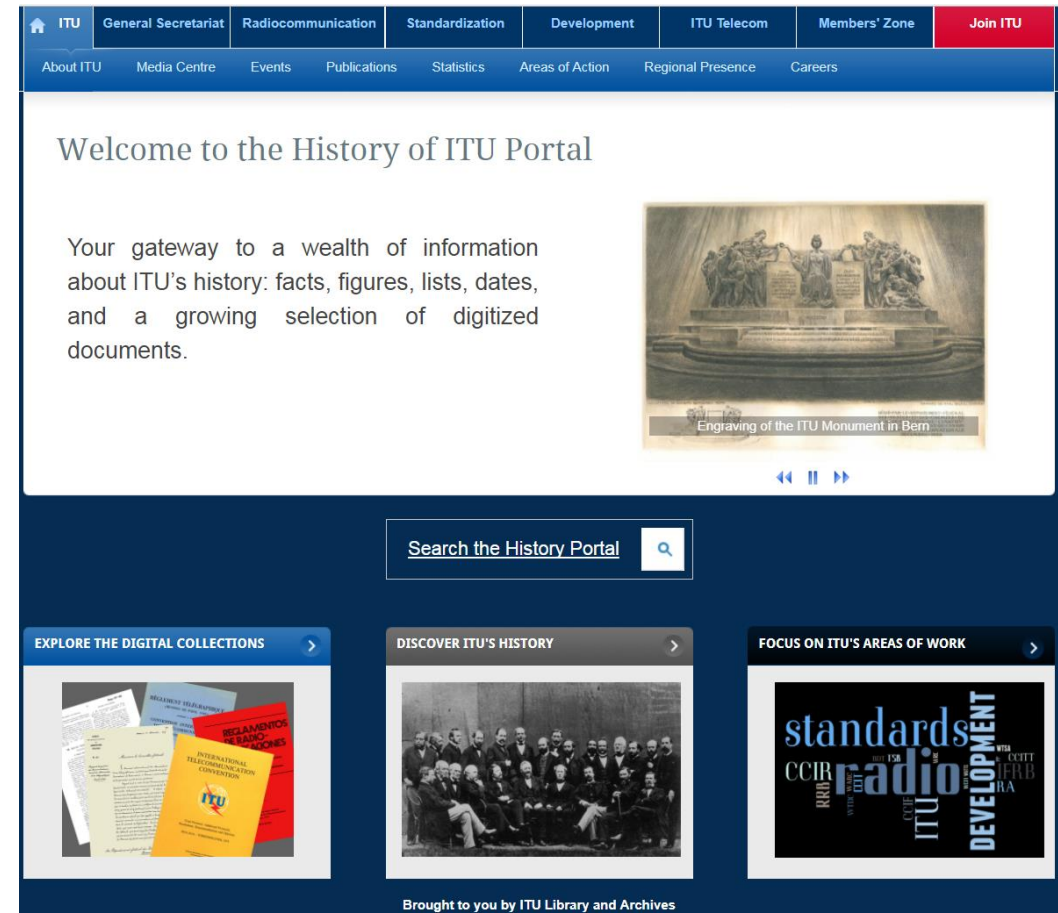
- Technological advances have enhanced global communication, connectivity, and knowledge sharing
- ITU has a key role to play in ensuring the efficient and equitable use of radiocommunication resources now and into the future



## History of ITU Portal – [www.itu.int/history](http://www.itu.int/history)

- ITU's story, 1865-present
  - History articles, key dates, key people
- Knowledge base of ITU decisions, activities, and member input
  - Final acts + documents from 200+ ITU conferences
  - All editions of the Radio Regulations
  - ITU's journals since 1869
  - And so much more!

*Full-text search on all digitized content*







# ITU Library & Archives



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Montbrillant, 6<sup>th</sup> floor

