Hints for first-time users of WSJT-X for FT8

Disclaimer: The following is based on personal experiences, hints by fellow hams and product manuals. The intention here is to share the best experiences for beginners and skip the details of Why.

Prerequisite: If you have already setup your computer to interface with your radio, you are good to go, otherwise look for "CAT" and "AFSK " sections of your radio manual or search for articles on the internet, there are tons of them. DO NOT PROCEED UNTIL YOU HAVE BOTH THE INTERFACES WORKING WELL.

To install and configure WSJT-X software, visit the WSJT-X website and follow their instructions. Then go to the "clock synchronization" section in the WSJT-X manual and follow those steps too.

Now that you are ready, you have probably started the WSJT-X application and are staring at the ton of information presented to you on the WSJT-X screens, wondering what to do next. Don't be confused, below are some simple steps to get you going. Using the **Search & Pounce** method turns out to be the simplest approach to get started.

First, make sure the "CQ Only" and "Auto Seq" boxes are <u>checked</u>, and the "Hold Tx Freq" box is <u>unchecked</u>.

<u>DON'T EVER</u> activate the "Enable Tx" button. *(You can do this after you get some expertise under the belt)*

Look at all the CQ calls displayed in the "Band Activity" window and check the number in the DT column. If most of them are 1.x or 2.x, STOP and revisit the WSJT-X manual about resetting your computer clock accurately.

Next, pick a CQ call in the "**Band-Activity**" window that has a dB value of better than minus 6 dB. Double-click the chosen CQ call. *The CQ call will be copied to the "Rx Frequency" window and the frequencies will change to match that of the caller.*

Now, watch the "**Rx Frequency**" window <u>only</u>. You'll be amazed, the software will do most everything automatically, including any retries if necessary. All responses with your call sign in it will appear in this window and will be colored appropriately. *(Refer to the diagrams on the following pages and compare it with the progress of your QSO.)*

If the called station responds to somebody else, the "Enable Tx" button will be <u>de-activated automatically</u>. Don't sweat it, just pick another CQ call in the "Band Activity" window and double-click the new one.

If the program does more than 3 retries, just click the "Enable Tx" button to deactivate it, and look for another CQ call in the "Band Activity" window. *(Reason: propagation over long distances can change rapidly or either of your locations may suffer QRM unexpectedly.)*

DO NOT CLICK on anything while the QSO is in progress. Just watch the program until the "**Log**" window popup appears, then click OK to save the log.
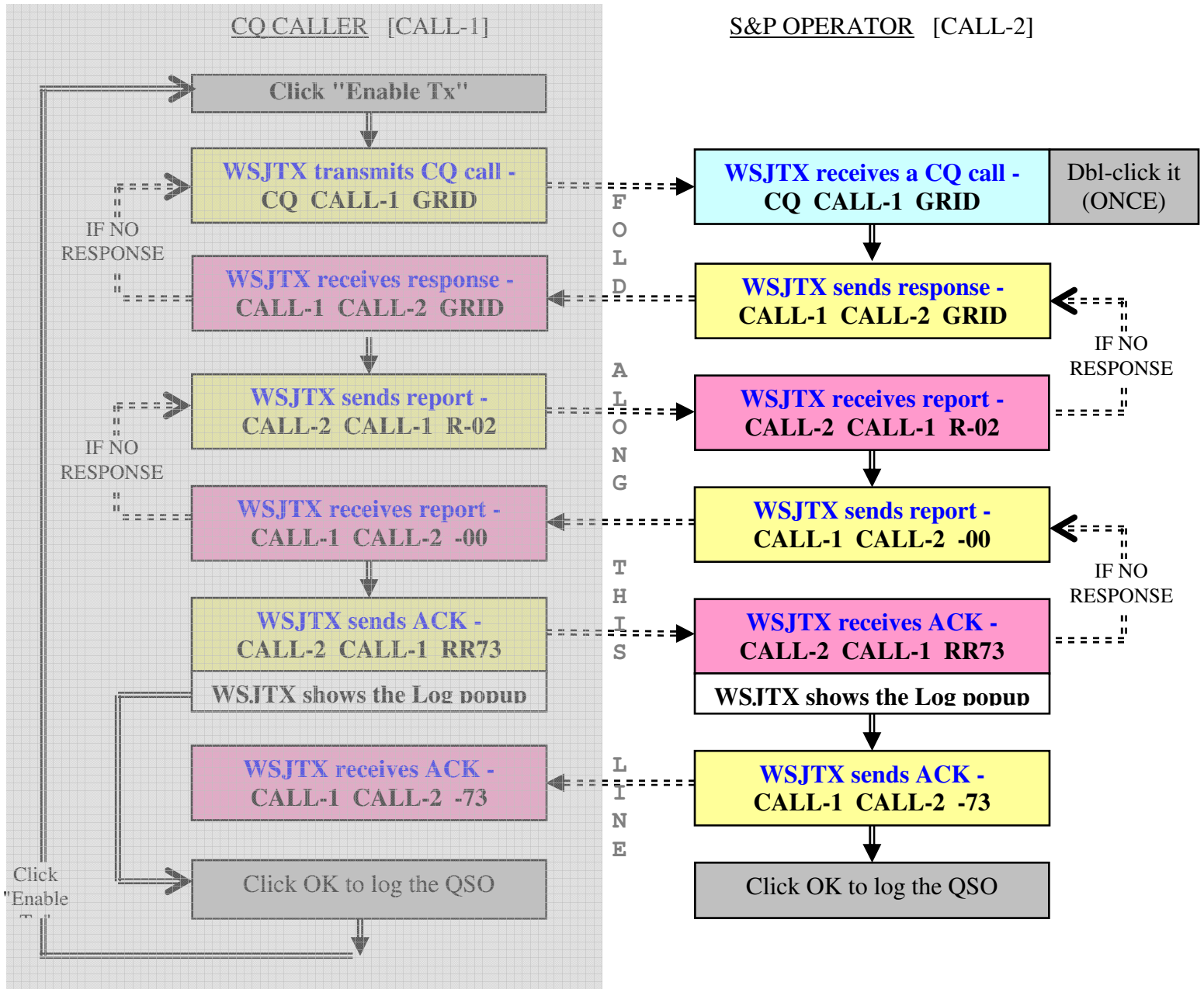
Congratulations, you made your first successful FT8 contact !

Lastly, there is no separate window to display the log, so you'll have to trust the software to do the right thing.

However, you can review the raw log file as follows - click "Open Log Directory" under the File menu, then right-click on the file called "wsjtx.log" and open it with Windows Notepad. Your latest log entry should be the last line in the file. DO NOT edit/change anything in this file, just close it when done looking at it.

Go get them tiger...

WSJT-X AUTO-SEQUENCE PROCESS

CQ CALLER [CALL-1] **S&P OPERATOR [CALL-2]**

CQ CALLER [CALL-1]	S&P OPERATOR [CALL-2]
Click "Enable Tx"	
WSJTX transmits CQ call - CQ CALL-1 GRID	WSJTX receives a CQ call - CQ CALL-1 GRID / Dbl-click it (ONCE)
IF NO RESPONSE	
WSJTX receives response - CALL-1 CALL-2 GRID	WSJTX sends response - CALL-1 CALL-2 GRID
	IF NO RESPONSE
WSJTX sends report - CALL-2 CALL-1 R-02	WSJTX receives report - CALL-2 CALL-1 R-02
IF NO RESPONSE	
WSJTX receives report - CALL-1 CALL-2 -00	WSJTX sends report - CALL-1 CALL-2 -00
	IF NO RESPONSE
WSJTX sends ACK - CALL-2 CALL-1 RR73	WSJTX receives ACK - CALL-2 CALL-1 RR73
WSJTX shows the Log popup	WSJTX shows the Log popup
WSJTX receives ACK - CALL-1 CALL-2 -73	WSJTX sends ACK - CALL-1 CALL-2 -73
Click "Enable Tx" / Click OK to log the QSO	Click OK to log the QSO

FOLD ALONG THIS LINE

By default, CQ call is shaded Blue, Sent data is shaded Yellow and Received data is shaded Red.

Most of the work is done by WSJT-X, normally the operator's work is very limited, see the grey boxes. After a transmission, the software waits to receive a response. All received signals are decoded to check for a response related to the last transmission. Based on the last response, the next appropriate transmission is automatically prepared and sent.

Sample FT8 (S&P) QSO using Auto Sequence

Just double click the CQ Call once, the WSJT-X software program does the rest !