

FSQ

FSQ, or Fast Simple QSO, is a mode recently developed for short, sentence-based chats on the HF amateur bands. It is easy to use and a great way to meet other hams and get to know them through interchanges on this digital mode.

I invite the reader to Google FSQCall. In particular go to the web site of developer Con ZL2AFP. This will explain the development and much more. This tutorial focuses simply on how to set up and configure the software so you can get on the air quickly.

There are only two pieces of software in existence. If you would like the simple, clean FSQCall version, it may be downloaded from this web site. In particular, use the NW8L/KA4CDN US Edition of FSQCall.

However, I prefer using Fldigi for two reasons:

- This software has the QRZ.com lookup function so I can quickly get operator information via an Internet connection.
- Fldigi also has a good logging function, so I can record and save QSO information after the contact.

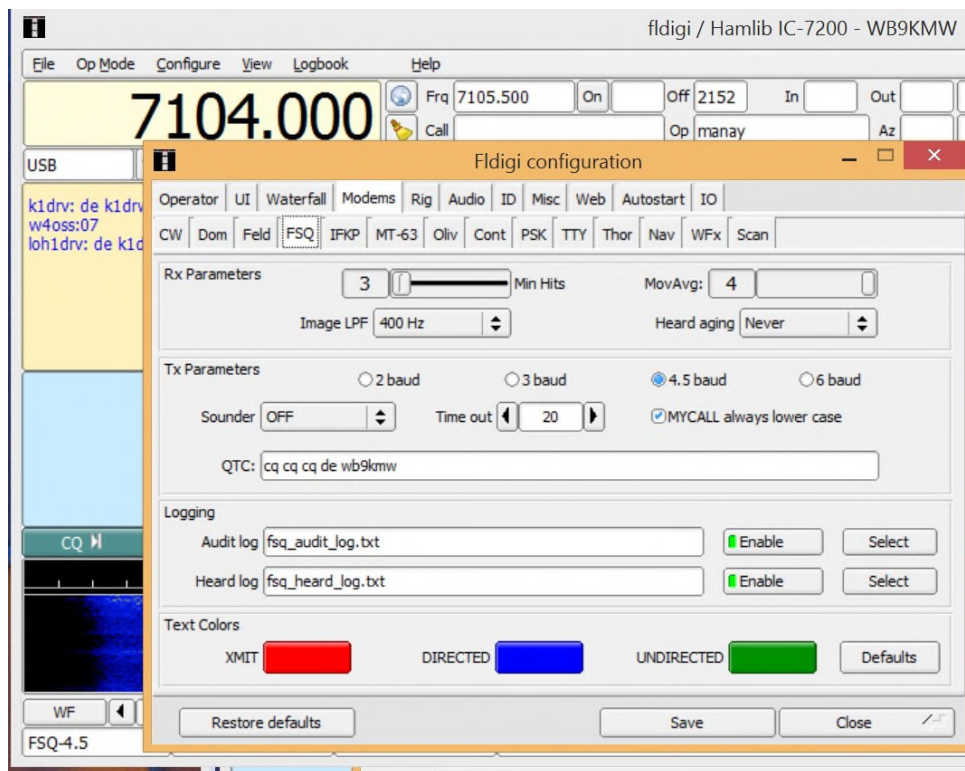
This tutorial presumes you know how to set up Fldigi with your rig, with appropriate rig-to-computer interface, configuration to the soundcard and connection to the appropriate COM port, if one is used, so you can trigger your transmitter when you are ready to use it.

You need to use a current edition of Fldigi. So if you don't see FSQ in the Op Mode column of your current Fldigi software, you will need to go to their web site to download and install the latest version.

After you have the basic Fldigi configuration set, go to Modems>FSQ and make a few updates, as shown on the next page. For example:

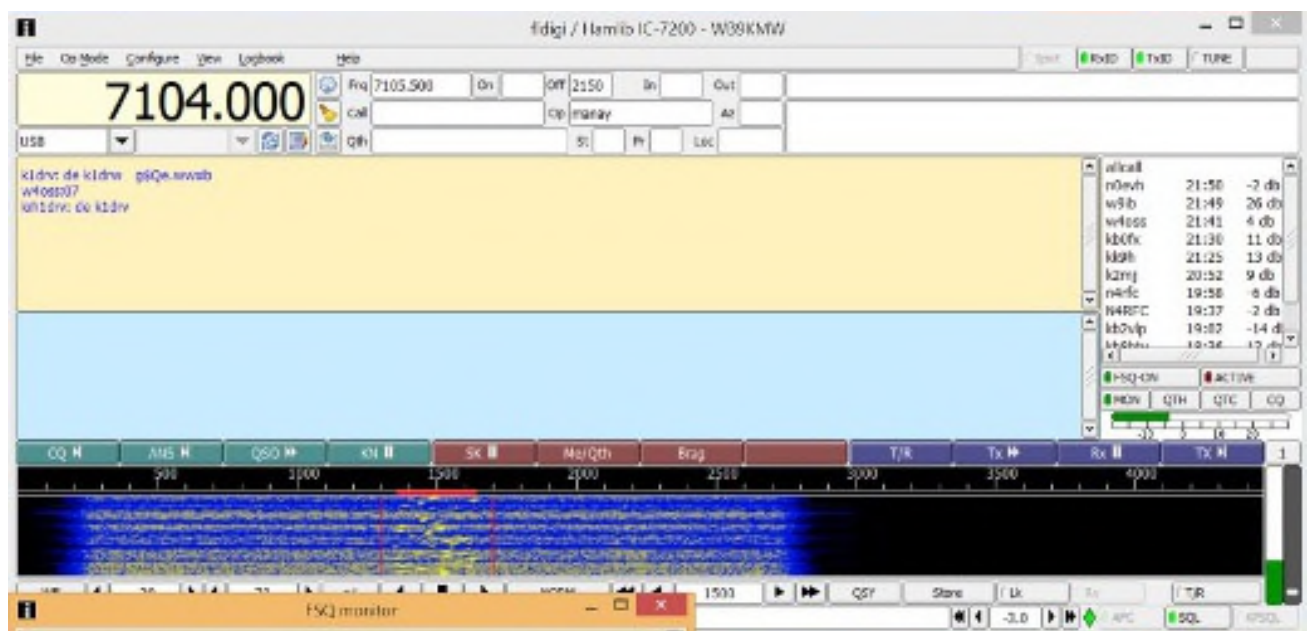
- Set Tx parameter to 4.5 baud, a common transmission speed.
- You can turn on the Sounder if you wish. That will automatically key your transmitter every half to one hour, for example, to send your call sign out over the air.
- Check the box, *MYCALL always lower case*. This is because the FSQ mode operates more efficiently when characters are in lower case.
- Update the QTC box with your call sign, eg, cq cq cq de wb9kmw

Be sure to Save after you are done with each configuration screen in Fldigi.



Now you are ready to switch Op Mode to FSQ. I typically select FSQ-4.5. Fldigi will now look like this. All of the essential controls are in the small box on the right. Click FSQ-ON (shows green) and Active (shows red) will appear.

As stations are received, they will be recorded in time order with their call sign (usually in lower case) and the SNR signal report in dB.

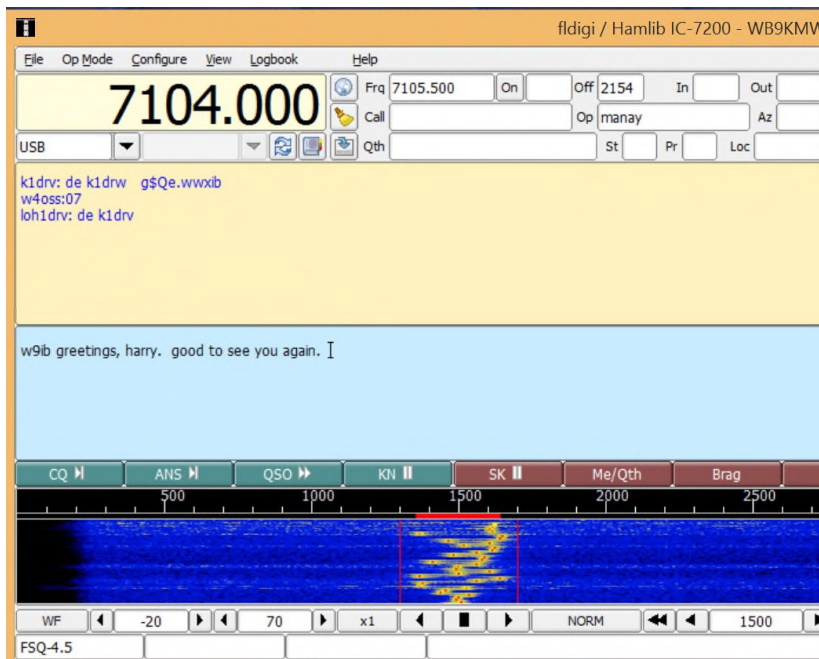


Now click on MON and the monitor window will pop up. This is where you will watch the QSOs as they take place.



Now when you wish to send a message, just type in the blue area of Fldigi just as you would do with other digital modes. Be sure to use the correct lower (most common) or upper case of the other station's call sign. For example, for Harry it is w9ib in lower case. Then just hit Enter on your keyboard to transmit!

You always start with the other station's call sign and then your message. There are some prosigns you can use with FSQ. One popular one is, for example, w9ib? After you press Enter and transmit, if Harry's station is on the air and receives my call sign, he will automatically reply to me with an SNR signal report, even if his rig is unattended.



You will notice that FSQ, like other digital modes, finds its home on specific calling frequencies, particularly in the 80, 40 and 30 meter bands. It is also useful on VHF.

I like to operate on 40 meters, so in my IARU Region 2 it is 7.104 MHz. Be sure you have your transceiver set to Upper Sideband (USB).

Happy FSQing!

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October 15, 2015

Commands

As previously mentioned, command sentences consist of a direction followed immediately by a command. Multiple directions can be used in the same sentence under limited circumstances. Two directions in the same sentence, which are understood by the same station, will cause confusion, and only the second will be responded to. For example, one should not send 'z11xyz@ allcall message', as the first part will be ignored by station z11xyz.

Command Syntax

The syntax for currently defined commands is listed below.

callsign text (Enable print)

FSQCALL opens. Addressee station starts to print **text**. No trigger character used except space following **callsign**. You MUST use a space or the trigger will not be recognised.

callsign? text (Is station hearing me?)

FSQCALL opens. Addressee station starts to print **text**. When squelch closes, station responds: **origin_callsign snr=xxdB**

callsign* (Enable FSQCALL)

Switches station to ACTIVE if FSQCALL is in SLEEP. Addressee station starts to print. When squelch closes, station responds: **callsign:<crc>**

callsign! message (Repeat my message)

FSQCALL opens. Addressee station starts to print. When squelch closes, station responds: **callsign:<crc> message** This is a simple relay mechanism. **message** may contain further trigger commands.

callsign~ message (Repeat my message later)

FSQCALL opens. Addressee station starts to print. When squelch closes, after a delay of about 15 seconds, station responds: **callsign:<crc> message** This delayed relay is useful when stations mentioned in **message** can hear and respond to the original message.

callsign#[nnn] (Send file to station)

Addressee station starts to print. Text following **[nnn]** will be saved in or appended to text file nnn.txt. When squelch closes, station responds **callsign:<crc>** if the message stored OK. There is no response if the message was not received. **[nnn]** can be alpha, numeric or mixed.

callsign#[filename.txt] (Send file to station)

Addressee station starts to print. File is opened from menu, and filename appended to message before file body text, File will be saved in or appended to text file filename.txt. When squelch closes, station responds **callsign:<crc>** if the message stored OK. There is no response if the message was not received. **[nnn]** can be alpha, numeric or mixed.

callsign@ (Request station position or location information)

Addressee station starts to print. When squelch closes, station responds with pre-recorded sentence, typically containing QTH information. This could be GPS position, locator, or physical address. This is the message stored and retrieved by the QTH button.

callsign& (Request station message)

Addressee station starts to print. When squelch closes, station responds with pre-recorded sentence, typically containing station information or an 'Out to Lunch' message. This is the message stored by the QTC button.

callsign^ (Request Software Version)

Addressee station starts to print. When squelch closes, station responds with current FSQCALL software version.

callsign/message (Send alert)

Addressee station starts to print. Alert pop-up box containing ***message*** is placed on the screen. When the operator closes this dialog, a response transmission is made:

origin_callsign Alert ack

cqcq cq text (Call for general chat)

FSQCALL opens if CQ is enabled. Following text prints.

allcall text (All stations print)

FSQCALL opens. Following text prints at all stations.

allcall#[nnn] (Send file to all stations)

All stations within range start to print. Text following ***[nnn]*** will be saved in or appended to text file ***nnn.txt***. When squelch closes, station responds ***callsign:<crc>*** if the message stored OK. There is no response if the message was not received. ***allcall#[filename.txt]*** works the same as ***callsign#[filename.txt]***

callsign% (Send image)

Addressed station receives the command to record an analog graphic image. The picture appears on the RX Pic tab, which opens automatically. Images are in colour, low or higher resolution, and take about 50 or 200 seconds to send, respectively. Images can be directed to ***allcall***. Received images are always displayed as 640 x 480 pixels, the larger size achieved through pixel interpolation.

callsign> or ***callsign<*** (Speed change)

> increases speed, < decreases speed at target station. Response is ***origin_callsign: 4.5 baud*** (or whatever the new speed is). If the speed is already at the maximum or minimum speed, the response is the same, and there is no speed change.