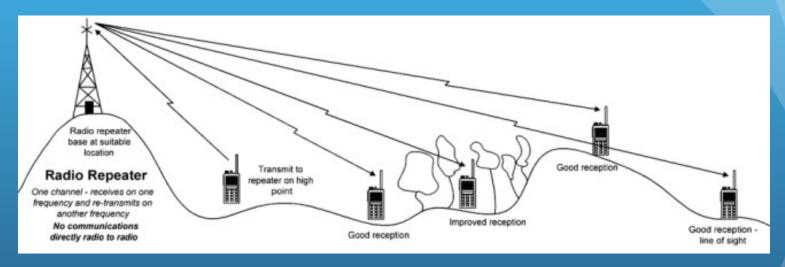
DX Clusters

Telnet, Web-based Displays, Skimmers and the Reverse Beacon Network



Then, in the 80s

• FM repeaters became popular, and clubs used them to propagate DX reports.

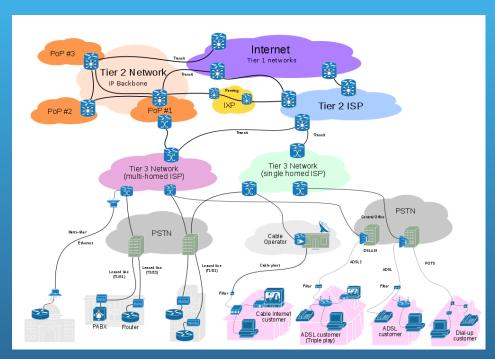


• There are still a number of repeaters used this way today (e.g., NCDXC's W6TI, 147.360+

From the website: "The primary purpose of the repeater is for the exchange of DX information and to conduct weekly on-the-air club meetings."

And in the 90s...

• ... cometh the Internet!



• The international nature of DX, and the widespread connectivity of the Internet made it the ideal vehicle for propagating DX information from anywhere to everywhere

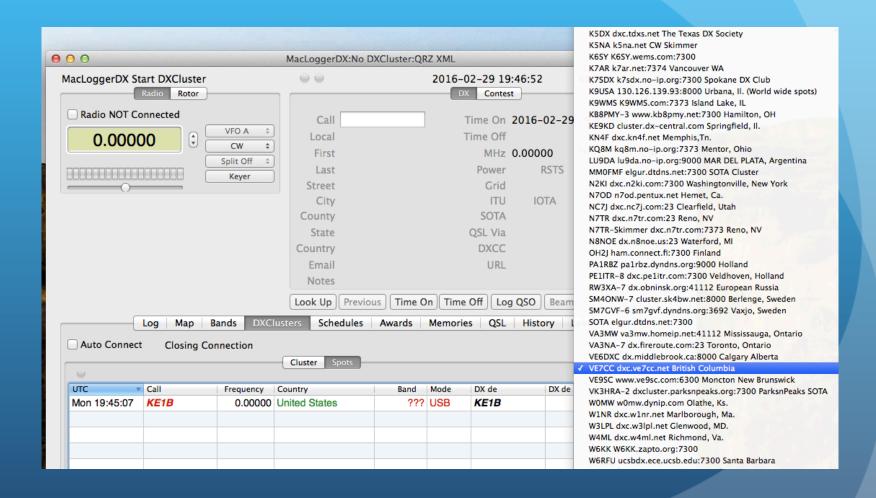
What is the DX Cluster?

- First, you log into your favorite cluster node
- People (or an automated tool) "spot" a station:

DX VP2EAQ 18070.0 QSX 18071

- Internet-connected DX cluster nodes world-wide exchange spots from locally-connected users
- The totality of all spots from all spotters is available everywhere!

Most logging programs have a built-in Telnet client for accessing the Cluster



You can view the raw cluster feed...

X de K6YK:	18094.0	KG4EII	Very weak in CA	1843Z CA		Conn	nected
		8R1/K9KX	QSX up 2	1844Z TX		Auto	Tune
	18101.0		RTTY QSX up 2	1844Z TX		Auto	Lookup
	21315.0		begging	1849Z BC			
	18080.0		CQ DX	1852Z TX		Comm	nands
X de NA60:		KG4HF	Up 1	1854Z CA		Sr	oot
	18074.0		EU-004	1856Z TX		▼ 160M	▼ 151
	14205.0		nice signal	1857Z BC			▼ 15 ▼ 12
X de W5MF:	21036.0	KG4HF	QSX 21037	1902Z TX		☑ 80M	
	14200.0	PD9Z		1907Z BC		₫ 60M	1 0
X de VE7SNC:	14190.0	IK4GRO		1908Z BC		✓ 40M	✓ 6N
	21036.0		QSX up 1.2	1910Z TX		 ✓ 30M	□ 2N
X de N6PE:	14300.0	N4EX	Do you have 20M? NPOTA MN35	NC 1912Z CA		✓ 20M	70
X de VE			-			✓ 17M	☐ Fo
SNC: 14185.0	IK4JPK	loud	1917	Z BC			
X de W7MTL:	21315.0	3XY1T	up 5 gud SIG's in OR	1919Z OR		Phone	
X de K7FU:	28271.7	W4TIY	Hear the beacon in Oregon	GA 1923Z OR		✓ Data	☐ Lo
X de VE7SNC:	14192.5	KL7HRN	calling africa	AK 1927Z BC			
X de KD6RF:	14203.9	V26IS		1928Z TX			
X de WA7DHQ:			not busy and gud sig in AZ.	5 1929Z AZ			
	21315.0		UP 5 Good Ears				
	21315.0		TNX. Sparks NV				
	21315.0		TNX 21320 KHZ. Sparks NV				
X de VE7SNC:			my ol' bud	1933Z BC			
	21315.0	3XY1T	DM09<>IJ39CL JT65 TX 4 JT9	1938Z NV			
	18102.0			AK 1947Z CA			
E1B de VE7CC-1							
ogging in user					in l		
ogging in user							
ogging in user							
ogging out user							
ogging out user ogging in user	28050.0		CW 10 dB 11 WPM CQ	AK 1947Z CA			
ogging out user ogging in user X de N6TV-#:		UE7CC_1. IIA6	JO				
ogging out user ogging in user	on node						

Or just a list of spots, filtered to your wishes...

0									Consorted
UTC	Call	Frequency	Country	Band	Mode	DX de	DX de Distance	Alarms	Connected
Mon 19:48:23	N5SAN	21.01350	United States	15M	CW	KU7T-#	997 mi		Auto Lookup
Mon 19:48:05	KB5KPD	7.04120	United States	40M	CW	K5TDA-#	752 mi		Commands ▼
Mon 19:47:29	NL7HH	28.05000	Alaska	10M	CW	N6TV-#	396 mi		Spot
Mon 19:47:17	KL7RST	18.10200	Alaska	17M	RTTY	W6INO	389 mi		☑ 160M ☑ 15M
Mon 19:47:10	KB4JR	14.04090	United States	20M	CW	N6TV-#	396 mi		
Mon 19:45:07	KE1B	0.00000	United States	???	USB	KE1B			
Mon 19:38:17	3XY1T	21.31500	Guinea	15M	USB	W7YKN	455 mi		♂ 30M □ 2M
Mon 19:33:17	LA4UOA	14.25300	Norway	20M	USB	VE7SNC	1,574 mi		 ✓ 20M ☐ 70cm ✓ 17M ☐ Follow
Mon 19:31:17	3XY1T	21.31500	Guinea	15M	USB	W7YKN	455 mi		Phone CW
Mon 19:30:17	3XY1T	21.31500	Guinea	15M	USB	W7YKN	455 mi		✓ Data □ Local
Mon 19:29:17	3XY1T	21.31500	Guinea	15M	USB	W5PD	1,092 mi		
Mon 19:29:17	3XY1T	21.31500	Guinea	15M	USB	WA7DHQ	1,003 mi		
Mon 19:28:17	V26IS	14.20390	Antigua & Barbuda	20M	USB	KD6RF	1,225 mi		
Mon 19:27:17	KL7HRN	14.19250	Alaska	20M	USB	VE7SNC	1,574 mi		
Mon 19:23:17	W4TIY	28.27170	United States	10M	USB	K7FU	283 mi		
Mon 19:22:17	N4EX	14.30000	United States	20M	USB	N6PE	93 mi		
Mon 19:22:17	KG4HF	21.03600	Guantanamo Bay	15M	CW	AC5AA	1,234 mi		
Mon 19:22:17	IK4GRO	14.19000	Italy	20M	USB	VE7SNC	1,574 mi		
Mon 19:22:17	PD9Z	14.20000	Netherlands	20M	USB	VE7SNC	1,574 mi		
Mon 19:22:17	KG4HF	21.03600	Guantanamo Bay	15M	CW	W5MF	1,239 mi		
Mon 19:22:17	2I0FLO	14.20500	Northern Ireland	20M	USB	VE7SNC	1,574 mi		
Mon 19:22:17	EA6VQ	18.07400	Balearic Islands	17M	CW	AC5AA	1,234 mi		
Mon 19:22:17	KG4HF	21.03600	Guantanamo Bay	15M	CW	NA6O	414 mi		
Mon 19:22:17	XE1XR	18.08000	Mexico	17M	CW	AC5K	1,310 mi		

Filtering, the old way: (Yuck!)

- telnet.reversebeacon.net port 7000
 - accept/spots by_zone 1,3,4,6,7,31 and not by WZ7I or call N6TV
 - http://www.dxcluster.org/main/filtering_en.html#toc1
- arcluster.reversebeacon.net port 7000
 - set dx filter call=N6TV or (unique>1 and (spotterstate=CA or spotterstate=NV or spotterstate=UT))
 - http://www.ab5k.net/ArcDocsVer6/UserManual/ArcDx.htm

Filtering, the NEW way: (Yaay!)

 CCUser is a Graphical Tool for Setting all of your Cluster filters and parameters:



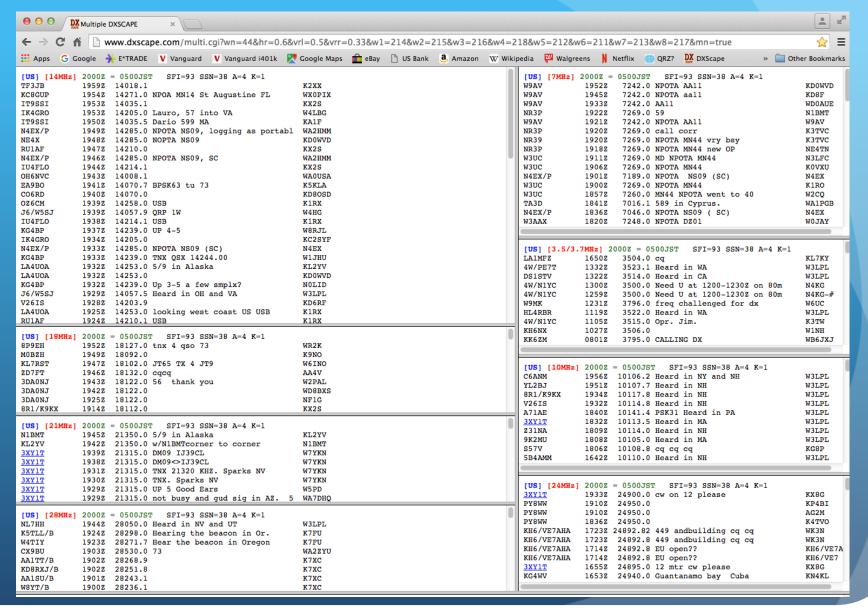


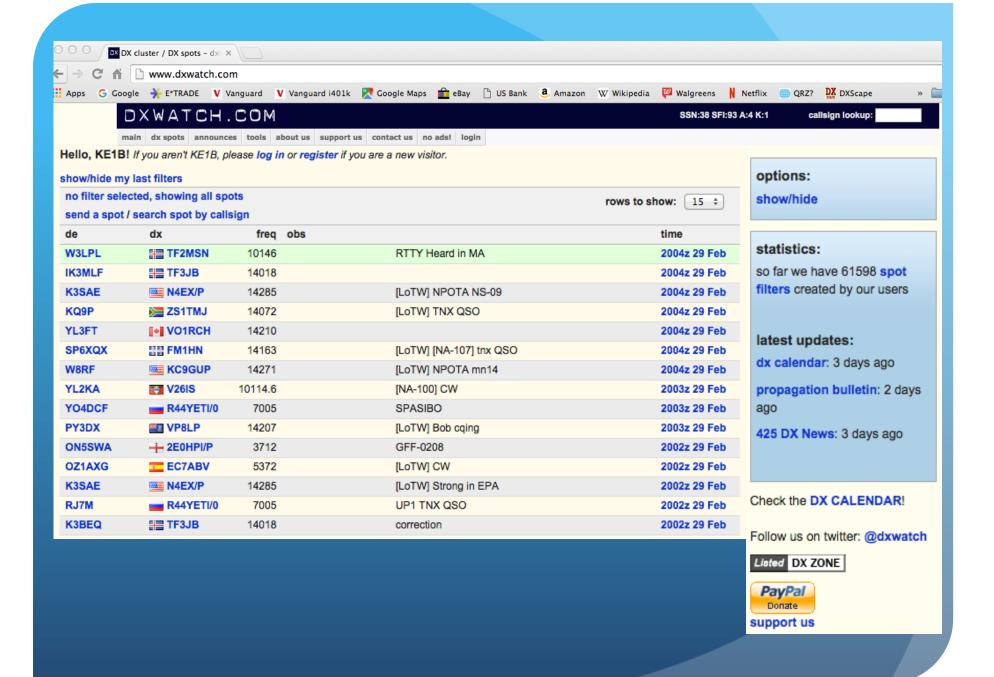
There is an equivalent tool for the Mac called "Spot"

Filters are persistent across sessions

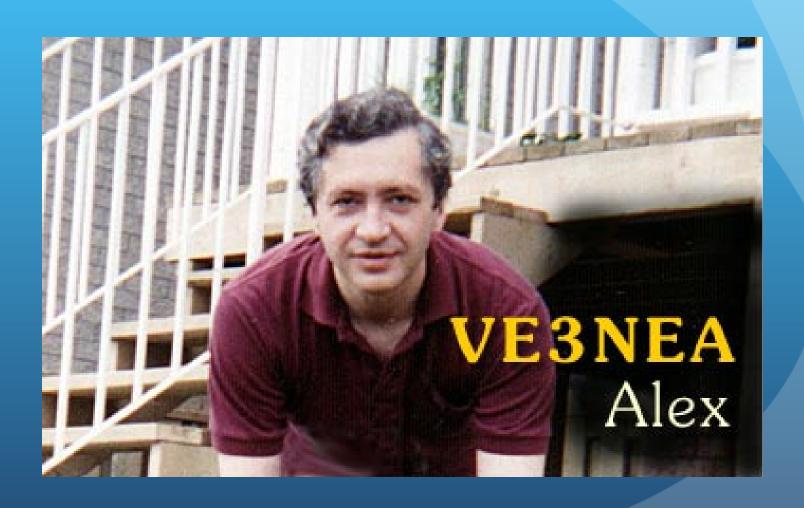
- Filters are normally set on the cluster node, not the local computer
- For a given callsign and cluster node, the same filters will be in effect every time you log in
- You can keep different filters on different cluster nodes
- You can change filters based on contest requirements

There are also web-based cluster viewers

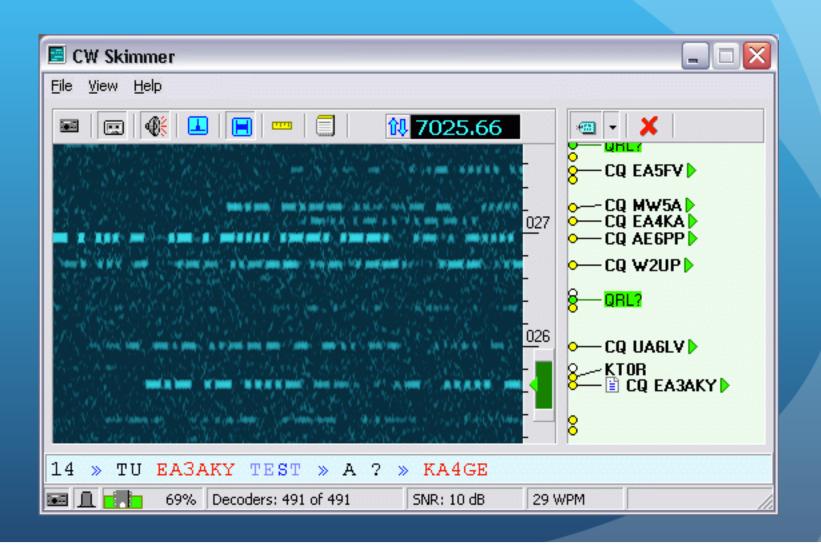




Who is this man, and why do I care?



Alex developed the "CW Skimmer"



Alex developed the "CW Skimmer"

- SDR-based receiver, plus Alex's (now free) software, plus an Internet connection
- Software decodes entire CW sub-band (e.g., 14000-14070, etc.)
- Looks for "CQ" or "Test" and callsign
- Automatically spots that station on the received frequency
- Instant spotting for all CW stations
- (And a version is now available for RTTY as well)

TU EA3AKY TEST » A ? » KA4GE

69% Decoders: 491 of 491

CQ UA6LV ►

The Reverse Beacon Network

- Uses any CW signal as a beacon
- Multiple CW Skimmers world-wide record signal strength (S/N ratio in dB) and CW speed (WPM)
- A free "Aggregator" program forwards CW
 Skimmer spots to a central server
- Central server distributes spots via web page and public telnet servers
- You don't need to have an SDR to use it.

RBN is a Great Tool

- Use the RBN as your cluster node in a contest to maximize spotted stations
 - Some cluster combine RBN and human spots
 - VE7CC, W9ZRX, N7TR
- Test your antennas: Call CQ a few times, then look on RBN website to see which skimmers spotted you, and your S/N ratio at that location.
- Can do in-depth analysis over time.
 Every RBN spot posted since Feb 2009 is archived

