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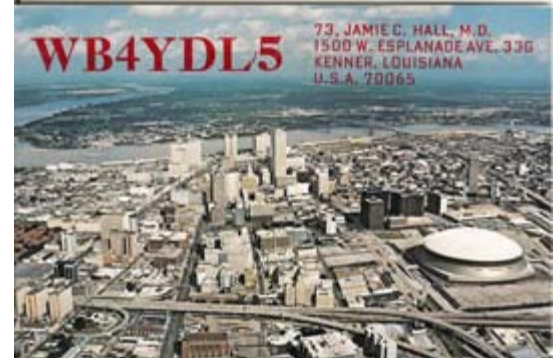
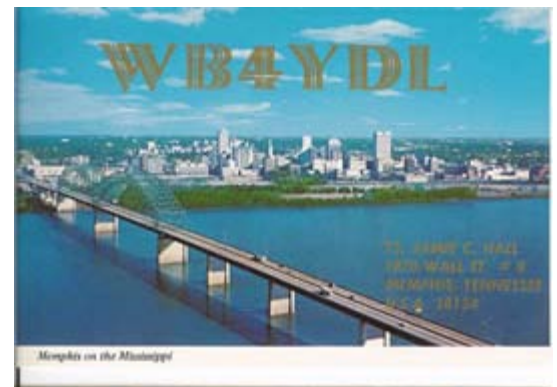
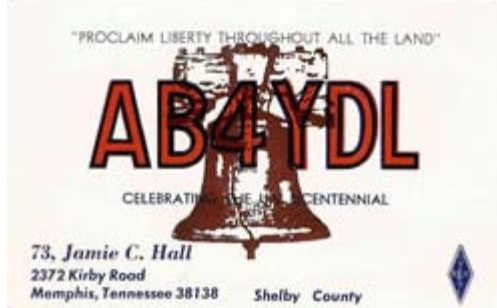
QSL ? > QSL cards - the basics

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Discussion of the art of designing, making, sending and receiving QSL cards

Since I was licensed back in 1971 as a Novice class operator, the art of designing and printing QSL cards in an economic way has changed dramatically. Indeed, the way printing is done now is vastly different than it was in the early 1970's. At that time, actual picture post cards could be stamped on the front with your callsign, address and any other particulars, and then the standard QSO information 'fill in the blank' area was printed on the opposite side. Print shops are no longer geared to do this kind of type-setting. Later, there was a company that actually sold labels with clear background with all the information, that you could stick on your chosen picture post card. You can still take artwork that you design to a print shop (or send it to a QSL printer) to make custom QSL cards. In 1976, the US Bicentennial year, we were allowed to change the prefix of our callsign for that year - mine was AB4YDL. After thinking for awhile about how I would handle QSL's for that year, I decided to photo-enlarge that present-day stamp, which had the Liberty Bell, and place it on a QSL card. Oh, incidentally, that was a 13 cent stamp ! This would not be a cost effective way of doing things now.

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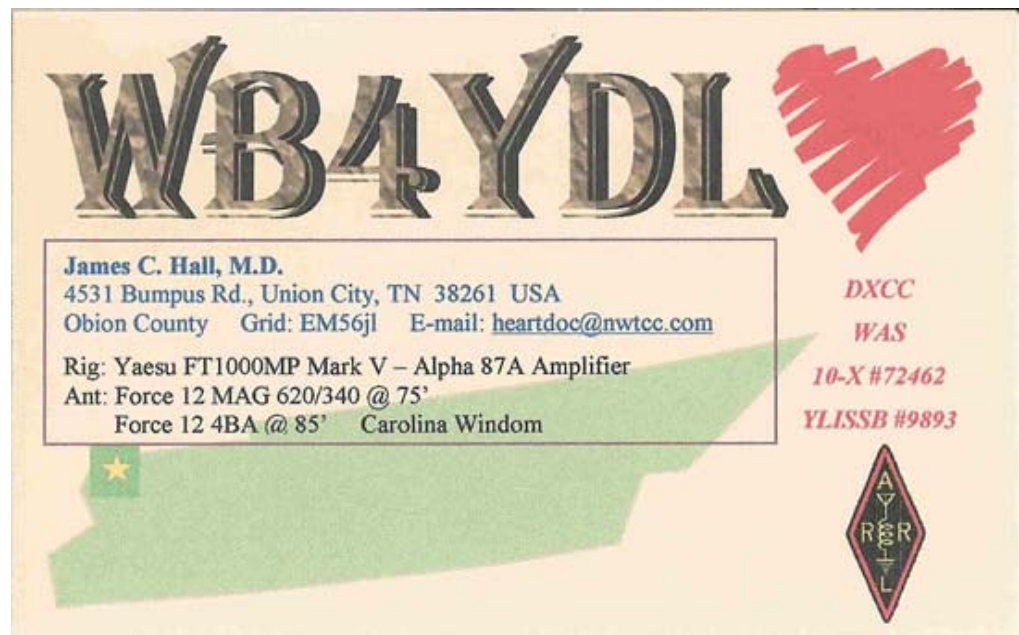
There are several companies that will print QSL cards for you - some are quite reasonably priced. Those include [The QSL Man W4MPY](#), [WB0NNI's QSLWorks](#), [UX5UO print - World of QSL's](#), [Cheap QSL's](#) and [QSL Card Factory](#). This is certainly not an exhaustive list and a quick Google search will turn up many more. Also [eHam.net](#) has interesting product reviews on QSL vendors.

As time has marched on, desktop computers have made it possible to design and potentially print your own QSL cards. Before delving into the particulars of how to do this, it should be mentioned that QSL'ing itself has changed. It is a rare QSL card indeed that is actually sent as a post card these days. Postage rates are continuing their inexorable climb necessitating change to make card sending even remotely cost-efficient. Today, QSL cards are usually printed so that all the information is on one side; the weight of the card stock is quite a bit lighter today to facilitate sending cards by envelope. The reasons for the latter have more to do with QSL'ing DX stations direct or via the bureau. Now that personal computers in the radio shack are extremely common, it is not unusual to print your own QSL cards, either through the general logging program of the station, specialized QSL printing software, or just standard programs such as Microsoft Word and Publisher. The first thing to decide here is how much QSL'ing do you intend to do ? What is your projected volume ? Are you a contester, award seeker, or DX chaser ? The following is what I decided to do and is, by no means, the only way to do things.


When I was scouting about the internet at the ham radio sites one day, I stumbled upon [WA7S Bob's website](#) on making your own QSL cards. I was amazed that you could make really fancy cards using nothing more than Microsoft Word. What is done is to make a template in MS Word that results in a form, complete with drop-down lists for things like band, rig, antenna, etc. You learn how to do Word Art and utilize those hidden toolbars. I did this for quite awhile when my QSL load was low. My template for doing this is on this [link](#) and here is an [example QSL](#) card made with this template. You are welcome to

modify it to become your QSL if you desire. This was a lot of fun and a different aspect of the ham radio hobby. I soon realized, however, that the 4x6 inch cards that were designed in this fashion were not only larger than the standard 5 1/2 x 3 1/2 inch QSL card, but I could only print two cards on a 8x11 sheet of inkjet or photo paper. Additionally, my volume of QSL'ing, particularly multiple contacts with the same station on multiple bands and modes, necessitated re-thinking the whole process.

I considered printing my QSL cards straight out of my chosen general logging software, LOGic, but the question became, 'print on what ?' There is only one vendor, to my knowledge, that sells decent card stock, pre-perforated, so that four QSL cards can be printed - W7NN at Hamstuff.com. Ron has all sorts of interesting items for use in a ham shack - good ham stuff ! - I particularly like the shoe box sized QSL organizers. But, of interest to this discussion, he sells this card stock in white and light beige as part of his QSL Kit. I have purchased this stock several times in both colors and have been very pleased with the results. Each kit includes a floppy disk with templates to design and print your cards in several formats - one of which is in MS Word format ([template link](#)). Hmmm ...Eureka ! Could it be that I could adapt my previous efforts with this printing template ? You betcha !! I came to the realization that, instead of printing the whole QSL card through LOGic, I would print labels with multiple contacts on Avery 8660 clear labels, and stick them on [my templated QSL](#) cards. That was the ticket ! Below is the result on the light beige card stock ...



... followed by an actual sample of a QSL ready to send.

WB4YDL 


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 Obion County Grid: EM56jl E-mail: heartdoc@nwtcc.com

Rig: Yaesu FT1000MP Mark V – Alpha 87A Amplifier
 Ant: Force 12 MAG 620/340 @ 75'
 Force 12 4BA @ 85' Carolina Windom

*73,
Jamie*

Confirming QSO with **RIANF**

Date	UTC	Band	Mode	RST
26 Feb 05	23:29	20M	RTTY	599
5 Mar 05	00:50	20M	SSB	59
5 Mar 05	17:44	15M	SSB	59
5 Mar 05	20:29	10M	SSB	59

PSE QSL 

*DXCC
WAS
10-X #72462
YLISSB #9893*

As I mentioned, this certainly isn't the only way to do this, but it works for me. I send several hundred QSL cards per year, many, if not most, with multiple contact labels. I could not dream of doing this with my previous solutions. Now, there are discrete programs for QSL management and most are FREE ! These include [N3JL Joe's QSL Designer](#), [WB8RCR QSL Maker](#), and [DF3CB BV QSL Mangement and Labeling](#) software. An excellent discussion of QSL card making is presented by Mike WB5PUP on eHam.net entitled [QSL Card Factory](#). This should give you plenty of ideas on yet another aspect of our wonderful hobby. If you have designed your own card or have other ideas on how to design and make QSL cards, submit a comment and upload your card image.

73, Jamie WB4YDL

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