

PSE QSL via LOTW, Bureau or Direct

- You may see or hear this often – but what does it mean? How do I QSL? What are the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods?
- I created this presentation with a single premise:
What I wished someone had told ME when I started trying to QSL.
- We will discuss:
 - Definitions
 - History
 - Methods

Definitions

- LOTW
 - Logbook Of The World. An ARRL Sponsored web based database that certifies QSL's between amateurs world wide. <https://p1k.arrl.org/lotwuser/>
- E-QSL
 - Web based QSL service not sponsored by ARRL. <http://www.eqsl.cc/qsldata/Index.cfm>
- IRC
 - International Reply Coupon. A form of international postage. Once very commonly used with various overseas countries, it has fallen out of popularity. They can be obtained from local post offices, you may be required to 'insist' they order them. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_reply_coupon
- The Bureau (AKA the 'BURO'.)
 - For US amateurs, the ARRL's QSL Bureau providing cheaper (but slower) bulk QSL services.
- Green Stamps
 - United States currency, usually refers to one dollar bill(s).
- Direct
 - QSL's sent via the postal system directly between two amateur's.

Definitions (con't)

- QRZ
 - Literally “Who is calling me?” Also (usually) refers to a web based amateur service www.qrz.com
- QSL
 - Literally “I acknowledge receipt.” Implies you will formally provide ‘proof’ of the QSO. **The final courtesy of the QSO is a QSL.**
- QSL Manager
 - Person who, for various reasons, handles the physical action of QSLing (logging, mailing and acknowledging) on behalf of another amateur or club.
 - You may see this mentioned as ‘Please QSL via (call sign).’
- QSO
 - An exchange of conversation or data between two amateurs

History of the QSL card

- The concept of sending a post card to verify reception of a station (and later two-way contact between them) may have been independently invented several times.
- The earliest reference seems to be a card sent in 1916 from 8VX in [Buffalo, New York](#) to 3TQ in [Philadelphia, Pennsylvania](#)
 - This was before [ITU prefixes](#) were used).
- The standardized card with call sign, frequency, date, etc. may have been developed in 1919 by C.D. Hoffman, 8UX, in [Akron, Ohio](#).
- In Europe, "Bill" Corsham, 2UV, first used a QSL when operating from [Harlesden, England](#) in 1922.

• Source: Wikipedia

(Sorry Johns Hopkins, I will never use Wikipedia in one of your papers)

Typical QSL request exchanges

- VK3AMA DE KG3BOZ 73, PSE QSL VIA LOTW, Direct, or via the Bureau K
- KG3BOZ DE VK3AMA R R I will QSL direct with SASE and two green stamps. I am good on QRZ.com. 73 DE VK3AMA SK

So what just transpired?

- Australian station, this is Boz, Best Regards, please acknowledge receipt (send a QSL card) to me to document our QSO. I can receive QSL's via Logbook OfThe World, Direct postal mail exchange or via the ARRL QSL Bureau, Over.
- Boz this is the Australian station, roger that, I will send a paper QSL card directly to you upon receipt of a self addressed stamped envelope and two dollars in US currency. You can look up my mailing address on QRZ.com. Best regards, this is the Australian station, out.

QSL “Direct”

- Amateurs mail QSL cards ‘Direct’ to one another via the postal system
- Physical mailing addresses are found on QRZ.com, given to one another over the air or found on various websites.
- Sometimes the only way to obtain a QSL!
 - Some amateurs do not use electronic methods because:
 1. They feel it’s not a ‘*REAL*’ QSL
 2. They don’t want to pay for postage
 3. They don’t have access to the INTERNET
 4. They are curmudgeon old coots (They can often be found late at night on 80 meters discussing their latest operation or other medical malady.)
- Can be expensive if mailing overseas
 - Currently .98 cents postage (anywhere in the world)
 - ~ .15 cents for each professionally printed card
 - Often requires ~ \$2 for the overseas amateur to mail the card back to you.
 - Oft times I have noticed the very rare DX stations seem to QSL direct and not via electronic means.

QSL via “The Bureau”

Outgoing:

- Amateurs mail QSL cards, in bulk, to the ARRL outgoing QSL bureau.
<http://www.arrl.org/outgoing-qsl-service>
 - DO:
 - ✓ Presort your DX QSL's alphabetically by call sign prefix
 - ✓ Enclose proof of ARRL membership. (Mailing address label from copy of QST or copy of membership card)
 - ✓ Enclose proper payment in check or money order.
 - ✓ Make checks to: ARRL Outgoing QSL Service
 - ✓ Place your QSL cards, Check and proof of membership in the envelope. Mail to:
ARRL Outgoing QSL Service
225 Main St.
Newington, CT 06111-1494
 - DO NOT:
 - ✓ Send cash

You must be a member of the ARRL to use the *outgoing* service

See ARRL.org for current price rates (it's CHEAP!)

The ARRL Bureau then sends cards to various other QSL Bureaus around the world; the other QSL Bureau effects delivery to the DX amateur.

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QSL via “The Bureau”

Incoming:

- Amateurs receive QSL cards, in bulk, from various incoming QSL Managers (not the ARRL)
<http://www.arrl.org/incoming-qsl-service>
- Check the website to determine who your contact is for INCOMING QSL's (varies)
- Mail several 5 x 7 1/2 or 6 x 9 inch self addressed, stamped envelope to your incoming QSL Manager. Print your call sign in the upper left corner and your mailing address on the middle.
 - When enough cards have accrued to fill the envelope, then he/she will mail them to you.
- Bureau services are NOT fast. Don't expect that card from North Korea to arrive overnight!
- Incoming QSL managers are volunteers. A please and a thank you from time to time is recommended.
- I recommend contacting your incoming QSL manager and ask if they have any particular requirements before using the service.

QSL VIA E-QSL.cc

- Not recognized by all organizations
- Easy to set up and configure
- <http://www.eqsl.cc/qslcard/index.cfm>



So... How do I obtain my own QSL cards?

- There are many (many!) different sources to obtain custom QSL cards:
- I recommend the QSL man (<http://www.w4mpy.com/>)
- You can order QSL cards from a variety of sources:
 - Rusprint.com qslman.com qslfactory.com qslshop.com octavia.com
cheapqsls.com Others...
- There are some programs available so you can design and print your own.
- You could design your own using MS Word, MS Power Point, Visio, etc.
- **Bottom line: Do some research and decide what's best for you and your budget.**

HOW do I know what QSL method the other amateur will accept?

- The easiest way is to... wait for it... ASK!

Ok, that was a little too simple. During a pile up (large number of amateurs calling a single operator) there simply isn't enough time to ask how to QSL. Besides, the other amateurs will hunt you down with torches and pitchforks if you tie up the frequency with such nonsense.

- Look up the amateur on QRZ.com. Oft times they provide directions on QSLing there.
- If QRZ does not provide an answer, Google their call sign.
 - Perhaps they have a dedicated website (This is common for Dxpeditions).
- If that does not work, copy some of the call signs you see trying to contact the station you are interested in. Contact THAT station and ask them.

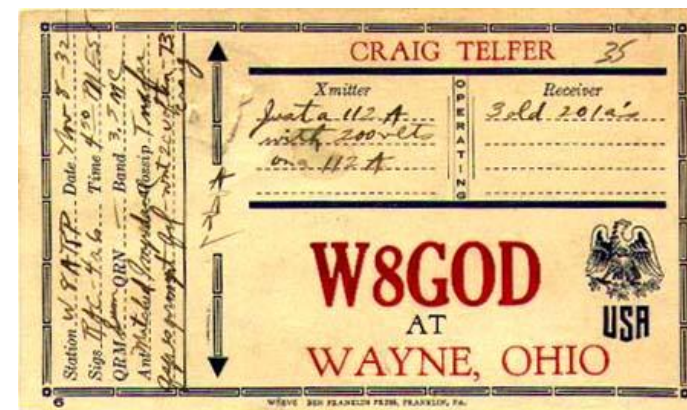
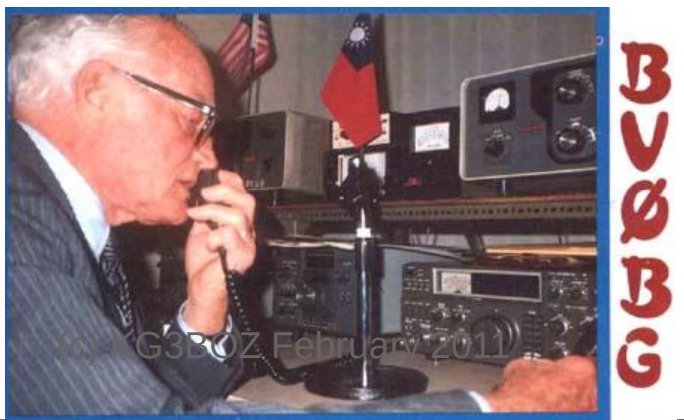
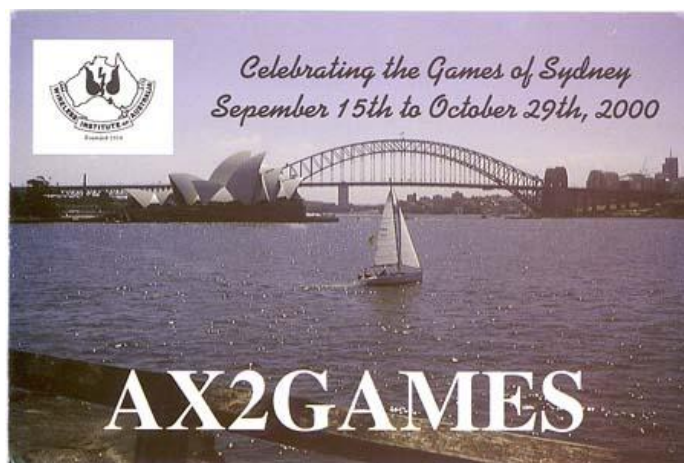
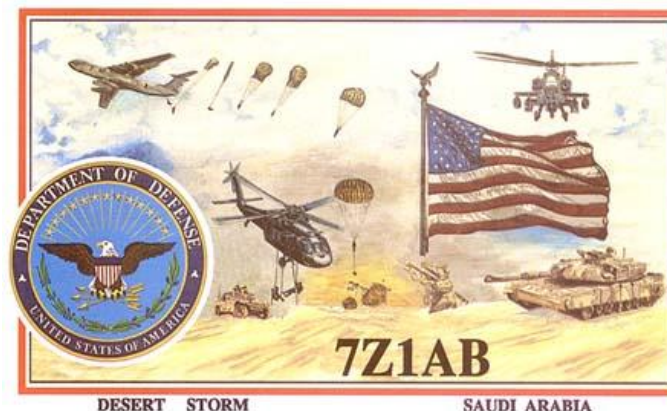
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4hHbW0KNw>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PKggkO2noU&feature=related>

Other Notes, Closing thoughts.

- Don't use *odd* size QSL cards. They should fall within these ranges:
Height 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and a width of 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches.
IARU Region 2 has suggested 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ as optimum
- Approximately 225 countries are served by the QSL Bureau. However, some are not. Check the ARRL Website for a complete list.
- QSL cards are interesting and fun. Finding a new QSL card in your mailbox is like being ten years old at Christmas.
- Which method is better?
Well, I know which method is 'better' but that only applies to me. You must determine the one that best suits you.

I prefer a combination of LOTW, Direct and the Bureau. I also use E-QSL to help others who use that service.



The final courtesy of the QSO is a QSL

