

Serious DXers still consider the QSL card as the means of achieving whatever goals they have set themselves, be it 100 countries confirmed, 500 stations confirmed or just to collect the cards or stamps that may accompany them.

Recently one such DXer, Mr Bob Padula from Australia has received his 1000th station confirmed. In doing this he sent out over 10000 reception reports and received over 8000 QSLs in response, a feat which took 52 years to achieve.

This level of achievement will be hard to match with the latest transmission season which started on the 29th of October showing a decrease in broadcasting hours over pretty much the whole spectrum. In saying this there are still enough stations out there to satisfy most needs. Another way of looking at this situation is that there will be less crowding and less interference so the rare ones should be more attainable.

Writing a reception report is not too difficult if the basic guidelines are followed. Without being too technical the main points to be observed are:

- Print or type your name and address details. Its not much good compiling a reception report and then having an illegible address.
- Make sure you get the correct persons details of who you are sending the report to.
- Write the date out in full as some parts of the world observe different date formats.
- Always use UTC format for time references.
- Frequencies are expressed in kHz (Kilohertz) and if possible give the exact frequency of the station received.
- Include the receiver make and model and the antenna used as this gives the station a possible comparison point with other reports received.

The received signal can be described using either the SINPO or SIO codes. SINPO stands for Signal Strength, Interference, Natural Noise, Propagation conditions and Overall Merit where the numbers 1 to 5 in each category are used with 1 being the weakest or worst in each category and 5 is the best. SIO code is the same breakdown using only the Signal Strength, Interference and Overall Merit classifications.

Using either of these methods is not compulsory however and some DXers will give a written form of signal report instead. Don't rely on your "S" meter to give the signal report from as they are not accurate enough on average receivers and are not much more than a tuning indicator in these cases.

For a reception report to be meaningful a reasonably detailed outline of the program details is needed. This should cover at least 15 to 20 minutes of monitoring time and give details of the program title, the presenter's name (if possible) and as many relevant facts about the program content.

It also helps if you can supply reports for other frequencies that the station may be transmitting simultaneously and over several days if possible and include any comments on what you thought of the programs heard (Was the program boring, too long, too short, just right etc).

If you want your QSL card to be sent out promptly check what may be the best way to ensure this. Does the station you are contacting require return postage?

IRCs or stamps of the country of origin can cover this. Some people will send reports on tape or minidisk nowadays and broadcasters are increasingly making use of technology available in that they will have the facilities for online reporting either through their web pages or via e-mail.

Again check first in publications like the WRTV Handbook or on the Internet.

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