

Electronic QSLing with eQSL

QSL cards are special postcards sent between amateur radio operators to confirm a contact. These are usually either exchanged via amateur radio bureau services, or are sometimes sent directly via the mail service. Some operators are avid collectors of these cards and regard the sending of them to be a courtesy, but others regard them as a nuisance.

Certainly this traditional method of exchanging cards has its overheads: - the cost of having cards printed, the cost of mailing them, and the cost to the amateur radio organisations for running their bureau operations

Many operators collect QSL cards to gain awards, and in these cases the use of bureau services is not always the best answer, because the exchange of cards is often a very slow process. Many stations only send out cards in acknowledgement of those they receive, so in some instances it is not uncommon to wait more than a year for a response, and sometimes you may not receive a card at all.

In recent years many of these problems have been addressed by the introduction of electronic QSLing where images of QSL cards are exchanged via the internet. These images can either be kept in a file, or if you like to display them they can be taken to your local photographic outlet where they can be printed like any other photographs.

One of the earliest of these online services which is currently celebrating its 13th anniversary is <http://www.eQSL.cc>

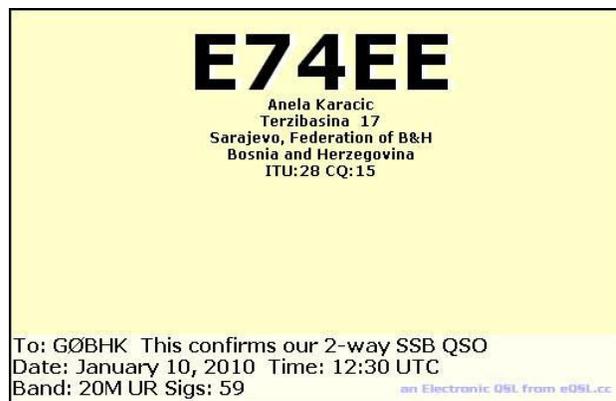
The eQSL service works in a very similar way to an e-mail service where you have an 'in box' for incoming eQSLs and an 'out box' for the eQSLs you are sending to other stations. Minimal skill is required to design your own card, and if you want to incorporate graphics eQSL offers you a large choice of suitable pictures from their image library.

Perhaps the biggest surprise when using eQSL is the speed at which images get exchanged. Many operators simply do a bulk upload of the contents of their log at the end of the day and, on several occasions, I have received an eQSL within an hour of working the other station

eQSLs can be created in three different ways –

- 1) by manual entry
- 2) by uploading your complete ADIF log file
- 3) by using a real time logger interface

If you are happy to have a simple card without any pictures you can use the eQSL service completely free of charge. See below -



An example of an eQSL which can be sent free

But if you want to send eQSLs which incorporate a picture, as in the card below, you need to make a donation of at least 5 U.S. dollars



In this case I made a donation and opted to supply my own picture, taken on the local sea front.

eQSLs are recognised for a very large number of awards, and the list is growing all the time. To guarantee the validity of an eQSL card, new users are invited, optionally, to submit an image of their licence document which can be checked and an 'Authenticity Guaranteed' status will be issued. This does not have to be done at the time when

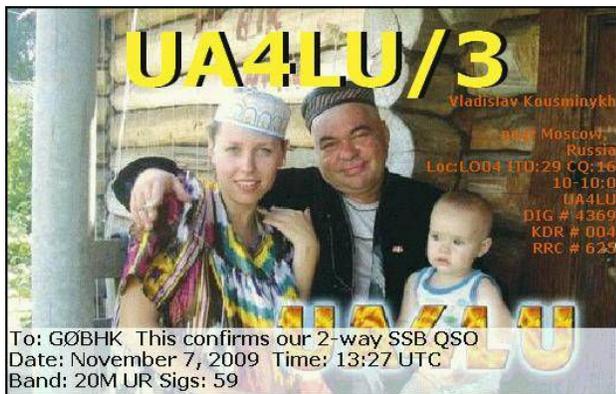
you register with the service, but can be done later at a time convenient to you.

eQSL currently has about 150,000 users who have submitted more than 121 million eQSLs. More than 300 countries are recognised by eQSL



If you like to send out traditional style QSLs via the mail eQSL offer you a printing service.

To encourage the use of their system, eQSL has developed its own programme of contests and awards based on contacts confirmed using eQSLs. Since everything works around eQSL's log database, there's no hassle trying to get that elusive DX card, and no expense and worry about posting your precious QSLs off to some adjudicator.



The saying that "The final courtesy of a contact is a QSL" may have been true in the days when a radio contact really was an event worth commemorating. These days the cost of printing and posting QSL cards just isn't justified for every contact, and national radio societies waste volunteer time and money on behalf of those who insist on QSLing every contact through the bureau. These days the Internet has become such an integral tool for most radio enthusiasts that there is

no logical reason not to use it to confirm contacts as well. Thankfully, it is a relatively small number of awards organisations that still won't accept eQSLs.

Electronic QSLs are cheaper, faster, easier, more friendly to the environment, more efficient and more readily verified than traditional QSL cards.

Why not give eQSL a try – it's **FREE!**

Remember :-

- no more printing costs
- no more envelopes required at bureaux
- no more stamps to pay for
- no more waiting, perhaps for years, for that elusive QSL to arrive

Ted Stiles GØBHK

