LoTW Update—January 2021

Logbook Committee

During 2020, users added almost 164 million additional QSO records, resulting in over 43 million additional QSLs. These 1-year increases are roughly 15% and 20%, respectively. We have almost 15 thousand new users, an increase of 12%. 9.8 million user files were processed, a growth of 41%. (3 Jan 2021).

Many amateurs have used the lockdown time to finally input their past logs into Logbook. Many users have reported QSLs going back long before the beginning of Logbook itself that they have now found matched in their logs. The high level of digital activity has also resulted in higher and faster confirmation rates.

Logbook availability continues to exceed our 99% uptime target. The realtime status report is at https://status.lotw.arrl.org/.

Following CQ WW contests this fall, the Logbook server queue at times exceeded 24 hours. ARRL IT noted that new servers had been acquired for Logbook, but not yet deployed. Accordingly, a switchover was made on 21 December, without incident. Statistics were collected before and after the switch to help IT understand what was affecting server performance. At this point, it appears that server congestion is due to a complex of processing factors, many of which may reflect a difference between today's environment and what was envisioned when Logbook first appeared in 2003. It's complicated; further analysis will be required.

Logbook 2.0

Our most recent report proposed beginning work on Logbook 2.0. We noted that Logbook is really part of a larger ARRL ecosystem, but we felt that Logbook's renovation could no longer wait for such a substantial update. These interdependencies include Logbook, Radiosport and ARRL.org. In November, A&F agreed with the necessity for a wholesale update, for which a new "Project X" was proposed.

Updates which may be included in Project X include:
- Migration to the cloud;
- Migrating TQSL to a browser-based function, rather than a separate utility;
- Adding dashboards, rather relying on numerical representations;
- Advanced functionality, such as alerts when sought-after entities are on the air;
- Rule-based and simplified award definitions to facilitate new awards;

- Mobile device support;
- General streamlining and User Interface improvements.

Each of these updates will require many underlying changes. CEO Minster discussed these ideas on YouTube recently with K3LR (https://youtu.be/5bKv6InXAkg?t=1138). Mr. Minster is to present a report on the definition of Project X for January's Board meetings.

The Logbook Committee agrees that this ambitious project is overdue. We also note, however, that this undertaking it will require fundamental process re-engineering, well beyond Logbook itself, including many other processes in ARRL HQ, along with a substantial commitment of funds.

The State of Logbook 2020
This section represents a summary of developments throughout the year 2020. Like everything else, Logbook has been challenged by the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we have still managed to make progress on several issues. These were covered at greater length in our quarterly reports.

- Added new functionality permitting a single Logbook upload to include multiple locations. This should greatly simplify logging for rovers and similar mobile stations.
- Streamlined processes for DX stations to provide documents via e-mail instead of hard copy.
- Supported users in resolving Logbook issues via the ARRL-LOTW group on groups.io.
- Completed programming to support an additional ARRL award via Logbook. Alpha testing was completed, but re-assignment of software resources did not permit completing beta testing.
- Supported establishment of a designated Logbook account, and successful implementation of the first-ever Logbook contribution solicitation by ARRL Development.
- Worked with K1JT and the ADIF organization to define the new FST4 mode ahead of its deployment to avoid user confusion.
- Encouraged and contributed to the LoTW New User Guide and LoTW Quick Start Guides to facilitate adoption of Logbook (see http://www.arrl.org/logbook-of-the-world)

Like everyone, we are looking forward to 2021. We are especially excited about the possibilities of Project X, and eager to hear specifics about how it will be defined.

Submitted by,
Greg Widin, KØGW, Chair 2020
         for the Logbook Committee

Members: AA7A, K3DGB, K7GM, KØGW, W3IZ, W9JJ, K1MK, K1MU/4, K6WX, Doug Haney