Marconi Logger Complete Manual

Version 3.0.6 for Windows and Linux

November 2026 edition

This manual explains how to install, configure and use Marconi Logger 3.0.6. In addition to logging QSOs and creating the Cabrillo file with its .sig signature file, version 3.0.6 includes CAT control, the Spot service, manual entry of the UTC date and time, band synchronisation and reading or adjusting the CW speed when the radio supports it.

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1 Overview

Marconi Logger records Marconi Activity QSOs, stores sessions in a local database, proposes words and short phrases for CW practice, and creates the required Cabrillo together with its .sig integrity file.

Program data remains under the folder chosen during installation, normally C:\McActivity. The Dati, Database, Esportazioni, Backup, Log, ParoleFrasi and maps subfolders keep all material easy to find and copy.

2 Installation

Windows: run Setup_Marconi_Logger_3.0.6.exe and accept the proposed C:\McActivity folder or choose another one. The installer includes its runtime and Hamlib; a separate Python installation is not required.

Debian and Ubuntu x86_64: install the mcactivity-logger_3.0.6-1_amd64.deb package with sudo apt install ./mcactivity-logger_3.0.6-1_amd64.deb. The package manager installs the dependencies available from the distribution repositories, including Hamlib where the package requires it.

Other x86_64 Linux distributions: extract Marconi_Logger_Linux_3.0.6_universal.tar.gz and run sudo ./install.sh. Python 3, Tkinter, Pillow, ReportLab, PyEphem and, for CAT, Hamlib are required. The Logger is a graphical application: it cannot open its window from an SSH shell with no graphical session.

3 First start and language

On first start choose Italiano or English. The choice is saved. To change it later open Settings > Language, select the language and restart the Logger when requested.

If the words and phrases file is missing, the program still starts and displays a warning. Logging remains available, but operator Text 1 and Text 2 are not proposed automatically until a valid JSON is loaded.

4 Main window and fields

The OPERATOR panel contains your own station details: My Call, Name, Locator, QTH, MC no., power, band, mode, Text 1 and Text 2. The Activity field is stored automatically in the database but is not shown in the main window. These details remain unchanged from one QSO to the next, except for the two proposed texts.

The CONTACTED STATION panel contains DX Call, DX Name, MC no., DX Locator, power, DX QTH, RST S, RST R, UTC date and time, band, mode, and the received Text 1 and Text 2. The active field and the completed fields are highlighted; date, time, band and mode, when filled in automatically, have a green background.

In the mandatory MC no. fields, N is accepted for operators who are not Marconi Club members. Enter N explicitly instead of leaving the field blank. Available bands are 160M, 80M, 40M, 20M, 15M, 10M and 2M; the expected mode is CW. The Operator and Contacted Station bands are kept synchronised.

Field meanings

Field	Purpose
My Call / DX Call	Callsign of the operator or of the contacted station.
MC no.	Marconi Club number; N is accepted for non-members of the Club.
Locator	Maidenhead locator of the station.
RST S / R	Sent and received signal report.
Text 1	Proposed or received word.
Text 2	Proposed or received short phrase; spaces are not transmitted.
Edit	Marks a QSO changed after its first save.

5 Entering and saving a QSO

Move between fields with Tab; Shift+Tab goes back to the previous field. You can also select a field directly with the mouse. Enter the data exactly as received during the contact and check in particular callsign, MC no., locator, RST, band and texts.

Press Enter or the ADD QSO button to log the contact. The program validates the fields, saves the QSO in the database and clears every CONTACTED STATION field, including RST S and RST R. The stable operator details remain filled. Alt+W

clears only the contacted-station fields without saving.

After each saved QSO the Logger proposes new operator Text 1 and Text 2 values. Proposals are not repeated in the same session and remain unavailable for four consecutive sessions while alternatives exist.

6 Words and phrases

Open Settings > Load Words and Phrases and select the official JSON. The file must contain 200 Italian words of 4-6 characters and 200 correct phrases, each of no more than three words and 15 transmitted characters excluding spaces. The Logger validates the content and keeps a copy in the Dati\ParoleFrasi folder.

Text 1 is one word; Text 2 is a short phrase. The operator sends their own texts to the other station and types what they receive into the contacted-station fields. The parser compares both logs and the official JSON. If the JSON is replaced with a newer version, the new proposals are used for subsequent QSOs.

7 Menus and commands

File creates or opens a session, exports Cabrillo, produces the available printouts or summaries, and exits. Settings contains Operator Details, Load Words and Phrases, Select Map, Schedule Activity Duration, CAT Configuration and Language.

Help contains Italian manual online, English manual online, Check for Updates and About. Manuals are no longer embedded in the installation: these commands open the current document on the Marconi Club website in the default browser.

8 Maps clock and scheduling

The greyline map displays daylight and darkness in UTC and adapts to the available space. Installed maps can be selected through Settings > Select Map; additional maps are stored under Dati\maps.

Schedule Activity Duration asks for the UTC date and the UTC start and end times. Use the YYYY-MM-DD format for the date and HH:MM for the time. The clock and the countdown never alter QSOs already saved.

9 Cabrillo export and sig file

At the end of the session export Cabrillo. The Logger automatically creates the .cbr file and the matching .cbr.sig file in the chosen folder, without asking for keys or passwords. Both files must be submitted together and with the same base name.

Do not edit the .cbr after it has been created: even a single change invalidates the signature. If a QSO needs correcting, do it in the Logger and export both files again. The current Cabrillo also includes Text 1 and Text 2 for the operator and the contacted station.

10 Updates

At startup the Logger checks in the background whether a new version of the program or of the words and phrases JSON is available. If it finds an update it displays a notice; when there is nothing new it does not interrupt your work.

Help > Check for Updates runs the check on request. Updates are downloaded only after the operator confirms. A new JSON is validated and installed in the proper location; for the program, the installer or page given in the official manifest is opened.

11 Backup and recovery

Regularly copy C:\McActivity\Dati, or the Dati folder of your own installation, to a safe medium. Database contains the sessions, Esportazioni the files produced, ParoleFrasi the JSON and its history, Backup the automatic copies and Log the information useful for diagnosis.

Before reinstalling or moving to another computer, save the complete Dati folder. Never delete or rename by hand a database that is open in the program.

12 Troubleshooting

If the program does not appear in the Linux menu although the package is installed, check /usr/share/applications/mcactivity-logger.desktop and start mcactivity-logger from a terminal inside the graphical desktop. The error no display name and no $DISPLAY environment variable means that the command was run from an SSH session with no display.

If the JSON is rejected, use the unmodified official file. If a map is missing, check Dati\maps. If the .cbr and .sig files are not created, make sure the destination folder is writable and look at Dati\Log\marconi_error.log.

If a mandatory field prevents saving, fill it in with a valid value; for MC no. use N when the operator is not a Marconi Club member. If the online manual does not open, check the Internet connection and open www.marconiclub.it/mcactivity/manuals/ directly.

13 Data to transmit and QSO time

The Show TX Data button opens a window with the data the operator has to transmit, in the same order the other station needs to fill in its fields. Text 1 and Text 2 are updated even while the window stays open. RST S shows Transmit Actual Report; green data are fixed, cannot be edited and are not transmitted.
UTC Date and UTC Time normally follow the computer clock. The two small buttons next to these fields let you lock the date or the time separately and enter it by hand, for example when you complete the log after the session. Press the button again and the field returns to LIVE. Check manual values carefully before pressing Enter.

14 CAT configuration

Open Settings > CAT Configuration. Tick Abilita CAT (enable CAT) and choose CAT diretto (direct CAT), Hamlib or OmniRig. Direct CAT uses Hamlib internally but shows only the operating settings: radio make and model, radio port, serial speed and handshake. Hamlib mode also lets you enter the rigctld host and port; OmniRig uses Rig 1 or Rig 2 and is available on Windows when OmniRig is installed.
The radio make and model and Radio port menus are filled automatically with the Hamlib models and the available serial ports, including those created by USB interfaces. A port can be used by only one program at a time, unless you knowingly use a shared service. If the connection drops, the Logger tries to restore it and shows a message in the CAT RADIO panel. When the radio responds, the CAT RADIO panel shows the frequency in the xx.xxx.xxx Hz format, the mode and, if the CAT exposes it, the CW speed in WPM. The Logger never operates the PTT. If the radio or its backend does not expose the CW speed, the WPM line stays empty.

15 Bands and CW speed

The frequency read through CAT automatically updates the Band menu of the Operator panel and the DX Band menu of the Contacted Station panel. A manual spot also corrects the band according to the frequency entered, so the combination always stays consistent.
When CAT is connected, choosing the Operator band tunes the radio to the configured CW operating centre: 1.835 MHz for 160M, 3.525 MHz for 80M, 7.020 MHz for 40M, 14.020 MHz for 20M, 21.020 MHz for 15M, 28.020 MHz for 10M and 144.150 MHz for 2M.
When the CW speed is available and adjustable, on Windows Alt+F9 lowers it by 1 WPM and Alt+F10 raises it by 1 WPM. On Linux with XFCE use Ctrl+Shift+F9 and Ctrl+Shift+F10, because Alt+F9/F10 and Ctrl+F9/F10 are reserved by the desktop. The change has no effect if CAT is not communicating or the radio does not expose this command.

16 Spot service

SEND SPOT publishes the operator callsign, frequency, band and mode on the Marconi Club service. With CAT connected the radio data are read automatically; without CAT a window opens (Manual spot entry) where you type the frequency, and the band is worked out from the frequency. This function needs the Internet, while normal QSO logging keeps working offline.
VIEW SPOTS opens a separate window that can stay visible while you use the Logger. Red spots are callsigns not yet in the session database; black ones are already logged. When you select a spot with CAT active, the radio is temporarily moved to the frequency and mode shown and SPOT LISTENING ACTIVE appears.
To go back to the previous frequency use the RETURN TO PREVIOUS FREQUENCY button or press Esc while spot listening is active. The Logger guards against double clicks and overlapping CAT commands; if the radio does not respond it shows an error and does not change the stored frequency. Spots remain available for about 30 minutes.