

LoTW Update—January 2019

Ad Hoc Logbook Study Committee

Logbook availability exceeds our 99% uptime goal. You can always find the realtime status report at: <https://status.lotw.arrl.org/>

TQSL Status	
Current Trusted QSL software: TQSL v2.4.3 (Download)	
Logbook of the World Status	
1,000,000,001	QSO records have been entered into the system.
187,798,390	QSL records have resulted.
112,824	Users are registered in the system.
165,239	Certificates are active.
18,724,655	User files have been processed.

LoTW Milestone

On December 19, we reported “ARRL’s Logbook of The World Tops 1 Billion QSO Records” (see <http://www.arrl.org/news/arrl-s-logbook-of-the-world-tops-1-billion-qso-records>).

Logbook continues to grow, and the team continues to improve how it works, and thus users find it increasingly friendly. Our plan is to make Logbook 2.0 a major step forward in improving ease of use.

LoTW Support for WAZ through LoTW. The application rate has tapered off, and the total is now a bit below 10% of the number of DXCC applications in the same time period. The count of WAZ applications through 2018 follows this update.

TQSL

TQSL 2.4.3 has been released. The main update was to add additional local translations. Now updates also support intelligent default fill-ins for station location when a user uploads QSOs. If users accept the defaults, fewer QSOs will be missing details such as county and grid square, increasing the likelihood of Logbook confirmations for these secondary characteristics.

“Logbook 2.0”

The project to update the DXCC database is now in acceptance testing. Once that milestone is passed, some programming resources will return to LoTW updates. The next project will be to add 5-band DXCC and WAC as supported awards within Logbook. Included in that project, we will be adding another award, working together with a sister national society outside the U.S. Working on several awards at a time will result in efficiencies in the associated programming tasks.

Communications to Logbook’s user base

Users on ARRL’s ARRL-LOTW group asked several questions about what would be next for Logbook following adding WAZ. In response, LSC chair K0GW posted a [LoTW Roadmap](#), which is appended to this update.

In addition to the Roadmap, an interview with K0GW was requested by NCJ Editor Scott Wright, K0MD. The interview appears in the November-December 2018 issue of NCJ, pp. 17-18.

DX station registration on Logbook

Since the main award support on Logbook is DXCC, participation by DX stations is critical to maintaining Logbook's value. In 2018, we began to permit DX stations to send scanned copies of authenticating documents via e-mail; having to send paper copies as before was a show stopper for many DX stations. We continue to look at other improvements to lower the barrier to entry on Logbook for DX and US stations alike. US Logbook users should understand that making DX registration more friendly benefits them as well, since the more DX stations find it easy to confirm via Logbook, the cheaper and easier will US stations find it to obtain their DXCC confirmations.

Closing the Loop

The team continues to work to close the loop on user activities, so users are informed about the success of their operations (such as requesting a new certificate). Not only does this reduce user frustration and improve user satisfaction, but it will result in fewer calls to the LoTW Help line.

Supported modes on LoTW

Logbook follows the policy of supporting mode designations that are officially accepted modes according to the ADIF standard. Recently, some users demanded FT8 support in Logbook prior to its approval for ADIF. The Board should be aware that Logbook follows ADIF, not vice versa. The ADIF group eventually did approve FT8, and Logbook support for the mode was added in a matter of days.

More friendly Logbook

In general, for users who have found LoTW frustrating to use in the past, we have improved and simplified setup and use. DXers who became discouraged on earlier trials are invited to try again. Today, many logging programs, both free and paid, support user upload to LoTW, and quite a few provide a simplified upload based on other information that can be supplied from the logging program.

Submitted by,
Greg Widin, KØGW, Chair LSC 2018
for the Logbook Study Committee

Members: AA7A, K3DGB, K7GM, KØGW, W3IZ, K1MK, K1MU/4, N2ZZ, Doug Haney

Additional information appears on the next two pages.

Monthly number of applications

Month	# WPX	# WAZ	# DXCC
January	93	0	
February	81	0	
March	75	4	
April	96	391	1422
May	62	101	856
June	80	84	669
July	78	60	937
August	61	57	789
September	66	49	601
October	68	69	
November	86	86	
December	101	55	1211
Total 2018	949	964	13334
Monthly average	78	106	1112

WPX & WAZ and DXCC monthly include LoTW only; DXCC total is from all sources
 Some DXCC individual month data not available at time of report
 Monthly averages for WPX and WAZ computed on last 9 months

Award Processing 2018

Paper/Fieldcheck Processing Time	3-4 weeks
Logbook Processing Time	1 . 2 business days
2018 DXCC Applications	13,334
2018 WAS Applications	2,413
2018 VUCC Applications	972
2018 WPX Applications	949
2018 WAZ Applications	964

Data from IN-news (ending 20 December 2018)

(Statement on the “roadmap” for future improvements and additional awards. This was published on 7 September, message 29354 on the ARRL-LoTW group on groups.io)

Logbook “Roadmap”

Questions were asked recently on the ARRL-LoTW user group about LoTW's plans for the future or “roadmap.” The following article was published there in response, by chair K0GW. It received no dissent from the group.

Logbook's direction includes more than just adding awards. Improving Logbook's friendliness and other user interactions is also important. A good example is some of the improvements that have been made recently which make it easier for DX stations to submit their credentials to get their Logbook certificates. A utility like Logbook becomes more valuable to everyone in proportion to the number of participating stations, and ARRL members especially benefit as more DX stations and DXpeditions provide their confirmations there.

Recent improvements to TQSL attempt to increase users' likelihood of providing their grid square information, at the same time that we have not made that a requirement. Other improvements in usability help reduce the cost of Logbook support, and make it possible to devote more time to extensions. A recent effort to close the loop on certificate requests has helped users and reduced support costs by being proactive. Even this ARRL-LoTW forum has improved users' experience and turnaround time for some problems. Recent, significant enhancements of the online Logbook Help site by AA6YQ have had a positive effect on user support.

Of course, ARRL awards have a high priority, so we have a high priority on integrating 5B DXCC into Logbook. When we consider supporting non-ARRL awards, we must decide whether the cost and effort of adding the award will be commensurate with the fees from those applying for them. While ARRL dues support LoTW in part, it is sensible that those who use Logbook to obtain awards should contribute directly to its upkeep. At this point, fees defray those expenses, but Logbook isn't even close to being self-supporting. Certainly, the popularity of an award is also part of this consideration; in fact, user comments from our informal survey at a recent Hamvention were influential in leading us to add WAZ support in Logbook.

We are currently investigating models where awards can be supported by Logbook, without having to program a display of the user's progress on the award. Custom support for specific award requirements requires significant time and money. As an example, differences between DXCC and WAZ criteria were a major factor in the WAZ project. Not having to validate whether a given contact qualifies for a particular award would mean Logbook could provide confirmations for contacts only, while the award sponsor and applicant deal with which contacts are qualified for an award.

Timetables to add these new awards are a separate issue. We have talked about the Logbook 2.0 that is planned soon. There are lots of things that should be upgraded for users that won't add awards, but will improve the process to make it easier or less confusing for new applicants. And though some improvements won't add new awards, they will make it easier to add awards when it is time to do so.