

Getting started with Advanced Simulated Radar Client (ASRC) v 1.1

Ruth McTighe, Director of Communications, Vatsim-UK

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www.cix.co.uk/~smctighe/Essex_RAM.html

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This guide is written for anyone who wants to start observing on Vatsim. It sets out the minimum configuration and software needed to observe ATC. Further information required for active controlling can be obtained via the links on the Essex RAM ASRC resources page (see URL above)

Setting up ASRC

1. Download ASRC 1.1 (asrcsetup.exe) from the developers' web page <http://www.asrc.info/> or the Vatsim-UK website (Downloads>Other)
2. Install into the directory of your choice
3. Once ASRC is installed there is a "quickstart.pdf" file in the ASRC directory which has information needed to complete setting up radio communications. The main ASRC manual is available online at www.asrc.info both as web pages and as a pdf download. It assumes quite a lot of knowledge of ATC procedures, so don't feel put off when you first look at it – it will all make sense in due course.
4. Download the UK radar map (egtt_airacxx2003.zip where xx is the month of the latest release). These maps are known as sector files. They can be found in the files section of the Essex website, or on www.vatsim-uk.org under Downloads/sector files/CTR-TMA.
5. You may also want to download a more detailed file for particular airports - for example essex_radar covers the Essex and East London area (Luton, Stansted, London City, Biggin Hill, Southend, Cambridge and Norwich).
6. Create a folder for sector files, and unzip into this.
7. **Warning:** make sure you are connected to the internet before you open ASRC 1.1. for the first time, or the IP address file will be corrupted. You do not need to be logged on to Vatsim.
8. Open ASRC – the radar screen will appear.
9. The first time you open ASRC the Audio set-up dialog should appear. If it does not, then click on Options>Audio to open it. The instructions for configuring the Audio settings are in the "quickstart.pdf" file in your ASRC folder - see the section headed "Built-in voice features – the new VSCS." When you receive the message that audio set-up is complete, close the audio set-up window and continue with these instructions. (You can choose to follow the quickstart.pdf instructions instead, but they are more complex than is needed for observing alone).
10. Set your voice transmit button by typing **.ptt <enter>** and then the key you want to use for transmitting. Use a key you will not want for anything else, and which does not type a character to screen e.g. RIGHT_CTRL.
11. From the drop down menus select File/Open. Navigate your way to the unzipped UK sector file and open it. Your radar screen will show a map of the UK. The default settings are adequate to start observing, but feel free to experiment.
12. Now continue with the Observers Guide.

Observers Guide

Logging on

1. If you are not online, you will need to connect to the internet before you open ASRC. If necessary, close ASRC, and make the connection.
2. Open ASRC.
3. You will see a message at the bottom of the screen "ASRC 1.1 Downloading Network Information ... Please wait..."
4. If you are connected properly you will quickly receive a message "<nn> servers received from the network".
5. If ASRC hangs, you have a corrupted or blank IP address file. To correct this, close ASRC, delete the file "vatsim.loc" from the ASRC root directory, make sure you are connected to the internet and reopen ASRC.
6. In ASRC select File/Connect. A dialogue box will open.
7. Enter your callsign. When you are controlling this will be the callsign of your position, but as an observer you can choose your own. It is recommended that you choose something by which you can be recognised online, such as your initials or first name, followed by _OBS. eg RUTH_OBS, RM_OBS.
8. Leave the Tag box blank.
9. Set the Rating box to your official Vatsim rating. If you are just starting out this will be Observer. You can only log on at a higher rating when you have passed the appropriate exam. Observers can watch and can take part in private chats, but cannot communicate on ATC radio frequencies.
10. Enter your real name in the appropriate box.
11. Choose one of the servers from the drop down menu to log in.
12. Facility should be set to Observer.
13. Enter your CID and password.
14. Press OK, and you will be connected to VATSIM.
15. You will now see aircraft positions appear on the map. You have successfully logged on!

Observing a controller

You now need to choose a controller to observe. The best position for a beginner to observe is a Tower (TWR), because these control all the take-offs and landings, and if there is no Ground controller available, they will also give the clearances and taxi instructions. You can also observe the Approach (APP) and En-route (CTR) controllers, who will be giving specific headings, flight levels and speeds for aircraft already in the air.

Look at your radar screen and identify any airports that look reasonably busy. If you have ServInfo, you can see how many aircraft are due to fly in and out. In ASRC the Controller List is in the upper right section of the screen. This lists the active controllers and observers in your visibility range. This will be centred on London Heathrow (EGLL) unless you have changed the "centre on" setting. The visibility range is set in the Options/Settings menu.

What do those codes mean? The main ICAO (airport) codes can be found on the ["Useful information"](#) page of either the Essex or the Vatsim-UK websites. For example, Stansted is EGSS, and Luton is EGGW, so Stansted Tower is EGSS_TWR, and Luton Ground is EGGW_GND. Controllers using voice put a V in their callsign eg EGSS_V_TWR. Other abbreviations you may see are T(rainee), M(entor), (R)adar and E(xaminer).

1. In order to observe a controller you need to connect to his ATC frequency using the VSCS (Voice Switching and Control System).
2. Click on the controller's callsign in the controller list. In the CRD (Computer Readout Display) in the bottom right hand corner of your screen, the controller's details will appear in the middle RA (response area) box. On the first line will be the controller's callsign and the ATC frequency e.g. EGSS_V_TWR 123.800. Make a note of both.
3. Each controller uses a voice room, identified by the server IP address and the controller's callsign e.g. 80.249.98.88/egss_v_twr. To find out which server a controller is using, you need to read his ATIS (Automated Terminal Information Service).
 - a. Type .atis <callsign> (the . is important).
 - b. You will see the callsign in the Controller List start flashing. Double-click on it.
 - c. A grey box will appear near the bottom of the screen with the ATIS in it. If it scrolls past too quickly, use <pageup> to scroll back. You can turn the grey box off by typing .x
 - d. Make a note of the IP address and voice callsign; note the latter is sometimes different from the text callsign.
4. Open the VSCS by pressing TAB or using the drop down menu. The grey boxes are called "frequency buttons", and each can be set to one ATC position.
5. Click on BUTN CNFG on the bottom line, and then on the first available grey box.
6. In the dialog box enter the frequency (e.g. 123.800), the ID (the name you want on the button e.g. Stansted Tower or EGSS_TWR), the voice server (e.g. 80.249.98.88) and the Voice Channel (the voice callsign e.g. EGSS_V_TWR). Click on OK.
7. The box will now turn white and will be labelled with its name. Click on the box (preferably on the right half) to open it
8. There are three coloured boxes. From left to right these are Transmit, Voice Connection, and Receive. Green means ON, and black means OFF. At the moment only one box should be on. If this is the left box, then click on the right box (receive) to turn it on. Anything that is typed on this frequency by the controller or the pilot will appear in the transparent textbox at the bottom of the screen. As an observer, you will not be able to input anything yourself.
9. You can check you are connected correctly by looking at the bottom of the screen. The frequency you are connected to is displayed in yellow text (receive mode only) or green text (receive and transmit) surrounded by a red box (voice mode off).
10. To open the voice channel
 - e. click on the middle box which will turn green.
 - f. At the bottom of the screen the box surrounding the frequency will change from red to green. You are now connected to the voice room and can listen to the controller and pilots talking.
 - g. Make sure you switch the left xmit (transmit) button off (i.e. black), so that you do not accidentally transmit on the controller's frequency.
11. **Voice etiquette.** The only people speaking in a voice room should be the controller and the pilots. Observers MUST maintain radio silence. The only exception is when there are no pilots in the voice room, when the controller may choose to use voice with an observer rather than text. This is highly unofficial, and if a pilot comes on frequency, must be stopped immediately. Consult the manual on how to use VSCS to transmit, or how to set up the Intercom.
12. You will get a better view of what is going on if you use the sector file for the airport you are observing. This shows the taxiways, runways, buildings and boundaries in detail. If you followed our "Getting started" instructions, you will also have the Essex Radar sector file. To open the Essex Radar file, click on File/Open, and then navigate to your sector file folder. To centre your screen on a particular airport just type the four letter ICAO code and then press the <home> key.
13. All the Essex RAM sector files are available on the Essex website. Other files can be obtained from the Downloads page of the Vatsim-UK website.

Using private chat

Observers can communicate with other people online by using the private chat facility.

Receiving a text call

14. If you have an incoming message the letters "CL" at the top of the controller list (top right of the screen) will flash yellow, and the background behind the caller's callsign will flash grey.
15. To view the message, click on the callsign. You can also select the callsign by typing the two character ID to the left of the callsign and then pressing the controller select <csel> key. This will be \ if you haven't changed the default setting.
16. A grey text-box will appear near the bottom of the screen with the incoming message displayed. The identity of the caller will be displayed in the RA (response area) box at the bottom right of the screen. The currently selected individual in the controller list will have a white box around the callsign.
17. The chat-box must be grey in order to type in it. To reply just type your answer in and press <enter>. If you press <enter> without typing anything in, the box will turn black. To turn it grey, press <enter> again.
18. To change to another person you already have communicated with, just click on their callsign.
19. To close a chat-box, press the <csel> key.

Initiating a text call

1. To open a chat-box with anyone in the controller list double-click on their callsign.
2. The grey chat-box will appear. Anything you type will then be sent to that individual
3. Their reply will appear in the chat-box.