As France wrestles over the uses and societal impact of digital media and the Internet, it is instructive to recall another era of communications innovation, namely the introduction of interwar radio to the French public, and the government’s reaction to controversial applications by the citizenry. Recent scholarship has underscored the importance of interwar radio broadcasting to France and its territories. Less explored, however, is the work of amateur user/developers who shaped the radio medium as an instrument of speaking, as well as listening. Determined to manage applications of radio, the French Interior Ministry formed a Police de l’Air to monitor France’s airwaves, including the activities of amateur radio users (i.e., hams), whose lawful (and sometimes unlawful) use of point-to-point and broadcast communication had begun to significantly disrupt the government’s effort to dictate the future forms and uses of radio. Against a backdrop of political crisis and attempts to manage print and electronic communication and dissent, the skirmishes between the Police de l’Air and amateur radio users reveal historical aspects of contemporary debates over use, access, and qualifications to speak and be heard in mediated cultural and political settings.