



ROTW Group Meeting Account

Fly! present situation

Today, it is no easy to find Fly! in shops. This is a real problem as restricting new users number. However, it is likely that many "Fly!ers" bought the software from its release and kept it "in a drawer". The objective of the current work with the press is to make these potential users reinstall Fly!. For that purpose, it is necessary to supply them with material allowing them to obtain quickly and without particular skills an up to date Fly!, matched with the main already published realizations. This is possible thanks to DVD realized by René and Bruno. This DVD contains all Fly! patches till .240 for the American and European versions, as well as all ROTW realizations and miscellaneous useful add-ons. Installation is totally automated and allows obtaining a complete ROTW Fly! from an installation made with the original CDs, and all that, in some minutes. First tests are totally positive and a "public" version should be able to see the light in the next weeks. DVD distribution will be made against payment of 10 € + postal charges (3 € in metropolitan France), by check only or by Paypal for foreign countries distribution. An order form could be directly printed from Simvol web site. Payment of these 10 € will allow the user to become sympathizing member or donor of the association.

Year 2004 realizations

Year 2004 saw becoming a reality of numerous projects on all grounds (sceneries, planes, dll and tools). Here are some examples of ended realizations: the biggest French airport, Roissy, finally succeeded thanks to Doc. The Alps are in constant evolution thanks to the work of the team consisted of TJ, Beralex and Thierry Pétris. Roland covers France with satellite pictures (Ile de France, Lyons and Clermont-Ferrand). SRTM90 data integration by Beralex and Roland brings an undisputable plus in realism. For planes, Cordouan was ended by Gilles and Fred. F2FD-ROTW cooperation allowed the outcome of Peter Sidoli's Seneca V, integrating new avionics by Laurent and TJ. A glider ASH25 was born. Laurent and Thierry proposed us various types of wind socks. Another dll: the display of various night textures for planes. Robert offers us the Mont Saint Michel in 3D. Didier continues to update DAFIFs.

Various works are in progress.

In association with F2FD, three projects are in progress: a Sirkosky helicopter, an Extra 300 for acrobatics, and an Aermacchi jet, in association with the Italian patrol, Frecce Tricolori.

For the ROTW group, Le Bourget is in progress by Doc. The ATR (good news!) was resumed by Jean Sabatier. The ASH25 should be improved.

TJ coordinates a ground textures group. The Alps should soon be carried on up to the Mediterranean coast.

The TB 10 is in progress by T.J. Roland continues his work of satellite cover.

Concerning advertisement, several meetings are foreseen: in September, 2005 will take place, in Rennes, an aviation professions show where we will be present. Robert is in charge of the organization of our presence at the "simulation day" organized by ADP (Aéroports de Paris).

Several problems were raised, as the impossibility to have a 1600x1200 display because of radios; the existence of a black strip on NIMA photos in Nice area; the problem of the meridian 0°; the Fly! limitation at 10° by pixel. None of these problems has, at the moment, a simple solution.

For Macs, dlls compatibility is not still insured. This would require a complete rewriting of these files. At the moment, only simple planes can be transferred on Mac, Furthermore, Fly! seems to pose numerous compatibility problems with OS X operating system.

Concerning network flights: Gilles continues his promotion by posting attractive reports. Unfortunately, it is not sure that Fly! can continue to be used on the IVAO network because of software compatibility problems.

The future of Fly!

This point was the object of long debates. Technically, Fly! is not any more supported by its developers and will not be the object of updates. This software being based on the DirectX technology, property of Microsoft, it is thus at the mercy of an update of this last one which could make it definitively unusable. The source codes having never been given by TRI, nobody would be capable to upgrade this software to make it compatible with the new DirectX standards.

Furthermore, the graphics equipments very fast evolution risks raising the same problem. It would seem that the most recent equipments do not allow the execution of Fly!. The future of Fly! is thus conditioned by not easily controllable external factors. It would seem that this software has only, technically speaking, a 2 to 3 years life expectation. So it is necessary to find alternatives which would allow us not to lose the work made during these last years and to find a more stable and more opened (GNU) platform in term of developments.

Two possibilities were evoked (FlightGear not being retained as a plausible orientation at present):

X Plane was the object of a presentation by Marc. The latest version (V8), equipped with a new graphics engine, has just been released. There are several positive points: numerous developers and available tools; interesting graphics engine (although very young); possibility of interfering directly with the software owner (Austin Meyer); possibility of using plug-ins. This last point deserves a quite particular attention, because it could allow importing all ROTW realizations. However, some black points remain: animated instruments panel representation only on the front view; codes not public open; constant simulator evolution by patch.

Fly! Legacy is a simulator in "alpha alpha" development phase. Chris Wallace, its father, speaks very little about it. We were, however, able to see some screenshots on the common forum F2FDesign showing a graphics engine and the import of the Seneca model. It seems that it remains a very important work to do. It would be possible that Chris, at the beginning

of the year, makes a first version of his work available to the group so that each one can express an opinion and estimate the software capabilities and the work remaining to do. One of the objectives of Chris is to reuse the logic of Fly! for flight models and sceneries management; this would allow an almost complete compatibility with current realizations, which is a very important point in favour of this software.

These two possibilities are to be very seriously considered for the future of our association. Members are invited to try X Plane even via the demonstration version which allows to be made a good idea of the product. For Fly! Legacy, we hope that a first test version will quickly see the light.

The group passes its friendship on to Beralex injured during a serious motorcycle accident.

In conclusion, Fly!, in spite of its probably limited life expectation, still has beautiful days in front of it. It is, however, necessary that all ROTW members envisage, eventually, the passage to another one platform.

For the committee,
Y. Missenard

PS: just a picture with a part of the team.

