

QL is 30 2014 - The Distribution – RELOADED edition

by Urs König



Pic 1. Logo of The Distribution, written with real QL keyboard keys

QL is 30 2014 - The Distribution Version 3 is the successor to the **QL Today 2013 - The Final DVD** which was sent out in September 2013 with **The Final Issue** of the **QL Today** magazine. The new version 3 holds everything which was on that “final” DVD, but has been carefully cleaned, updated and supplemented with new material. **I have been able to add some real gems (e.g. long lost software) and an exclusive new release of a formerly commercial package!** Details about that further down.



Pic 2. DVD edition of The Distribution

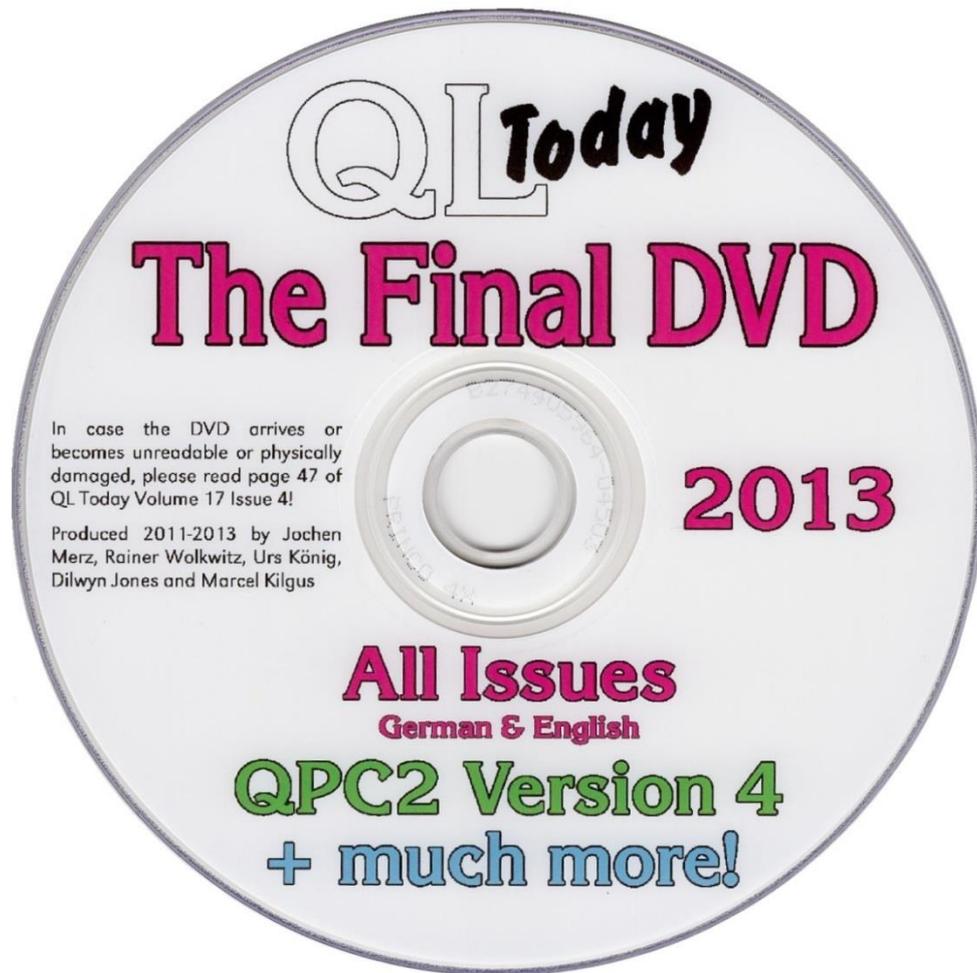
The new version is free which means it can be downloaded, used and given¹ to friends by anyone at no cost².

¹ Offering The Distribution for download or sharing it by peer-to-peer networks such as torrent is not allowed.

² Sale of The Distribution is not allowed.

What's new?

For those familiar with **QL Today 2013 - The Final DVD** (version 2 of The Distribution) there's a lot of new material to discover.



Pic 3. QL Today 2013 - The Final DVD, predecessor of The Distribution

Here's a list of the **additions**:

- Latest versions of the virtual QL machines (aka emulators) QPC2 and SMSQmulator and the Operating System SMSQ/E
- QL/E distribution
- QL INTERACTIVE FANTASY collection
- QL ZEXCEL SPECTRUM EMULATOR collection
- Seven volumes of the QUANTA eMag (Volumes 22 to 28, 2005-2011, 43 issues)
- The SBASIC/SuperBASIC Reference Manual (PDFs and more)
- A playable version of the so called "megagame" Bandersnatch
- GMOVE software blitter by Linus B Torvalds, the inventor of Linux
- Prospero Pro Pascal & Pro Fortran-77 programming languages
- QDT desktop
- QTop user front end
- TRON Light Cycles game
- Rotating Head & Elite demos
- QL Demonstration software by Sinclair Research Ltd
- New QL industrial design by Rick Dickinson, industrial designer of the Sinclair computers

Plus updates in many places!

What is it good for, what does it offer?

QL is 30 2014 - The Distribution holds searchable PDF files of every published **QL Today** magazine and seven volumes of the **QUANTA** newsletter for you to read. Plus an awful lot of other QL related material for you to explore. Altogether there are about 4 GB of **documents**, **software** and **pictures** in this distribution. Preconfigured **QL emulators** for use under Windows, Mac OS and even Linux make it easy to **bring the QL (back) to your desk(top)**.



Pic 4. Running QL/E, showing the system-manager QTop-Desk, the web-browser lynx and a photo of a bit more than just a QL (heaven) on the desk(top) ;-)

The Distribution has an easy to use **top level menu** (HTML, file "index.htm" on root of The Distribution) and is laid out in a way that this menu starts automatically when running off a **DVD** on systems configured to allow **auto-start** of DVDs. If it does not auto-start, have a look at the contents using your computer's file manager. Double-click the file "**index.htm**" in the top directory to get the menu displaying in your favourite browser. The menu system itself is considered to be self-explanatory and presents all the main topics and contents of The Distribution for you to choose from (see Print-Screen below).



Introduction

- [A brief documentation](#)

Run QL/E (v3.13), a virtual QL Environment - 1-2-3 go!

- [QPC2 v4.02 \(running SMSQ/E v3.25\) on Windows - Files - README](#)
- [SMSQmulator v2.18 \(running SMSQ/E v3.25\) on Java - Files - README](#)

Collections

- [Local \(offline\) copy of Dilwyn Jones' QL website \(as of 20-01-2014\)](#)
- [QL DOCUMENTATION collection v2.97 - README](#)
- [QL EMULATORS collection v1.45 - README - HISTORY](#)
- [QL ON A STICK environment v1.14 - README](#)
- [QL TOOLKITS collection v1.03 - README](#)
- [QL GAMES collection v1.03 - README](#)
- [QL INTERACTIVE FANTASY collection v1.01 - README](#)
- [QL ZEXCEL SPECTRUM EMULATOR collection v1.03 - README](#)
- [QL HISTORY collection, 30th anniversary edition - README](#)
- [QL PICTURE GALLERY collection v3.30 - README](#)
- [QL Today magazine, English, Volumes 1 to 17, 1996-2013 \(PDFs\)](#)
- [QL Today Magazin, Deutsch, Jahrgänge 1 bis 6, 1996-2002 \(PDFs\)](#)
- [QUANTA magazine, English, Volumes 22 to 28, 2005-2011 \(PDFs\)](#)

Bonus Material

- [QL Service Manual \(HTML edition\)](#)
- [The SBASIC/SuperBASIC Reference Manual \(PDFs and more\) - README](#)
- [SQPP Exclusive gems: GMOVE, Prospero Pro Pascal & Pro Fortran-77, QDT, QTop, TRON Light Cycles, Rotating Head, Elite & Sinclair demos - README](#)

Web Links (Online connection required)

- [Dilwyn Jones' comprehensive QL information and PD software website](#)
- [sinclairql.net, the repository of the Sinclair QL Preservation Project \(SQPP\)](#)
- [QL PICTURE GALLERY \(well organised and maintained picture gallery\)](#)
- [QLvsJAGUAR, Urs König's YouTube channel \(Videos and information about Sinclair, QL, ATARI, JAGUAR, NUON, APPLE & more...\)](#)

One after the other, here's a list of what you can browse:

First there's a link to this document (**Introduction**).

Next are two links to **start a virtual QL** and run the **QL/E environment**. The menu offers you the possibility to start and **use** two of the most advanced free QL emulators **QPC2** and **SMSQmulator**. I tend to call them virtual QL systems as they offer so much more than just emulating a vintage Sinclair QL computer. Both natively run a tailored version of the **most advanced QL** operating system **SMSQ/E** in its latest incarnation. In case the direct links do not work for you (this may be the case at QPC2 if you're using a DVD and your computer handles the DVD in a way I was not aware of while preparing it), you can browse the folders (**Files**) using your computer's file manager. In addition you can read the "**README**" documents of QPC2 and SMSQmulator. Please note that more QL emulators are available in the QL/E distribution, in the "QL EMULATORS" collection and in the "QL ON A STICK" environment. To learn more about **QL/E** and how to start and operate it, consult the **QLE_manual.txt** in the **\qle\Documentation** folder.

QL/E Quick Start Guide

Windows users best start **QPC2** (a 32-bit Windows program) using **QPC2.bat** located in the **\qle** folder of THE DISTRIBUTION, **all others** (Mac OS, Linux, etc.) best start **SMSQmulator11.jar** (a Java 11 program) using their up-to-date Java Runtime Environment. On systems with older Java Runtime Environments you can try **SMSQmulator8.jar** (a Java 8 program). **Get your QL experience!**

Then there are all the **collections**³. You can dive into every single collection or just open and read the "**README**" (first) document of each one. Talking of reading, what about browsing through **all the volumes** of the **English** and **German** editions of the **QL Today magazine** or **seven volumes** of the **QUANTA eMag** and (re-)read every single issue. Depending on your computer's PDF reader⁴ you can read, navigate, search, copy, mark, print, export or the like.

Now comes the **bonus material**. There's the great **SBASIC/SuperBASIC Reference Manual** for you to explore. And - as a kind of delicious desert - there are **ten exclusive gems**.

Finally the menu offers links to some selected **websites** which act as a **good entry point** to the **QL World** in the World Wide Web. Those websites are pretty unique, offer a large repository and are frequently being updated. More links to many other QL sites are available on those websites.

³ Collections are packages covering a specific or wider topic. Examples are what Dilwyn Jones was maintaining under the term QL CD-ROMs for over a decade or the QL PICTURE GALLERY produced by the author.

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PDF_reader

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Main type of content</u>	<u>Physical location (folder)</u>	<u>Root QXL.WIN</u>	<u>Other QXL.WINs</u>
QL/E, a virtual QL environment v3.23	Documents, Software, Pictures	.\qle\	X (named QLE.WIN)	SMSQ/E QXL (QL-SD Bootstrap)
QL DOCUMENTATION collection v2.97, incorporating SBASIC/SuperBASIC Reference Manual	Documents, Software, Pictures	.\doc\	X	-
QL EMULATORS collection v1.48	Software	.\emu\	X	QPC1 (2) QPC2 SMSQmulator SMSQ/E
QL ON A STICK environment v1.14	Software	.\qos\	X	-
QL TOOLKITS collection v1.03	Software	.\tkl\	X	-
QL GAMES collection v1.03	Software	.\gms\	X	-
QL INTERACTIVE FANTASY collection v1.01	Software	.\ifc\	X	-
QL ZEXCEL SPECTRUM EMULATOR collection v1.03	Software	.\zxl\	X	-
QL HISTORY collection, 30th anniversary edition	Documents, Software, Pictures	.\30a\	-	-
QL PICTURE GALLERY collection v3.30a	Pictures	.\pic\	-	-
Scanned PDF files of all QL Today magazines ever published (1996-2013, 123 issues)	Documents	.\qlt\	-	-
PDF files of seven volumes (Volumes 22 to 28, 2005-2011, 43 issues) of the QUANTA magazine	Documents	.\qnt\	-	-
QL Service Manual (HTML edition)	Documents, Pictures	Web-only since v3.05	-	-
SQPP Exclusive gems: Bandersnatch (Megagame), Linus B Torvalds' GMOVE, Prospero Pro Pascal & Pro Fortran-77, QDT, QTop, TRON Light Cycles, Rotating Head, Elite 3D & Sinclair demos	Documents, Software, Pictures	.\xcl\	-	-
Dilwyn Jones' most comprehensive QL information and PD software website	Documents, Software, Pictures	Web-only since v3.05	-	Many

Tab 1. Table of content

Making the most out of your copy

Please keep in mind that - even in case it is stored on a DVD - The Distribution is **designed for use with a computer** rather than a DVD player and TV set. Even possible and supported, I recommend to not using The Distribution as a physical DVD. Running off a DVD is slow, static and sometimes noisy.

By default The Distribution is delivered as a ZIP file called **THE_DISTRIBUTION.ZIP** (size approx. 3 GB) rather than a DVD (image). I highly recommend storing the content of The Distribution on your computer(s) or even on your file server(s). Just unzip THE_DISTRIBUTION.ZIP at your preferred storage location.

The Distribution is fully portable, no installation/setup needed to get started. I use the content the same as I do with any other QL related material on my PCs which means I rely on local search engines (software) and picture galleries (software). While working with the local search engines on my PCs I discovered that at least "Windows Search" (standard on Windows Vista, 7, 8, 10 and 11, add-on on Windows XP) does find what you are looking for in the scanned magazines and other material. Please remember to make sure that the location where the PDFs are stored is included in the search index. I tend to keep my personal copy of The Distribution in the "Documents" folder of my PCs user account (e.g. "c:\Users\Urs\Documents\KOPIEN\CDs_DVDs\QL\THE_DISTRIBUTION").

Picture galleries easy-peasy

The Distribution holds several thousand pictures. The vast majority of those are in the two collections "QL PICTURE GALLERY" (\pic\) and the "QL HISTORY" (\30a\). Another place with a relevant quantity of pictures is the "QL DOCUMENTATION" (\doc\) collection. The easiest way to access/handle the images is to use/browse them with picture gallery software like Microsoft's "Windows Essentials⁵ Photo Gallery" or Google's "Picasa⁶". Both software packages are free downloads at no cost. As long as you've stored the content to a location known and managed by those software packages (e.g. the "Documents" folder of your PCs user account) then nothing more needs to be configured. If you like to store the content in another place (e.g. on your file server), then you must add the network path to your picture gallery software's managed locations. Once this is done, you can use all the features of the software. I personally prefer to use Microsoft's "Windows Essentials Photo Gallery". It's easy to use, smart and fast at browsing through large picture collections, good to order pictures and has some nice picture edit features. Some Windows users may prefer using Google's "Picasa" or another picture manager of their choice. Mac OS X users may use "iPhoto⁷".

Usage of the QL software archives

There are about twenty virtual WINchester hard-drives in QXL format (QXL.WIN for short) in The Distribution. Eight rather large ones - located in the root folders of the QL software collections (see table above) or in the root of the SD card edition - build the core QL software archives of The Distribution. Then there's one called "qpcdemo.win" which is part of the QPC2 distribution, one called "SMSQmulator.win" which is part of the SMSQmulator distribution and one called "QXL.WIN" which is part of the QPC1 distribution. Then there are at least seven more *.WINs which are stored in ZIP-Files. One of them holds an older version of "qpcdemo.win" which was mentioned above. Three hold the "SMSQmulator.win" which was also mentioned above. One (".\emu\archives\petawin.zip") holds a rather old environment which was prepared way back in 1996 for distribution and use with the demo package of QPC version 1. The last ones (".\emu\archives\SMSQE3*src.win.zip") hold the complete source code of SMSQ/E, the most advanced QL compatible operating system. As this is already installed in the QL/E environment, count this as backup. This is a case where duplicates can make sense.

Starting QPC2 from the menu will boot the QL/E environment from "QLE.WIN" of the QL/E distribution. Starting QPC2 using "qpc2.bat" from "QL ON A STICK" will boot the QL environment from the "QXL.WIN" of that environment. Users of QPC2 and SMSQmulator can easily configure to use specific file system containers in QXL.WIN format for use as WIN1_ to WIN8_. In QPC2 you can even mount such file system containers at runtime using the

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windows_Essentials

⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Picasa>

⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iphoto>

SBASIC command WIN_DRIVE. WIN_DRIVE even supports relative paths based on where QPC2 has been started of (e.g. WIN_DRIVE 1, "..\..\..\gms\qxl.win"). Users of QemuLator can mount QXL.WIN based file system containers on the main screen with a right click to the virtual Microdrive slot and then choosing "QXL Hard Disk File...". Other QL emulators such as uQLx and sQLux do also support QXL.WIN.

Using the native file system access features of QPC2 (DOSx_ device), SMSQmulator (NFAx_ device) and QemuLator (Attach Directory...) one can easily access more QL software which is stored in ZIP files on various locations in The Distribution (e.g. last commercial version of QTop in ".\xcl\qtp\Redist\QTop123RTM_zip").

Legal stuff

All material in The Distribution is believed to be freeware, public domain, charityware, cardware, shareware or contributed with permission to redistribute and hopefully no copyrighted material which cannot be freely copied has been included. If you spot anything which should not be there for copyright or other reasons, please let me know straight away so that the offending item may be removed. Similarly, if you discover any errors, please let me know so that I may try to correct them.

The included material may be governed by licences. Consult each package for details.

Important: Offering The Distribution for sale, for download or sharing it by peer-to-peer networks such as torrent or use-net is not allowed. The Distribution is a well maintained project and updated versions will be published from time to time exclusively on this website: <https://www.sinclairql.net/>. Get it from there!

Feedback

Feedback is highly appreciated. How do you like this distribution? What would you like to see in the future? What could you contribute? Ask not what the QL community can do for you; ask what you can do for the QL community. (Freely adapted from John F. Kennedy)

Thank you

This distribution would not have been possible without the tremendous efforts and work of Jochen Merz, Rainer Wolkwitz, Dilwyn Jones, Marcel Kilgus, Wolfgang Lenerz, Jim Hunkins, John Gilpin and Markus Dettwiler. Thank you very much guys for making it happen. Special thanks to all contributors (a list of all contributors can be reached in the footer of the menu).

This is my biggest contribution to the QL is 30 anniversary (see <https://qlis30.org.uk/>), but definitely not the last for the QL community. **Enjoy exploring the QL World!**

Keep always in mind: **QL forever!**

Urs König

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<https://www.sinclairql.net/>

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