FSQCall in Missouri ARES

<u>Why FSQCall?</u> FSQCall, hereafter FSQ, is a digital mode specifically designed for public service and disaster NVIS communications on HF.   However, FSQ is also being successfully used on VHF nets in the Kansas City area and perhaps other venues.   Unlike other ubiquitous digital modes, FSQ has features that are unique and especially useful for Emcomm applications. A short list of features relevant and useful for Emcomm include the:

- Ability to conduct semi-automatic nets. Net control does not need to be present at station to take check-ins and simple (non-critical) messages related to net coordination.[1]
- Ability of stations to "message" each other as needed, even if they cannot directly communicate, by using messaging relay function and relaying through intermediate stations.[1]
- Ability to poll stations to determine viability of RF link.[2]
- Ability to store messages at attended/unattended stations.[2]
- Ability to change the transmitting speed at another station.[2]
- Ability to open two instances of Fldigi to facilitate FSQCall keyboard-to-keyboard chat messaging (1500 hz default) while using other Fldigi modes such as Thor or MFSK (700 Hz recommended) for formal traffic.[1]

<u>FSQ benefits to Emcomm</u>.   A handful of amateurs in Missouri began experimenting with FSQ for emcomm applications in March 2016. Since then FSQ has been utilized and evaluated for Emcomm applications regularly in the Kansas City area, during at least two statewide exercises, several weather related incidents in Missouri and on the weekly Missouri FSQ net. In addition to participation in the weekly nets SEMA uses FSQ mode as a situational awareness tool to collect local weather and community response activities such as school closings and related issues. Because FSQ messaging is open text the information passed on the air serves to inform all users on specific local, regional and statewide activity during disasters and exercises.   Information occurring between venues may of course be used to provide situational awareness to local emergency managers. FSQ may also be used to provide messaging between emergency management venues and other supported agencies. FSQ has been extensively tested under a variety of conditions and is found to be a viable mode, at times the preferred mode given its unique features, to achieve Emcomm purposes, particularly for ARES groups.

<u>Weekly statewide HF net</u>. The weekly FSQ HF net is conducted each Thursday morning at 1000 local time. Propagation over the last few months has necessitated the use of 3.598 MHz as the primary net frequency. The secondary frequency is 7.099 MHz, USB. This is a directed net with check-ins solicited sequentially by Missouri ARES regions. All interested amateurs are invited to check into the net. Detailed information on FSQ setup and operation can be found on the ares-mo.org website[3] and on K0OG's website http://counsil.selfip.net/fsqcall/. Some net stations are on the air 24/7 on unattended standby on 3.598 MHz, USB. Messages may be left at these stations, the stations can be used as intermediate relays or merely pinged for propagation purposes.

<u>FSQCall downloads</u>: FSQCall program (recommend V0.24.6-US Edition instead of latest) is available at http://www.qsl.net/zl1bpu/MFSK/FSQweb.htm and The Platte County Amateur Radio Group http://www.pcarg.org/fsqcall-kc/ FSQ mode is also resident in the Fldigi suite. To subscribe to the FSQCall-MO email list go to http://www.kcnorthares.org/fsq-call/

----

[1]J. Counsil, K0OG, "FSQCall-MO Net, An Overview", Nov 2016
[2] http://www.whitemesa.net/fsqcal/doc/FSQCAL_024_3_US/CALLhelp.htm
[3] http://www.ares-mo.org/Plans/, "FSQCall-MO Missouri and Operations Version 5"