How do I?

An occasional series

This week: What is a QSO? When do you log in WSJT-X?

Watching the discussion threads on Yahoo or Groups.io not only can be informative but occasionally provides material for these *How Do I...* articles.

Once again the WSJT-X group on groups.io steps up.   The debate over when to log a QSO (contact) flared up again.

The International Amateur Radio Union, (IARU), is an organization comprised of representatives from all over the world.   The IARU is divided into regions. Region 1 is largely Europe, Region 2 the Americas and Region 3 pretty much everything else.

The debate started a long time ago, in a thread far, far away; I think it was at the time when WSJT-X was a Yahoo Group. The debate migrated to groups.io and about every 2-3 months flares up again.

The question: When do I log a QSO?
And thus the debate begins:

From the WSJT-X version 2.2 manual

7.1. Standard Exchange

By longstanding tradition, a minimally valid QSO requires the exchange of callsigns, a signal report or some other information, and acknowledgments. *WSJT-X* is designed to facilitate making such minimal QSOs using short, structured messages. The process works best if you use these formats and follow standard operating practices. The recommended basic QSO goes something like this:

```
CQ K1ABC FN42                            #K1ABC calls CQ
              K1ABC G0XYZ IO91           #G0XYZ answers
GOXYZ K1ABC -19                          #K1ABC sends report
              K1ABC G0XYZ R-22           #G0XYZ sends R+report
GOXYZ K1ABC RRR                          #K1ABC sends RRR
              K1ABC G0XYZ 73             #G0XYZ sends 73
```

The WSJT-X software smoothly flows from macro to macro as each transmission is decoded and displayed on the screen. When the **RRR** or **RR73** macro is sent or received, WSJT-X will prompt the operator to log the QSO. The reply to a **RRR** or **RR73** is a "**73**".

Joe Taylor, K1JT, has said that the **73** is NOT required for it to be a valid QSO. Many operators call "**CQ**" as soon as they send **RRR** or more typically **RR73**.

However, some operators will not log a QSO unless they receive the "**73**". So how is the operator who didn't call CQ, sent all the information, received an **RRR** and sent a **73** supposed to know if it was logged on the other end? As many have pointed out, this becomes an endless loop. Operator-2 sends a **73**. Operator-1 receives it. Are they then supposed to send a **73** that essentially says "I received your **73**? And should they wait for a **73** that says "I got your **RR73** and your **73**? Should they then wait for a **73** that says I got your **73**?

As some digital mode hobbyists have said, this just becomes silly. The second operator has replied to the CQ, sent the exchange, received the exchange (signal report in both cases in WSJT-X) and received a RR73.

The first operator has called CQ, received a reply with the second operators call sign and grid square, sent a signal report, received a signal report and sent RRR and received a 73 or sent RR73. Both have all the info they need in order to log it.

From Tom LA4LN via WSJT-X groups.io
A QSO is defined by IARU Region 1 as [according to the HF Manager's Handbook]:

2.1.1 QSO-DEFINITION

A definition for a valid QSO is:
A valid contact is one where both operators during the contact have

1. mutually identified each other
2. received a report, and
3. received a confirmation of the successful identification and the reception of the report.

It is emphasized that the responsibility always lies with the operator for the integrity of the contact.

This requires that the operators receive no help in making the exchanges of the QSO.

We see that «73» is not a requirement for a valid QSO, according to the IARU definition.
A common confirmation of received call sign and report is «RRR», especially when using bands above 30 MHz (VHF / UHF / SHF / microwave).

The «RR73» message is an attempt to be more effective, by combining «RRR» and «73», and should be regarded as «all received» and «best wishes».

In short,
- If you call CQ and you have received enough info to justify sending **RR73**, log it!
- If you receive an **RR73** from the other guy, log it!
- If you receive an **RRR** from the other guy, send a **73** and log it!
- If the other operator comes back following your **73**, and he is calling **CQ**, you are pretty safe to presume he has logged the contact!

Catch 'ya on the air!