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Two months ago, we introduced the new CQ DX Field Award. Last month, we announced the return of the CQ DX Marathon. This month, we conclude our three-pronged effort at *Waking Up DXing* with another new award, this one aimed at introducing newer hams to the wonderful world of DXing.

**Announcing:**

## The CQ iDX Award

BY RICH MOSESON,\* W2VU, AND BILLY WILLIAMS,† N4UF

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, newcomers to amateur radio were known as “Novices” and there were special contests and awards designed just for them to provide a lower-pressure introduction to amateur radio contesting and DXing. Today, in our galaxy, the vast majority of new hams are known as “Technicians” and their world consists of the frequencies above 50 MHz, where traditional DXing opportunities are rare. Yet, within the next year, it is widely expected that the FCC will change our licensing rules and open up at least part of the amateur HF bands to tens of thousands of Technicians.

We at CQ do not fear this influx. We will welcome it, as it is sure to re-energize traditional DXing. And if you've been following our articles over the past few months introducing the **CQ DX Field Award** and the revival of the **CQ DX Marathon**, you'll know that we feel that traditional DXing needs to be re-energized. We hope that the **CQ iDX Award**, along with these other programs, will help provide that necessary spark.

### Different Mindsets

One thing we've noticed over the years is that there seem to be two major operating mindsets among hams—the *DXer* (which also includes contesters, award chasers, etc.) and the *communicator*, for lack of a better term, which includes ragchewers, public service and emergency communicators, repeater users, etc. (There is a third mindset—the *experimenter*—but experimenters tend to be more focused on designing and building than on operating.)

VHF FM and repeaters, which provide most new hams' introduction to our hobby, tend by their nature to reinforce the communicator mindset. Weak-signal VHFing and VHF contesting provide an alternative for the DXing-minded new ham, but these activities generally require an investment in specialized and expensive equipment and antennas that many newcomers are not yet ready to make.

In addition, advances in technology, along with policy changes by regulators, continue to shape the future of amateur radio. The demarcation between wired and wireless communication is blurred by modern integrated systems employed by public safety agencies and commercial users. In the 1980s, trunked radio systems and microprocessor



management led to a reduction in operator flexibility and control. The next decade saw development of “smart” radio systems which are now being embraced by the FCC and other regulatory bodies. This “blurring of the line” between wired and wireless has already reached amateur radio in several ways—using the internet to collect and distribute DX “spots,” propagation data and location information, using the internet to link existing VHF and UHF repeaters over great distances, and using the internet to access an HF “remote base” station. It is these last two on which the **CQ iDX Award** will focus.

### Expanding a Long-Standing Concept

There are already large networks of repeaters around the United States, mostly connected via UHF and/or microwave links. In many cases, these networks provide users the ability to cover several states with a handheld or mobile FM transceiver. The development of Voice over Internet Protocol, or VoIP, led to the expansion of this concept with the development of internet-linked networks that increase the user's “range” from many states to many countries. These systems, which include IRLP (Internet Radio Linking Project), Echolink, WIRES and D-Star, use the internet to link repeaters and individual amateurs all over the world. In many ways, using IRLP or Echolink while driving is like having a 20-meter rig in your car, only without the 20-meter rig and HF mobile antenna. For the first time, hams whose stations are limited to VHF FM mobile and handheld rigs are getting

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the opportunity to at least get a taste of working DX. Once you've established contact, you quickly forget that your path is using wires and satellites rather than the ionosphere, and you concentrate on the fun of talking to another ham in a faraway place. And that, after all, is what DXing is all about.

In addition, growing restrictions on antennas are giving greater appeal to internet-linked HF remote bases (W7DXX's is the best-known), which allow you to remotely control and operate an HF station from your computer via VoIP.

Whether one is a traditionalist or a progressive, this communications evolution and its effects on Amateur Radio cannot be ignored. The **CQ iDX Award** recognizes the changing landscape and its inevitable effect on where Amateur Radio will be in 2020.

Using these systems to make contacts in faraway places helps develop and promote the DXer mindset among hams who previously were exposed only to the "communicators" among us. We want to encourage this and, hopefully, encourage an eventual transition to traditional HF DXing through our third "Waking Up DXing" program, the **CQ iDX Award**.

### The CQ iDX Award

The **CQ iDX Award** is an introductory award, along the lines of old-time Novice awards, which encourages the development of a DXing "mindset" by recognizing the accomplishments of those amateurs who make confirmed contacts with between 25 and 100 different DX countries ("entities") through the use of internet-linked repeater systems or remote bases.

Because this is an introductory award, because many repeater-only hams do not yet have traditional QSL cards, and because these contacts do/will not count toward traditional DXing awards, our confirmation requirements are somewhat more relaxed for this award than for traditional DX awards (see rules for specifics). However, since it is still an amateur radio award, we will require that *at least one end of each contact must be made by amateur radio*. Computer-to-computer contacts, while possible on systems such as Echolink, *will not count* for this award. At least one person in each contact must be *on the radio*. (We realize this will not satisfy many of the purists among you, but remember that the goal of this program is to introduce new people to the concept of DXing and encourage them to pursue traditional

DXing activities and awards once they are active on HF.)

Unlike other CQ awards, the **CQ iDX Award** mandates a "fresh start." All contacts must be made after 0000Z on January 1, 2006. For gathering verifications, we encourage use of technology to avoid the inconvenience, expense, and delay of postal mail whenever possible. Make plans now, so that in a few months you will be set to begin earning this exciting new award.

So with that, we are pleased to introduce our third new **Waking Up DXing** operating program, the new **CQ iDX Award**:

### Rules: The CQ iDX Award

1. The **CQ iDX Award** is an introductory award for contacts made between licensed amateurs in different countries by means of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) linking systems. These systems include, but are not limited to, IRLP (Internet Radio Linking Project), Echolink, WIRES, and internet-linked remote base systems, which use the internet and VoIP to connect amateur radio repeaters and operators. At least one station in each contact must be transmitting via radio in the amateur bands (e.g., computer-to-computer Echolink QSOs do not count toward this award). SWLs may qualify by monitoring the required contacts and receiving confirmation from at least one of the stations involved.

2. The basic award is issued for confirmed VoIP contacts with amateurs in at least 25 countries. Endorsement stickers are issued for 50, 75, and 100 confirmed countries. All contacts must have been made after **0000 UTC, January 1, 2006**.

3. All contacts must be two-way (SWLs must monitor two-way contacts). Confirmations are required. For the purposes of this award only, acceptable confirmations include traditional QSL cards, electronic/online confirmations from sources approved by CQ (see CQ website for details), and verifiable e-mails. All confirmations must contain the call signs of both stations; the name, mailing address, and location of the sending station (if different from the mailing address at the time of contact); and details of the contact, including date, time, mode, and frequency band used by the sending station for the contact (if the station accessed the amateur bands via the internet, the confirmation should indicate "Internet" in place of frequency), and must state that the contact is via VoIP (including specific system name). E-mail confirmations must also include the

sender's valid e-mail address and must be dated within 60 days of the contact for which credit is claimed. CQ reserves the right to spot-check confirmations.

4. Applications should be submitted on the official **CQ iDX Award** application (form 2006A). Reasonable facsimiles or computer printouts are also acceptable. Contacts should be listed in alphabetical order by callsign prefix. Listings must include the frequency band (or internet) used by each station, as well as the VoIP linking system used. Confirmations must be verified by one of the authorized check points for the CQ DX Awards, or must be included with the application. Return postage must be included.

5. An SASE must be enclosed with all endorsement applications. Stations outside the United States must include an SAE with two IRCs for airmail return.

6. Any altered or forged confirmations will result in permanent disqualification of the applicant.

7. Fair play and good sportsmanship in operating are required for all amateurs working toward CQ DX Awards. Repeated use of poor ethics will result in disqualification of the applicant.

8. A fee of \$6.00 is required for CQ subscribers applying for a **CQ iDX Award** certificate. The latest CQ mailing label must be attached for the subscriber discount. For non-subscribers the certificate fee is \$12.00. Endorsement stickers are \$1.00 each for all applicants. IRCs (International Reply Coupons) are acceptable in lieu of check or cash.

9. All contacts must be with land-based or shipboard amateur stations. Contacts with aircraft are not acceptable. Contacts from international waters are not acceptable. Shipboard stations must be in the territorial waters of a country, no more than 12 miles (19 kilometers) from shore, operating in accordance with that country's laws and regulations, and the confirmation must indicate the country from whose waters the shipboard station is operating. The CQ DX Award countries list or ARRL DXCC Countries List determine what entities are considered separate countries. In the event of differences between the lists, the CQ DX Award countries list will govern.

10. In the event of any disputes or disagreements, decisions of the CQ DX Awards Manager shall be final.

11. All checks must be made payable to B. F. Williams. Applications should be sent to Billy Williams, N4UF, P.O. Box 9673, Jacksonville, Florida 32208-0673. Do not send applications to CQ.