

Saturday April 13, 2019

DXLab forum at IDXC Visalia

We had a very good turnout. I had wondered with the ARRL having the same time slot. Björn SM7IUN and Dave W6DE did a great job of filling in. I could not capture the callsigns of those who asked questions and those who contributed answers in the discussions, of which there were quite a few. Rather than trying to decide what was important, how to keep it short, which items most people might already know, etc. I have just listened to the presentation numerous times, and with some summarization, typed it up as it was spoken.

Bjorn started the forum by giving an overview of DXLab.

Dave AA6YQ has created a program that works great for DXing, it gives you more time to be on the radio. DXing can take a lot of time from logging, creating QSL cards and monitoring spots. Dave wanted something more efficient as a DXer.

It is user driven. Dave is always active on the forum, with over 5,000 members.

It is a suite of eight different applications, they all have their own purpose, but they interact with each other. Bjorn then showed a slide that many of us are familiar with showing the names of each application within DXLab and their interactions. Bjorn pointed out each application (DXKeeper, Commander, Pathfinder, etc.) and traced each of these interactions

Bjorn commented on how he likes to use two monitor screens for DXLab.

Next the major enhancements were shown.

The waterfall/spectrum display with the ICOM 7300 was shown. It will show you the mode and that segment of the band. He showed some recent activity.

The DXView has an override data base. Historically this had to be updated manually, like if you had a Dxpedition with an odd call sign. Now it has been automated by Dave, so by a push of the button you can update the over ride list.

Integrates with WSJT-X now. This is one of the most recent. The display and what the individual colors meant was explained. It was pointed out that you can copy a call over to WSJT-X and then work it. It was also pointed out that currently JTAlert does not work with this.

There have been 68 enhancements to the applications.

At this point Bjorn finished the slides and opened it up to questions, ideas, feedback and comments.

Q- I am a long-time user and it is taking an incredibly long time to upload my 9,000 QSO's.

A- Typically, Dave's response is to inactivate your anti-virus. Another person commented that Dave had addressed this and had helped him, he could not remember what it was though. Another member said that he went in to Windows and had it trust each application. You can not do it one time on an executable. You need to go in and recertify each of them. He recertifies his apps periodically every three months. One member wanted to know about using the file folder for DXLabs, but Bjorn said that would not work.

Q-How do I have DXKeeper keep things sorted in the order I want. DXKeeper keeps organizing things as it wants.

A-DXKeeper works like a spreadsheet. If you click on the heading it will sort on that, clicking again it will reverse the sort. You can grab the bars and move it up and down. Down at the lower left of Keeper is a tab called UTC, click on that and it will arrange the items by chronological order. They reviewed the other sorting buttons on the bottom.

Q-The sort time for the log seems excessive.

A-Look into security exceptions as well. Also Dave is extremely hesitant to ask users to look at their computer size, but look at how old is your computer, is it a laptop, is it solid state as this can affect it.

Q- A long time user of Dxlab, please let Dave know how much we appreciate it. My question is spot collector, I am running the other applications with it. Spot collector for a long time has been lethargic. It is difficult to use it, it will sometimes gray out.

A-There could be several reasons. Are you running windows 10, no I am using windows 7. The first thing Dave would ask is how long is your database. Do you know how long yours is? It is normally every 2 hours. In spotcollector set up, there is a button to set up the "pruning". The questioner then asked so are others having the same issue I am having? Several people spoke up that they are having the same trouble. It was again reiterated to make sure to prune spot collector and how to do that. Bjorn can get up to 1,000 spots an hour, but he limits the database to 15 minutes.

Q-I am a newbie to DXLab. I have a remote station that sometimes I work it remote and sometimes I am on site. Is there a best practice how to keep the logs in synch?

A-There is a wiki page how to use different computers. In general, there are two sources of information about DXLab. There are the manual pages and there are the wiki pages that are task oriented. Several examples of tasks on wiki were given. There is also good help with elecraft radios there. Everyone should be a member of the forum. Dave is extremely polite, there is no such thing as a dumb question, he will always help as will others. Dave never sleeps, to which there was laughter from the group and numerous comments of agreement.

Q-How do I keep the QTH so that it stays set. It keeps blinking asking me my QTH.

A-There is a tab in DXKeeper where you can set your default QTH, if it is blank then keeper has to keep asking your QTH.

Q-I am transitioning my 35,000 QSO log from dx base to dxlog. What is the need for what is called synch LOTW QSO's and synch LOTW QSL's and what is the distinction between them?

A-There followed a general discussion that was summed up by the first synch for QSO's is between your log and the log of logbook of LOTW, and the second synch with QSL's is between LOTW and the log of the QSO partner.

Q-I never get a completion on the first step of synch QSO's, Dave says to just wait but that is not right to wait for days. Someone said to go through somebody else's web page and have LOTW to send its entire log as an ADIF file, is that useful? But it is still taking forever.

A-Various people in the session said that they do not use the synch QSO button, it should not be pressed very often, there should not be a need. Questioner was asked why he was doing it and he responded that it seemed like it was the thing he was supposed to do. Again, there were responses most do not use this button. It was suggested that maybe the program is not able to link with LOTW. There are different options on those buttons. No one else is having this issue. The consensus was to refer this to Dave.

Q-I recently purchased Green Heron, I want to be able to select the antennas on a sub band basis. I want to have the program look at commander to see what frequency I am on and then select the appropriate antenna. Where do I interface that?

A-No one was sure on that and the questioner was referred to Dave. There is something in commander called a frequency dependent device, but no one was sure past that.

Q-What is the function of the workspaces?

A-Workspace is a fantastic feature. It is to save all of your settings, in all of your applications. It is found in launcher. This will save everything in the whole suite. From the responses, which were quite a few, it has saved a lot of users a lot of grief.

Q-Is there a way to have different people at a club station work with dxlab and be able to use their own call signs?

A-You go in to dxkeeper and set them up there and then you can have your own workspace.

Q-Trying to import from N1MM with 400,000 entries. It is taking 5 seconds for each entry.

Q-The most likely reason is dupe checking, you can turn that off, but you are likely to have dupes, but there is a function to check for dupes when you are done.

Q-Is there any chance to have Dave here next year? We are avid dxlab users.

A-A chorus of yes, please get him here.

It was time to end, so I reminded everyone that Björn SM7IUN and Dave W6DE had presented today at basically the last minute and to thank them. There was a round of applause from everyone, and then I ended the forum.

Ron KF7ZN