

Meet Wi-Fi ...

The Wi-Fi we use every day runs on unlicensed spectrum. Wi-Fi and other unlicensed technologies travel across the spectrum using a so-called “politeness protocol,” which means that it waits for the band to be clear and will back off if it

senses interference from another user. Think of it like this – unlicensed spectrum bands are a playground slide and the children on the slide are the Wi-Fi signals.



Polite Wi-Fi signals wait in line to use unlicensed spectrum.

... and LTE-U

Pre-standards LTE-U — the ability to use 4G LTE wireless technology in unlicensed spectrum — has no such politeness protocol. It takes over the band without listening for interference, degrading traffic or knocking it out completely. Some worry that such a “rude” technology would eventually make the band unusable so other technologies that play by the rules couldn’t get through.



LTE-U can block and interfere with unlicensed spectrum traffic.