

# QSLing

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South Florida DX Association



W6RGG operating from BS7H (Scarborough Reef, in the South China Sea) in 2007

# Today's Class

- QSLing – what and why
  - Goal: Maximize your return rate
- Paper QSLing
  - Direct or via manager
  - OQRS
  - QSL bureaus
- Electronic QSLing
  - LoTW
  - eQSL
- Record-keeping

# You've Worked 'em ...

## Now What?

- Part 2 of the process: Getting confirmation of the contact from the other side – a QSL.
- Confirmation of the QSO:
  - Convinces a third party (e.g., the ARRL DXCC Desk) that the contact did, in fact, occur when and how you say it did
  - Confirms to you that you worked a valid station, and not a pirate
  - Can add to a collection of beautiful, educational memorabilia from around the world

# Paper QSL Cards

**ZD8KW** Johnny Clingham  
 Po box 2, Ascension island, South atlantic ocean, ascen Izz.

Loc: 1122ta  
 CQ ZONE 36 ITU ZONE 66

To Radio: G8BCG/P ..... Confirming our QSO

DATE	2-WAY	UTC	MHZ	RST	MODE
20/01/00	SSB	21.18	50.1	59	SSB

PSE QSL DIRECT IOTA AF-003 Best 73/88 Johnny Clingham

best wishes from  
**IT9RZR** ITALY  
 Op. Maurizio CANNARELLA  
 P.O. Box 24/A  
 89012 AVOLA (SR)

CQ Zone 15 - ITU Zone 28 - WWL JM 75 MV

**VIENTIANE LAOS** **XWØX**

**NA1SS**

**I4ZQS**

**LAND MADEIRA**  
 BOX 86, PORTO SANTO ISL

16° 22' W  
 32° 21' N

**CT3FT**  
 op : CEDRIC J. ROURKE  
 ex : G131VJ & E16AZ

CONFIRMING QSO WITH  
 G8BCG/M

DATE	UTC	MHZ	RST	2 X AIA
22-6-98	1618	50	55	3E

P QSL E Peter

**E51SIX**  
 Cook Islands  
 Rarotonga

**BURKINA FASO** **XT20W**

**3D2SC**  
 Naitauba Island  
 Fiji

CONFIRMING QSO WITH DAY/MONTH/YEAR

UTC	MHZ	RST	2-WAY	QSL
				THX

CALIFORNIA  
 Los Angeles County, DM144uc  
 34° 6' 57" N, 118° 16' 27" W

**K9FYR**

Raymond F. Benson III  
 3717 Los Feliz Blvd. #112 1/2  
 Los Angeles, CA, 90027 USA

**Niger**

**SU2K  
 SU3T  
 SUSA**

Grid U76 AD

**20J**

Radio: G8BCG/P  
 date: 2001 08 04  
 mode: 16:10  
 id: 50  
 dec: 2165  
 port: 559

g d PIEJOUGAT  
 GAGNOA  
 e Côte d'Ivoire  
 E - Waz35 - ITU 46

To RADIO

DATE	CDG	MT	BAND / Mhz	MODE	RST
4 11 2003	14:30		50	USB	59

QSL Pse  
 Q.S.L. Manager: F 8 IPW  
 BP 35 - 37500 MONTS - FRANCE

**EK6AD**

Evgeni Kurgin - uk.Tamanceneri-18 - 56  
 Yerevan- ARMENIA.  
 CQ zon:21 - ITU zon:29 Grid:LN20EG

Radio: G8BCG/P  
 date: 2001 08 04  
 mode: 16:10  
 id: 50  
 dec: 2165  
 port: 559

Qso verified by SM3DBU

# Basic Process

- Send one to get one
  - Theirs is rare; yours, probably not so much
  - Exceptions:
    - Major DXpeditions may have web-based requests
    - Some small stations may QSL 100% via bureau
    - County or grid square hunters
- Motivate recipient to reply by:
  - Making it as easy as possible, and
  - Avoiding common problems and sources of error

# Issues

- Your card design
- Where to send your card
- How to send return postage
- How to send your card (a.k.a. beating postal thieves)

# Your card design

- Should include both stations' call signs, QSO date and time (both in UTC), band, mode, and signal report
  - All on the same side of the card
  - And legible, with no corrections or cross-outs
  - With month spelled out (is 3/1/2009 in January, or March?)
- Your return address – including *country* – should also be legible
- Your county, state, Maidenhead grid locator, CQ and ITU Zone may make your QSL more valuable to the recipient
- n.b.: Your card should not be anywhere near anyone's definition of obscenity or poor taste (you'd be surprised...)
- Artistic qualities may or may not improve your response rate
  - YMMV

# Where to send your card

- Direct
- QSL manager
- OQRS (don't send at all)
- Bureau



# Sending Direct

- Addresses available online

- <http://www.qrz.com>
- <http://hamcall.net/call>
- <http://www.google.com>
- DX bulletins
- Stubborn cases: <http://mailman.qth.net/mailman/listinfo/dx-qs1>

Postal rate, anywhere  
outside the US: \$1.15  
Use “Global Forever” stamps!  
<http://postcalc.usps.gov/>

- Follow QSL instructions

- Preferred return postage method
- Envelope details

- Foreign QSLs often larger than US standard 3.5” x 5.5”

- Larger return envelopes needed!

# QSL Managers

- Many DX stations have poor postal systems, or need help with the workload, and so engage a QSL Manager.
  - “QSL via W3HNK”, for example
  - The manager is the “correspondence secretary” for the DX station
  - The DX station sends his manager his logs, and the manager handles all the QSLing chores
  - DXers send their cards to the manager – not the DX station directly – and the manager replies on behalf of the DX station
- QSL managers are usually well-advertised
  - <http://www.ik3qar.it/manager/> (specializing in managers)
  - <http://www.qrz.com>
  - DX bulletins
- All other direct QSLing rules apply

# On-line QSL Request Service (OQRS)

- Usually linked to <http://clublog.org>
- Steps:
  - DX station uploads his log to Clublog.org, and activates OQRS
  - You enter your call on the DX's OQRS form (either on Clublog.org or embedded elsewhere on the web)
  - You enter the date and time of your QSOs (or upload your log to Clublog, and this will happen automatically)
  - Those that match the DX's log are eligible for direct or bureau cards to be sent, with return postage payment made via PayPal (usually)
  - DX's card arrives by postal mail
- Much faster, and more secure, than sending GS through the mail; less work for the DX op
- Typical charge is \$3 - \$5

# Forms of Return Postage

- US dollar bills
- International Reply Coupons
- Local stamps
- PayPal

# US dollar bills (“Green Stamps” or “GS”)

- Minimum of \$2; sometimes more
  - Germany \$3
  - Iran \$15
- Crisp, new bills preferred
  - In some places, easier to exchange for local currency
- Sometimes illegal though, so check first
  - India and Indonesia, for example
- Some major DXpeditions now accepting PayPal from their websites
  - Don’t forget to include your callsign!

# International Reply Coupons (IRCs)

- Exchangeable for overseas airmail letter postage almost world-wide (even in the US)
- ...but no longer **\*sold\*** in the US
- Available from foreign post offices via the Internet, and second-hand from QSL managers
- Left side round-stamped at purchase, right side at redemption



<http://www.upu.int>  
[http://pe.usps.gov/text/imm/immc3\\_020.htm](http://pe.usps.gov/text/imm/immc3_020.htm)

# Local Stamps

- Often the most convenient for DX when travel to convert IRCs is difficult, if GS possession inconvenient, or the DX is an individual operator
- Often not the best for DXpeditions, which may need GS to fund the trip, etc.
- Don't attach stamps to the envelope
  - QSLs may be sent from another country, via a postal meter, etc.
- Don't send US stamps overseas!
- Sources advertise in some DX bulletins (e.g., QRZ DX)

# PayPal

- Becoming very popular, either as part of OQRS or as an independent transaction
- All that's needed is an email address for the DX station
- If an independent (non-OQRS) operation, be sure to include QSO information and your call sign in PayPal note (or separate email)
  - PayPal should send mailing address automatically, but it's a good idea to include that, too



## So, which to use?

- Prime Directive: **Do what the operator says.**
  - Usually will say on QRZ.com, or DXpedition web site
- But if you have no information, some *general* suggestions (YMMV):
  - PayPal or GS to “major” DXpeditions, that have “major” expenses
  - PayPal when operator indicates he’ll accept it (OQSL or independently); GS otherwise
  - Foreign stamps to native individual operators, especially in places where travel to convert IRCs might be difficult
    - And especially if the op is not a “DX” op, just in a DX entity ☺
  - IRCs otherwise
    - Sometimes cheaper than stamps. . .

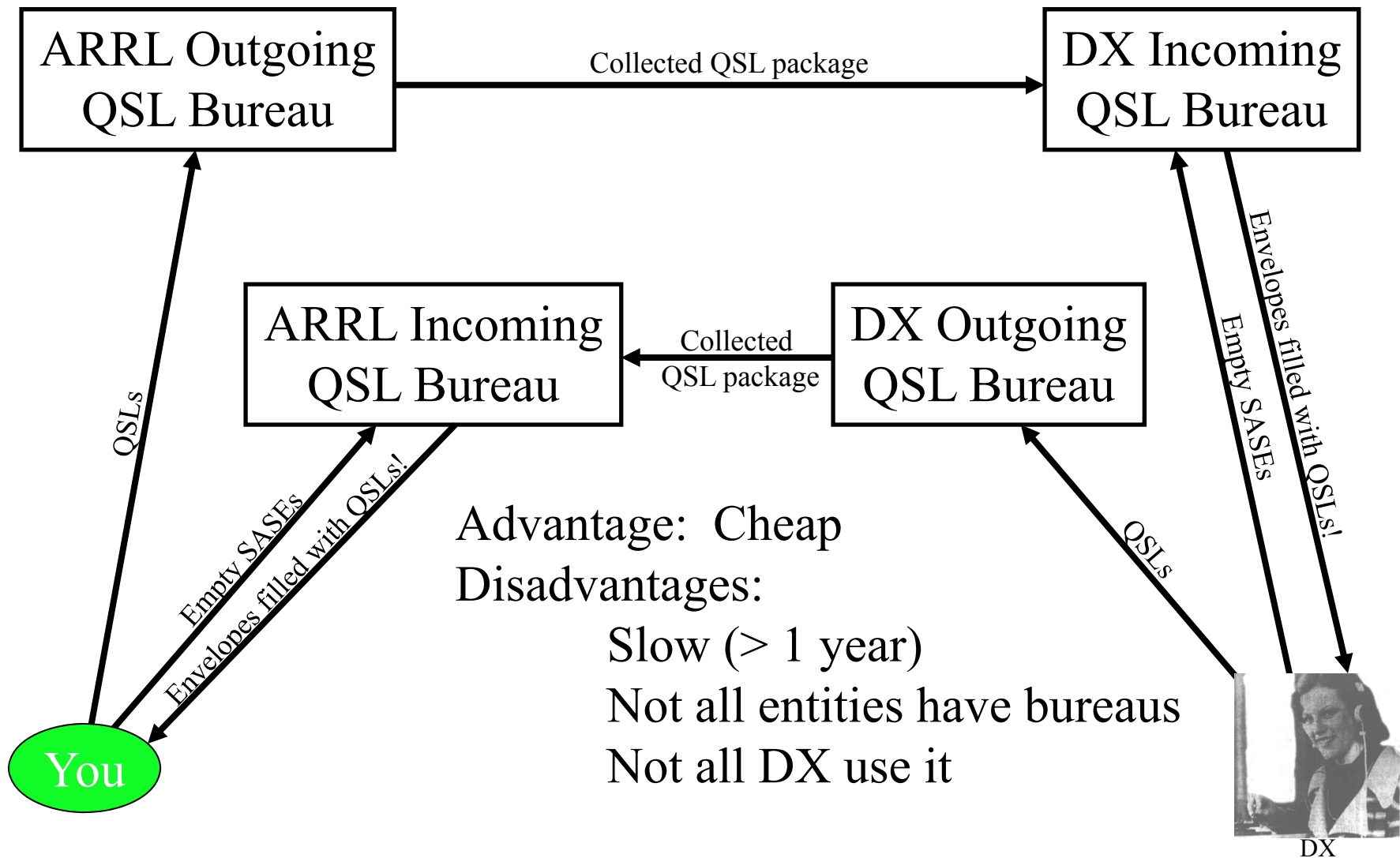
# International Mailing

- This just in: Mail theft is a near-certainty in some parts of the world
  - Defense 1: Good envelope strategy
  - Defense 2: Registered mail

# Envelope Strategy

- Opaque mailing envelope
- Avoid lumps, indicative of a folded return envelope inside (and associated \$\$?)
  - Size of mailer and return envelope should match closely
- No callsigns or other indication of amateur radio on mailing envelope
- Place return envelope *upside down* in mailing envelope
  - Prevents letter opener from cutting return envelope flap
- Include country in reply envelope address
- Frank's Compulsive Guide to Postal Addresses is your friend:  
<http://www.columbia.edu/~fdc/postal/>

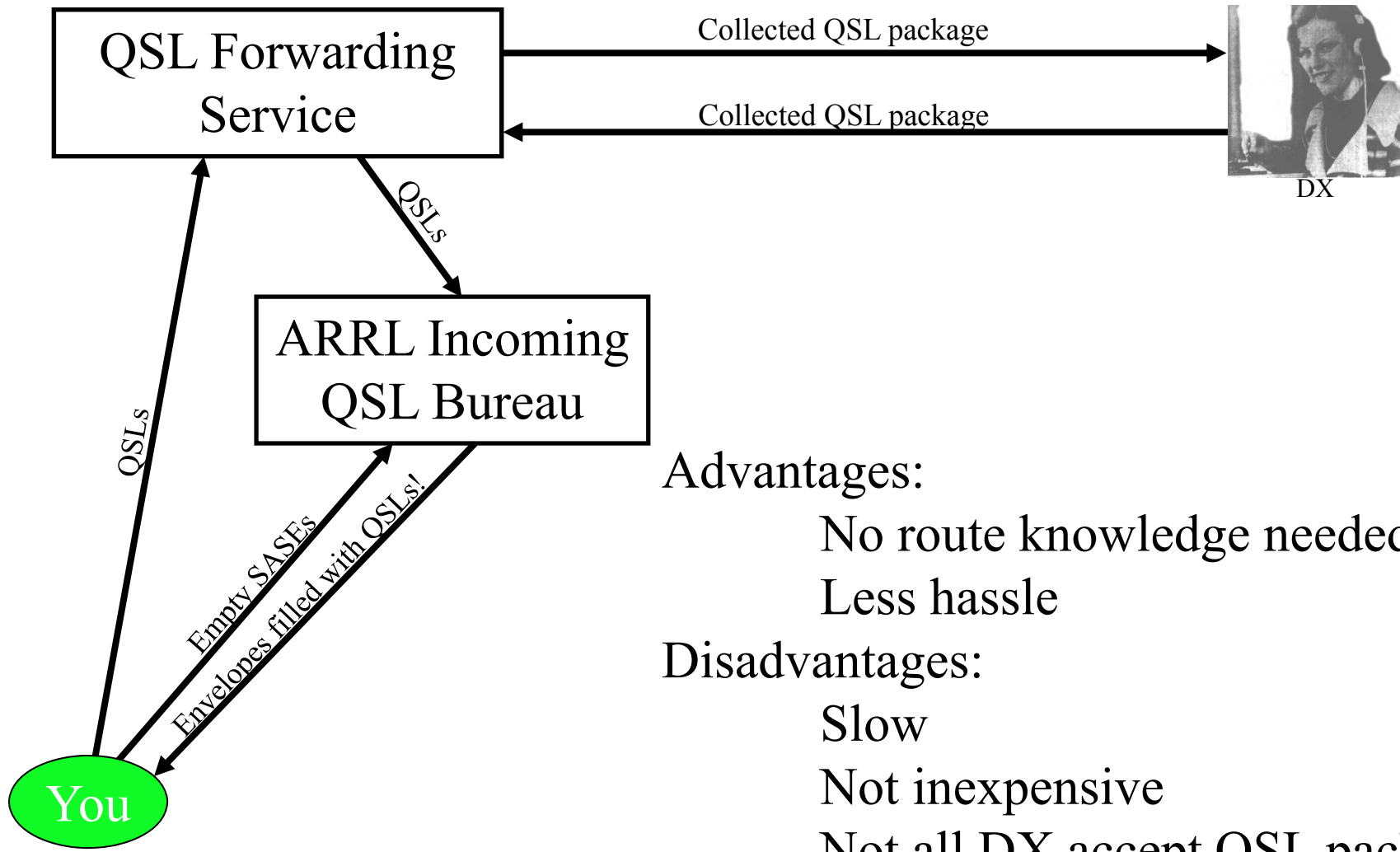
# The QSL Bureau System



# Using the QSL Bureau

- Incoming (open to all US amateurs):
  - Keep *several* 5” x 7-1/2” envelopes on file
    - Your callsign in upper left corner
    - Self-addressed
    - One “Forever” stamp attached, with additional stamps clipped on
- Outgoing (ARRL members only):
  - Sort your cards by “parent” callsign prefix
    - 2E → G, RA → UA, etc.
    - Note that some entities do not have QSL bureaus...
  - Enclose proof of ARRL membership (copy of *QST* mailing label)
  - Enclose check for fee (\$0.75 per ounce of cards)
- On the web:
  - Incoming bureau: <http://www.arrl.org/incoming-qsl-service>
  - Outgoing bureau: <http://www.arrl.org/outgoing-qsl-service>

# QSL Forwarding Services



## Advantages:

- No route knowledge needed
- Less hassle

## Disadvantages:

- Slow
- Not inexpensive
- Not all DX accept QSL packages

# International Registered Mail

- Expensive, and not a panacea, but beats the alternative
- Requires a signature of every postal employee that handles the envelope, door-to-door
- Do not use any plastic tape on envelope
  - An international regulation (not tamper-evident)
  - Paper tape okay (postal clerk will add to all seals)
- If desperate, consider adding (not available to all entities):
  - Return receipt requested
    - You receive a post card with recipient's signature
  - Restricted delivery
    - Will only be delivered to addressee
- USPS' International Mail Manual is your friend
  - <http://pe.usps.gov/text/imm/welcome.htm>
  - §330 Registered Mail; §381 IRCs; etc.

# Hints and Kinks

- Mail to French possessions (e.g., Reunion Island) goes to France first:
  - Last lines of address should be:  
    <postal code> <City>  
    France
  - Postal code indicates which possession
  - “Reunion Island” in address → lost mail!
  - [http://www.upu.int/post\\_code/en/countries/REU.pdf](http://www.upu.int/post_code/en/countries/REU.pdf)
- Addressing style in the former USSR is inverted, with country on the first line of address
  - Cyrillic translation of “USA” is “C III A”
  - Writing “C III A” on top line of SAE helps return rate



# Electronic QSLing

eQSL.cc - The Electronic QSL Card Centre - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.eqsl.cc/qslcard/Index.cfm

Most Visited Getting Started Latest Headlines Customize Links Free Hotmail

eQSL.cc - The Electronic QSL Card Ce...



The Electronic QSL Card Centre

How do eQSLs work?

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- any Cour
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- from our
- \* Only 12
- have don
- \* Congra
- recipient

Callsign:  Search

the eDX100 award: VU3DJQ | 135.9 million eQSLs from 309 Countries Now Online | Es

[Why Join?](#)


ARRL's Logbook of the World - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

arrl.org https://p1k.arrl.org/lotwuser/default


Most Visited Getting Started Latest Headlines Customize Links Free Hotmail Windows Window

ARRL's Logbook of the World



THE ARRL  
LOGBOOK  
OF THE WORLD™

YAESU  
PRINCIPAL SPONSOR  
of the LoTW Website



The Diamond Terrace  
for 2009  
Bricks and Benches available!

Log on to Logbook of the World

Note: You must have been issued a certificate before you can log on to the LoTW site.

Username:

Password:  Note: This is **not** the password sent to US amateurs via postcard!

Log On

Your browser must support cookies in order to log in.

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# Basic Process

- Upload (or email) an electronic log to a web site
- DX does the same
- Claimed QSOs common to both logs compared via the web site
  - Manually or automatically
- When matches are found, issues confirmations (electronic QSLs) to both stations
- Can be very fast – and inexpensive

# Logbook of The World (LoTW)

- <http://www.arrl.org/lotw/>
- Operated by the ARRL
- Confirmations valid for the DXCC program, WAS, TPA **only**
  - No IOTA, WAC, WAZ, etc.
  - But can get WAC, 5BWAC by hand-selecting QSLs
- Integrated with your DXCC account
  - Totals available on the web
  - Apply for awards electronically
- Very (some would say too) secure
  - Logs authenticated via digital signature
  - Public-key cryptography
- No printable card involved
  - “Bits in a database”

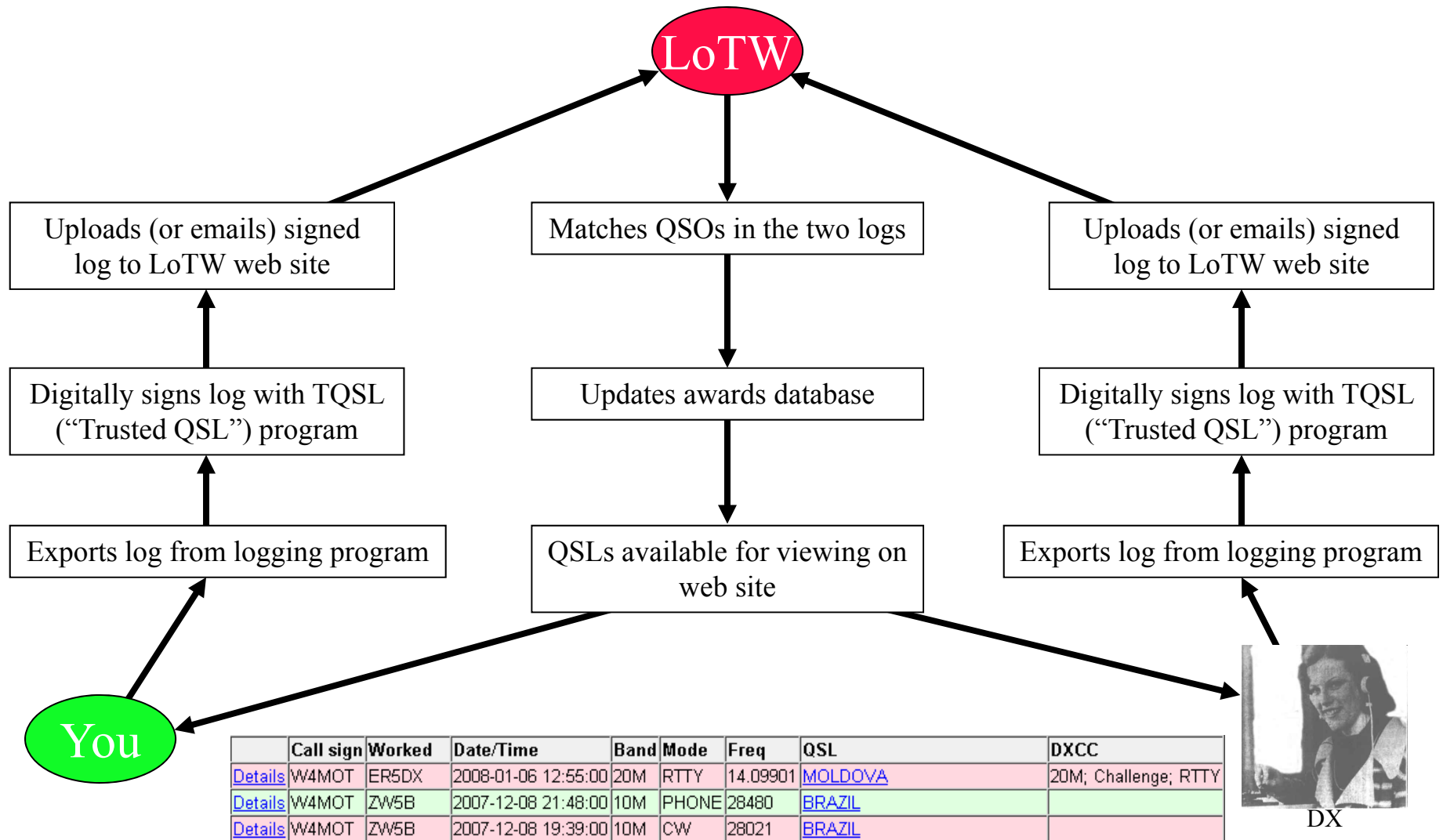
Your Logbook DXCC Account (W4MOT - UNIT)

Account Status

Award	Selected	Applied	Awarded	Total / Current
Mixed *	0	0	319	319 / 315
CW *	6	0	221	227 / 227
Phone *	2	0	154	156 / 156
RTTY *	2	0	109	111 / 111
160M	3	0	22	25 / 25
80M	1	0	51	52 / 52
40M *	1	0	101	102 / 102
30M	3	0	71	74 / 74
20M *	3	0	196	199 / 199
17M *	3	0	123	126 / 126
15M *	3	0	110	113 / 113
12M	3	0	27	30 / 30
10M	0	0	63	63 / 63
6M	2	0	5	7 / 7
2M	0	0	1	1 / 1
Challenge	22	0	769	-- / 791

\* = Award has been issued

# Logbook of The World (LoTW)

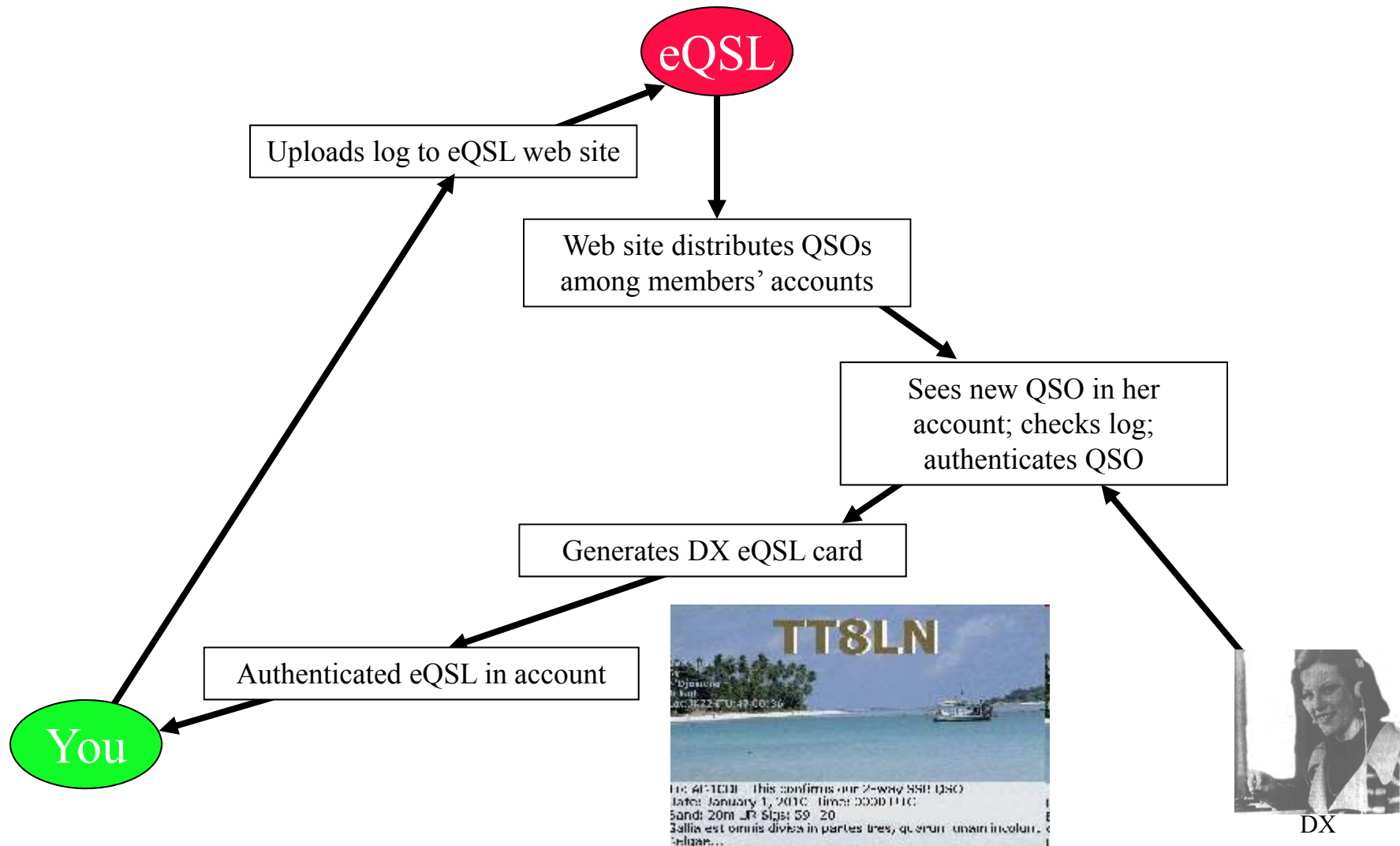


	Call sign	Worked	Date/Time	Band	Mode	Freq	QSL	DXCC
<a href="#">Details</a>	W4MOT	ER5DX	2008-01-06 12:55:00	20M	RTTY	14.09901	<a href="#">MOLDOVA</a>	20M; Challenge; RTTY
<a href="#">Details</a>	W4MOT	ZW5B	2007-12-08 21:48:00	10M	PHONE	28480	<a href="#">BRAZIL</a>	
<a href="#">Details</a>	W4MOT	ZW5B	2007-12-08 19:39:00	10M	CW	28021	<a href="#">BRAZIL</a>	

# eQSL

- <http://www.eqsl.cc>
- Since 1998; operated by Dave Morris, N5UP
- Confirmations valid for the CQ awards program (WAZ, WPX, US Counties, etc.) in addition to separate eQSL awards
  - But only QSLs from “authenticity guaranteed” participants with “Bronze” or higher membership level
  - **NOT** valid for ARRL awards (DXCC, etc.) or IOTA!
- Auto-match or manually confirm received eQSLs
- Less (some would say in-) secure
  - Submitters, not logs, authenticated
  - No cryptography
  - . . . but probably not significantly less secure than paper QSLs
- Printable card available; also supports SWLs

# eQSL



# Record-keeping Advice

- Keep good records (via electronic log or otherwise) of when you sent your QSL, where it was sent, and with what return postage method
  - Recheck and resend at least annually
  - Third time can be the charm
- Never give up!
  - Personal Record: VP8SO (South Orkney Islands)
    - QSO: 1 March 1979
    - QSL: 22 March 2007

Questions?