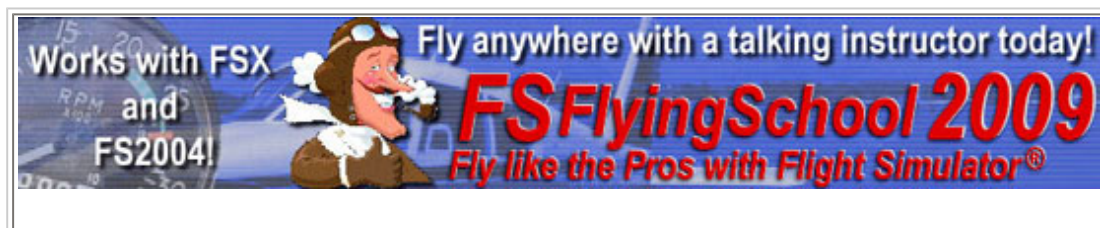


AVSIM Commercial Utility Review

FSFlyingSchool 2009



Product Information		
Publishers: FS Flying School		
Description: Simulated Flight Instructor plus Logbook.		
Download Size: 23 MB	Format: Download & CD	Simulation Type: FSX, FS9 or FS2000
Reviewed by: Jeff Shyluk AVSIM Staff Reviewer - July 23, 2009		

FOREWORD: Back To School, Again!

In December of 2007, I wrote a review for FSFlyingSchool (FSFS), which is an interactive simulated flight instructor who monitors your actions in Flight Simulator and accumulates notes on your technique into a comprehensive logbook. Jeff Preston, the team leader for the FSFS project is tireless when it comes to making revisions and additions to the product. He listened to what customers had to say about FSFS, and now he is proud to present a new release of the product. At this moment, I am looking at Version 2.2.0, with the biggest changes occurring at v2.0.0.

In this review, I will revisit FSFS and find out what is new in this latest version. This means going back to my "good" set of flight sim habits (no more inverted passes under the bridge to see if I can make the landing gear scrape against the underside of the road), because FSFS is monitoring my every move.

If you are new to FSFlyingSchool, you can find my [previous review](#).

DISCLAIMER: For Simulated Flight Only!!!

I am going to repeat here the same warnings that I wrote for my previous review: First, since FSFlyingSchool simulates flight instruction, it is intended

for Microsoft Flight Simulator (MSFS) only! It is not intended to be a replacement for a real flight instructor operating any real-world aircraft. Although educational, the primary focus of FSFS is entertainment. Do not use FSFlyingSchool as a substitute for real flight training!

A second disclaimer: FSFlyingSchool requires the ability to control an aircraft with precision. While knowledge of flight operations is crucial, it is also important that the sim-pilot has a good set of flight controls, preferably with a joystick and a rudder control. The better your control set-up is, the better you will perform within FSFS.

And disclaimer number three: for what it does, FSFlyingSchool uses a large amount of processing power. If you are getting low frame rates with your MSFS, then FSFS will have problems. Typically, the instructor call-outs will occur much later than they should, which means that you, the student, are not getting the feedback that you need to fly correctly. If you have your flight sim running smoothly, then FSFS should work just fine.

In any case, the FSFlyingSchool.com website can give you a free demo version to try out and see for yourself how you like FSFS. The demo is fully featured, except that the geographical area that you may use it in is limited.

INTRODUCTION: FSFS Redux

Even elite pilots have to go back to school some time or another to hone their skills. While I am as far from elite as you could get, like the others, I am going to study up on the basics of flight using FSFlyingSchool.

Like the previous version, FSFS2009 is entertainment software, as it is not at all a rigorous instructional course in flying an aircraft. However, FSFS2009 pays close attention to what you do in the air. Regular practise with the sim and learning from the feedback FSFS has to offer should improve your virtual airmanship. If you've seen the interactive lessons with Rod Machado included with the more recent versions of MSFS, then FSFS2009 is roughly equivalent to those. One big difference is that the Rod Machado missions are designed to be flown in a very specific manner, whereas FSFS2009 is much more free form.



In FSFS2009, you can choose where to fly and which airports you would like to visit. You may perform circuits or you can follow your own flight plan. You can create your own in-flight emergencies, or you can have the sim create them randomly as you go. All along the way, the FSFS2009 simulated instructor will give you advice, help you if you've missed an in-flight item, and give you positive instructions to remedy bad situations. All of this commentary is generated dynamically, based on how well you are controlling your aircraft in addition to keeping track of the time, location, and weather in the simulation.

Another difference between the Rod Machado lessons and FSFS2009 is that FSFS2009 is designed to give you a lot of feedback on how you handle your aircraft. Like a virtual NTSB agent (National Transportation Safety Board, the Federal body that investigates all civil aircraft crashes in the United States), you

Test System

Intel Core 2 CPU 6600 @2.40GHz x2
 2 GB RAM
 NVIDIA GeForce 8800GT Superclocked Edition
 RealTek AC'97 Audio
 Win XP SP3, FSX + Acceleration
 Thrustmaster Top Gun Afterburner II
 Logitech MX Revolution Laser Mouse
 MS Digital Media Pro Keyboard
 Saetek Pro Flight Rudder Pedals
 TrackIR4:PRO
 TrackClip PRO
 XBOX 360 Controller
 DBS Walk And Follow
 Zinertek Ultimate Weather
 Alphasim SR-71B Blackbird

Baseline FPS: 45
 FPS In Review: 45

Flying Time:
 18 hours

The Rod Machado Lesson Page that is included with FSX. If you've never seen this page before, here you can find rudimentary flight lessons for flight sim. FSFlyingSchool is somewhat similar to these lessons, but FSFS is also a lot more dynamic.

can forensically analyze every facet of your flight. At a glance, you can see what you did right and how you can avoid what you did wrong. Due to the limitations of the MSFS Mission structure, Rod Machado cannot make any real commentary when you do something wrong. You simply fail the Mission and are kicked out of the flight. FSFS2009 will tell you with specifics what you did wrong and it keeps track of your mistakes and successes. The logbook generated automatically by Flying School will help you understand what your strengths and weaknesses are as a virtual pilot.

While FSFS2009 is an improvement over the Rod Machado lessons and is more robust than the original FSFS, there are still limitations. Using FSFS2009, you should stick to flying stable, engine-powered civilian aircraft such as the default Cessna 172, or the default passenger jets. FSFS2009 supports roughly a hundred different aircraft including many popular add-ons, but it cannot be trusted for use in agile aircraft like stunt planes or fighter craft, with rotor-driven vehicles like helicopters, or with unpowered gliders.

If you have an add-on aircraft that is not directly supported by FSFS2009, you can easily create a custom profile to include your add-on. Likewise, if you use custom scenery, FSFS2009 will incorporate your new runways and airport frequencies. I will go into more detail on this further in my review.

INSTALLATION & MANUAL What Ain't Broke

If you are familiar with the original FSFlyingSchool, then there are no surprises with the new version, which I consider a good thing. For those that are new to FSFS, you can purchase the program on a CD-ROM, or you may download it. The 2.2.0 file is 23 MB in size, which is just slightly larger than the original version. Installation is automatic, and copy protection comes from a unique key sent by e-mail from the FSFS website.

FSFS2009 comes with a 41-page manual in .PDF format. A quick-start button on the main opening screen will automatically open the file for you, so you don't have to search your hard drive for the manual. Despite being 41 pages, the manual has many blank spaces in it, so it's not a lot to read. The instructions are clear, precise, and well written.

You must have Peter Dowson's FSUIPC to make FSFS2009 work; the free version of FSUIPC is all you need. If you don't have FSUIPC, the manual shows where you can go on the Internet to download this essential module.



A reminder to have FSUIPC on hand.

I can think of three things that are remarkable about installing FSFS2009. The first is that just as with the original FSFlyingSchool, you can fly in FSX, FS9, or even FS2000. Of course, you will have the most features available to you with FSX. If you prefer the older sims, FSFS2009 should run nicely. Please note that you cannot "share" one copy of FSFS across more than one version of MSFS. Also, I've only looked at the FSX version for the purposes of my review.

The second remarkable feature about FSFS is that it has a very generous try-before-you-buy offer. You may use FSFS for free as long as your aircraft remains within a specific large boundary on the map. All of the features are the same for the try-before-you-buy version and the full retail version, with the exception that you cannot use the free version to report your scores to the online FSFS database for official bragging rights.

How can I not like such a generous trial offer? There's no crazy logos or disabled functions, so if you are interested in this product, by all means download it and see for yourself.

The third remarkable thing about FSFS is that many of the set-up and tutorial functions of the program have little online videos to help rookie pilots get started. You need to have an Internet connection to watch the videos, which are short, to the point, and instructive. Although I feel FSFS is intuitive by design, it's nice to see that if you have a query about the product that there is a snappy little video you can call upon to answer your question. For those who are curious, the videos feature the original version of FSFS.



The Flying School Tutorial Video Page. If you are connected to the Internet, FSFS2009 can bring you to this webpage.

OPERATION: More Of The Same, But Much More So

If you've had experience with programs like FS2Crew or FDC Live Cockpit!, then FSFS2009 is somewhat similar in that the biggest interactive part of the program is a disembodied co-pilot voice. In the former applications, the co-pilot is a cockpit helper, whereas in FSFS2009, the voice belongs to a flight "instructor". You don't get much in the way of actual lessons in FSflightSchool, which is something I think is lacking, but you do get quite a bit of dialogue with regards to your piloting skills in real time as you fly.

In the original FSFS, I considered the flight to be something like a check ride, except that the instructor would be more helpful on approach. What I mean here is that you were expected to know what to do before you took your aircraft up, and the instructor would possibly give you praise for doing something right, or gently correct you if you were doing

something wrong, especially on the final leg of the journey leading to touchdown.



It would be way too difficult for FSFS2009 to insert a visual model for the co-pilot, so the next best thing is that your instructor is heard rather than seen. Of course, this makes for strange screenshots.

FSFS2009 is largely the same, but now the instructor has more to say. He or she is more interested in how you are managing your engines, and will remind you how to operate your lights in the correct manner. In addition, the instructor is more helpful dealing with failed equipment (if you have failures enabled) and emergency procedures. Most of the changes to the new FSFS2009 are subtle, and the emphasis remains on basic aircraft handling rather than advanced skills.

What Stays The Same:

I'll go over the things that remain the same from FSFS to FSFS2009.

The main opening screen is largely unchanged, although now there are more options. Mostly, the buttons on the front allow you to set up the logbook, the instructor you would like to fly with, and your aircraft. As before, once you have your pre-flight systems ready, all you have to do is press the big "CONNECT" button, and FSFS2009 will automatically run in Flight Simulator.

Also as before, you have the same five instructors to choose from, the American-sounding Miss Aviatrix and Mr. Hughes, the British/European-sounding Mr. Smith and Mr. Whittle, and the Very, Very British-Sounding (yes, I need capital letters for that) Mr. Mitchell. Some instructors are more talkative than others, but they all have a few more things to say now that FSFS2009 watches a wider range of actions than before. Also making a return is the mysterious stow-away child whose demands for an ice cream on take-off quickly and queasily turn to demands to get to a bathroom before landing. You can turn the airsick child off with a menu selection for a more serious flight sim session. The audio quality of the voices stays the same from FSFS to FSFS2009: not nearly as good as the Microsoft Mission voices (which I consider among the best), but the FSFS voices



The main multi-purpose screen. The most important control is the big CONNECT button.

are not bad either. The voice actors all speak English very clearly and do not mumble anything that I could find. Sound quality is not the best from a technical standpoint, but it is satisfactory for flight sim. If you think you can do better, FSFS2009 allows you to create your own custom instructor voice set.

Your choice of flights is up to you. You may fly a pattern (you may only fly left circuits in Circuit Mode), you can fly freely anywhere you like, or you can follow a flight plan that you filed with FSFS2009. The more structured your flight, the more information the instructor will give you as you fly. However, FSFS2009 is perfectly happy to let you point the aircraft wherever you want to go, as long as you do so safely.

Your FSFS2009 instructor is the most help on final approach, where the cockpit becomes very busy and it's easy to miss a checklist item. You can fly VFR (Visual Flight Rules) or IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) landings as you see fit. FSFS2009 will give priority to IFR landings, but if you want to shoot a VFR approach, FSFS2009 has improved its performance in VFR landings considerably.

How things work out from start to finish depends on you as the pilot. FSFS2009 makes a reasonable effort to sense what you are trying to do. As with the original FSFS, your flight is broken down into phases: Taxi, Take-Off, Cruise, and Landing. FSFS2009 will try to estimate which phase you are in depending on what you are trying to do. If you are moving slowly at the start of the flight, you are Taxiing. If you accelerate rapidly, the phase shifts to Take-Off. When you level out in flight, you are assumed to be in Cruise. After Cruise, when you descend, you enter Landing phase.

To be honest, I am not certain that FSFS2009 is any better at automatically adjusting the phases than the original FSFS. Depending on what you do and how you fly, FSFS2009 will either make the transitions so beautifully that you will start humming with joy, or else it will look at your minor control movement as the definitive signal to go to the next phase, in which case there is swearing. In my recent tests, I found that FSFS2009 handles circuits very well, but had troubles with flight plans. In a flight plan, there are a lot more ways to make an approach for landing than there are in a touch-and-go circuit, and the FSFS2009 logic algorithm can only handle so much creativity from the pilot.

The easy solution is to turn off automatic phase changes, and there is a switch for that. You can easily make the phase changes manually in flight with simple keystrokes.



The pilot settings screen, which is more advanced than before.

he other major feature in FSFS2009 that carries on from the original FSFlyingSchool is system failures and emergencies. As before, you can call on failures in MSFS (with failures becoming more dynamic in FSX), or you can have FSFS2009 generate failures for you. Notable are the FSFS "loose wire" failures, where some switch or device suddenly goes inoperative and then fixes itself again, simulating a loose wire behind the console that periodically shorts out your system. Usually, the loose wire failures are not critical, but you wouldn't want to stay in the air very long with an intermittent short. FSFS2009 now simulates engine fires on its own, which in my tests provided excitement followed quickly by catastrophe.



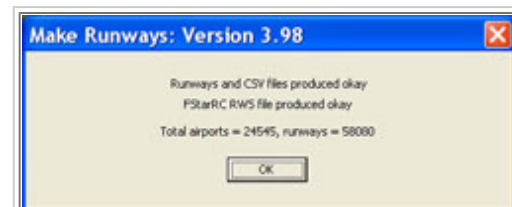
What's New:

FSFS2009 is an incremental step up from the previous FSFS, but I must be clear in pointing out that there have been ten free upgrades to the original FSFS as well as now two upgrades to FSFS2009. That's a lot of increments! If you like the previous FSFS as I do and you are curious as to see if the new improvements are worth your money, I will discuss that here. Of course, you can the download FSFS2009 demo and see for yourself!

Runway database. One of the biggest changes is a marked improvement on how FSFS uses runways. As always, you have a choice between IFR and VFR approaches. I found the VFR system rather tricky to use in the original FSFS. If your favourite VFR strip was not in the FSFS database, then you had to create your own data set for the runway manually. This was easy to do, but plainly put, it was monkey work and a lot of it of you had many runways in mind.

Now, FSFS2009 reads your flight sim scenery files and creates VFR information for all of your available runways. The process is fast and automatic. It may be possible that your favourite runway was somehow mismanaged by FSFS2009, in which case you can go in and manually edit the runway data.

The result is that you can now point your aircraft at a runway and the instructor will give you commentary on your landing. If you have the radios tuned correctly, the instructor will help you follow the ILS glide slope; otherwise, you will get advice for a VFR approach.



Aircraft database. Another big change is that FSFS2009 will now automatically generate a database file for any powered aircraft in your virtual hangar. Previously, if you used an add-on aircraft that was not on the FSFS list, you would have to create a file by hand. You would have to input items like flap positions, airspeed data, and landing gear settings, among other things. Again, it's not difficult labour, by why do the work when the computer can just find the data for itself from Flight Simulator?

FSFS2009 features a new automated database. You can over-ride the database if you need to.

As before, there are limitations to this system: you can't reliably use gliders, helicopters, or acrobatic aircraft. Well, that's what the manual says, anyways. The manual is perfect if you want to research precise, correct, and relevant information. But what if you just wanted to do something really stupid? I decided that I would hook up Alphasim's terrific SR-71 Blackbird to FSFS2009 and check out the results.

First of all, the original FSFS should be able to accept an SR-71, but in order to do so, I would need to add this aircraft's flight specifications into the system by hand. Not so with FSFS2009! At first, I got a warning message that the aircraft I wanted to use was not in the database, and then FSFS2009 went ahead and plugged it in. That was cool!



The SR-71B is the trainer variant for the Blackbird. The instructor sits on the top seat; the rookie sits on the bottom. This aircraft model is courtesy of Alphasim (it's not included with FSFS2009!)

The aircraft configurator in FSFS2009. Note the Data Source: FSFS automatically found the configuration file for the SR-71. I turned off the "Monitor Lights" function to make my flight a little easier. If I want to, I can edit the configuration data manually.

Flying the supersonic SR-71 in FSFS2009 turned out to be a joke, though. The Blackbird cruises at over Mach 3, whereas the poor FSFS instructor is more comfortable in a low-and-slow Cessna or a big, fat passenger jet. "You're going too fast! Watch your bank angle! We've lost an engine!" From the afterburner take-off to the sonic boom over Chicago to the engine unstart (something like a cross between a stall and a flameout) over the Great Lakes, Mr. Mitchell in the back seat blurted out a continuous stream of complaints about my hotdog flying skills. After thirty seconds of having his stomach pushed into his feet, the instructor gave up and disconnected my FSFS session. So, the manual is right after all. Better to stick to non-acrobatic, fixed wing, engine-powered general aviation aircraft. However, if you decide to push the envelope, FSFS2009 will automatically generate a profile for your favourite add-on. If it has a speedometer with lots of Mach numbers on it, just don't expect your co-pilot to like it.

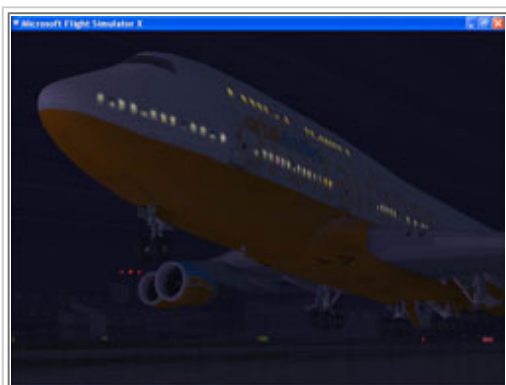


The moment the afterburner kicked in, the instructor wouldn't stop complaining. You'd think he'd never been past Mach 3 before. Less than a minute into the flight, I get kicked out of flying school for committing four out five cardinal sins (To my credit, I didn't use slew!)

Pilot briefing tool. FSFS2009 has beefed up the logbook considerably. As before, the FSFS logbook would keep enough stats on your flights to keep most VA's (Virtual Airlines) very happy. Currently, it analyzes your complete body of flights and can tell you where you are strong as a pilot as well as what skill you need to improve. Hopefully, unlike me, your flights don't involve unstarting an SR-71 at supersonic speed, or igniting your engine, or dumping fuel just to see what happens. If so, your scores won't be happy ones.

Lights. The instructors will now comment on how you use the lights in your aircraft. Given that some virtual aircraft do not have full panels of light switches, you can easily modify which lights, if any, you want the instructor to notice. Typically, he or she will say something like, "Please turn on your strobe light," at which point you should comply.

Interactive instructors. Instructors have more to say. They will comment more about the things you need to do while in flight. It's not a whole lot more dialogue, but it's a bit more like a lesson and less like a check ride where the instructor sits next to you with a stone face and dissects your flight using a red pen on clipboard notes. Even so, for a program called "Flying School", there aren't any actual in-flight lessons.



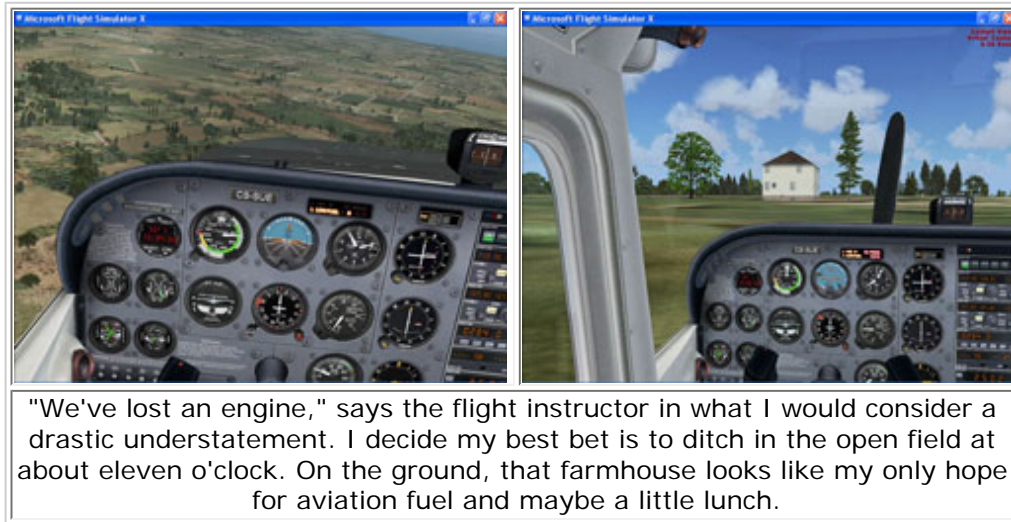
Your FSFS2009 instructor will help you nail those tricky landings.

I would certainly like to see some drills, like orbiting in place while compensating for wind, or learning the basic aircraft manoeuvres. Some of this is covered in the FSX Learning Center, so there would be some overlap with those lessons. Held over from the original FSFS are "Airmanship Challenges". These are little "mini-drills" you can call upon to liven up your flight. The difference between an Airmanship Challenge and an actual drill is that the primary goal of the Challenge is to earn points, while an actual drill is designed with a structure that helps a student pilot to learn. At the least, the FSFS2009 instructors are very good at helping you find the runway for a smooth landing, which is the most important flight skill of them all.

In the previous version of FSFS, I tended to keep to one small area for flight training. Since the runway database is now worldwide, FSFS2009 makes a good tool for exploring a wider range of destinations. I have read accounts of sim pilots taking their FSFS instructor for a ride around the world! The instructors

will make comments on places that are important to them, if you fly there.

Instructors will also keep track of failures in flight, and will comment on them. You receive a better score at the end of your flight if you successfully handle failures and make a good landing. I had mixed success with this feature. One new failure is the creation of engine fires. I expected the instructor to say something about smoke, flames, or even engine temperature, but all he said was, "We've lost an engine," when the pistons finally seized up. I found it strange that the instructor would give clear commands for correcting a stall but said nothing about what to do when there's flames under the cowling. On the other hand, the instructors speak up a lot more when something minor fails. "I don't like the position of the pitot heat switch!" is more instructive than "Uh, oh..."



Lastly, the instructor will comment on your control of the engine. Again, my results seemed mixed. I can run the engine on emergency power for the entire trip, and the instructor says nothing. Granted, FSX usually does not track engine wear, so as far as the sim is concerned, this is not always an issue. However, as I gained altitude, the instructor did mention that I should lean my fuel mixture. There is no lesson here, nor any explanation of why or how I should do this, but he was right, my mixture was a bit too rich, so I dialled it back a little.

Audio Output Customization. An easy example of the new audio features is the new volume control. You can use a switch to make the instructors sound louder or quieter. On my system, any volume other than Normal caused an unpleasant persistent crackle for the instructor voices. Good thing I like the Normal setting, which sounds okay. A more complicated example is that now FSFS2009 can be configured to use more than one audio device. If your computer can handle it, you may have the FSX sounds coming through your speakers and the FSFS2009 instructor audio passed through headphones.

Crashes. I mean where you drive the airplane into the ground, not where your computer stops working. I never ever got either FSFS or FSFS2009 to make my computer crash, it's an extremely stable product.

However, the crashes where you wreck your virtual ride can happen, especially if you choose to fly an unreliable aircraft. FSFS2009 now keeps track of your crashes, and it will give you a very helpful "post-mortem" from the fictional "National Aeronautical Safety Board". This log entry tells you the things that went wrong in your flight and tries to analyze the major factors that lead to the final event.

In-Flight Progress. The instructors will talk a little bit more about the progress of your flight and your score while you fly. You can now use a keystroke to force this topic of conversation. In addition, the instructor will call out your altitude above ground level (AGL), which is useful.

OUTSTANDING ISSUES: When A Bug List Isn't A Bug List

The original FSFS ran very well on my system. I never had it crash or do anything absolutely peculiar. FSFS2009 builds on that solid performance. The streamlined runway and aircraft database makes it even easier to climb into an aircraft and fly into the sky with a watchful instructor helping you along the way. Really, after installation, all you need to do is press the big CONNECT button while Flight Simulator is running, and you will be ready to go without even looking at the manual.

A couple of old issues remain from FSFS, but they relate to individual computer systems rather than bugs in the programming. First, you need to be able to run MSFS at a decent frame rate. If your computer struggles with MSFS, then the audio call-outs in FSFS2009 will be late. The only cure is to invest in a faster computer.

FSFS2009 did not affect my frame rates in FSX in any way that I could detect. When I overloaded my computer, I could cause delays in the FSFS2009 call-outs, but on my system, I had to have every gizmo I could think of running in the background. I did not test FSFS2009 with any complicated airliner add-ons, as I don't have any installed on my system. I would expect that if your airliner gives you draggy frame rates, you might have issues with FSFS2009. The easiest way to find out for your individual needs is to go to the FSFlyingSchool website and download the free trial version of the program.

The other issue relates to your game controllers. The higher-quality flight controls you use, the better you will do with FSFS2009. You don't have to have a force feedback joystick or rudder pedals, but the sim works better with them. I would highly recommend a decent set of rudder pedals for any serious flight sim enthusiast, as MSFS models both rudders and differential toe brakes.

Finally, FSFS2009 is intended for an English-speaking audience, and it does not use metric units even if you have them enabled in Flight Simulator.

CONCLUSION: Executive Summary

FSFS2009 is an incrementally newer version of FSFlyingSchool, which is an add-on that provides an interactive co-pilot flight instructor voice to FSX, FS9, or FS2000. When I say that the improvement is incremental, I should be clear and point out that there are actually quite a few increments involved, depending on the version of FSFS you are looking at. The same basic premise and operation of FSFS remains intact, but a number of improvements allows for smoother, more streamlined operation of the product, as well as a higher lever of interactivity with the instructor. Checklist items like lights and engine management are now crucial for a successful flight.

The new version has an enhanced logbook that keeps track of all of your flight statistics. You can consult your flight records for an in-depth analysis of your pilot habits, use the log to track your flying time for a virtual airline, or seek out a definitive cause for an aircraft crash. The full version of FSFS2009 will allow you to upload your hottest flight scores to the FSFlyingSchool website for the world to see and be amazed!

FSFS2009 is easy to install and easy to use. The focus is on maintaining basic airmanship skills, so there are no in-depth lessons like you would find at a flying school, nor are there accommodations for extreme aircraft like fighter jets or

stunt planes. However, you may use almost any engine-powered fixed-wing general aviation or passenger/cargo aircraft that you have on hand, including third-party add-ons.

FSFS2009 supports a few dozen aircraft right out of the box with pre-made flight profiles. It is also a whiz at automatically setting up new aircraft that don't have a pre-made profile. If you don't like the automated set-up, you can still make a profile manually. FSFS2009 also has a runway database that has been greatly improved over the original. Whereas in the older version of FSFS you'd likely have to perform a number of manual set-up operations to create a custom flight, most of these systems are now automated in FSFS2009. This means you can install the program, start Flight Simulator, and then press the FSFS CONNECT button, and that's pretty much what you need to fly.

FSFS2009 does require that you have at least the freeware version of Peter Dowson's FSUIPC installed for FSX.

Overall, FSFS2009 is a product I like, much as I do the original FSFS. Now that I have seen both, I can say I prefer the new version. It doesn't break anything, it just improves on what has gone before. It's not a massive transition from one version to the next, but there are many small changes that I think are worthwhile.

FSFlyingSchool maintains an active website and forum for technical support and for conversation with your fellow sim captains. You can find helpful videos on how to use FSFS or search for the latest product update. What I like is that you can try FSFS2009 before you buy it. You can download a free trial copy that has all of the features enabled except for the ability to upload your high scores to the Internet.

THE LAST WORD: Jeff Preston's Comments

I've invited Jeff Preston, the head of FS Flying School to say a few words about the new product. Needless to say, he and his crew are very enthusiastic about the new release:

"With FSFlyingSchool2009 we have tried to add more realism, excitement and fun, while making the whole product easier to use. Our support forum is staffed by our developers and we listen closely to feedback from customers; their requests and ideas are taken very seriously.

As a result we have enhanced FSFlyingSchool so that it automatically evaluates landing with or without ILS at any runway in the world and automatically creates an FSFlyingSchool aircraft profile for any powered airplane. These two improvements have made a world of difference to the product's ease of use and are very popular with customers.

The introduction of the Pilot Briefing Tool gives pilots a chance to see which areas they need to concentrate on, and the instructors themselves are more helpful by giving lots of additional advice before mistakes are made.

Pilots who want the real thing can choose to have FSFlyingSchool monitor the correct use of aircraft lights and engines, and we have found that these two aspects add a whole new level of challenge to the simulation fan who wants to do it 'just right'.

We have had a multitude of aircraft failures integrated into the program for some time, but now they can have a dramatic effect on the pilot's final score, depending on severity and other circumstances. If you wish, the instructor will



The log functions of FSFS2009 are more detailed than before.

help out by commenting on each failure as it occurs.

We've also introduced the fictitious National Aeronautical Safety Board and in the event of a crash, added their findings to the pilot's log book, which is of great help to the pilot who wonders why an aircraft crashed in Flight Simulator. In addition, the pilot gets a record of how well the flight had proceeded up to that point.

Several of these and other features have been added free in the 2 updates we have performed since we released FSFlyingSchool2009. As with our previous product, our intention is to listen closely to customers and produce frequent free updates."

THE REALLY LAST WORD: Flying School Freddie

If you've seen advertisements for FS Flying School or if you've been to their website, then you've no doubt seen a cartoony-looking aviator chap complete with leather helmet, flying goggles, and a pipe that looks like it started my last engine fire. The new guy is "Flying School Freddie", the mascot for FS Flying School. I've nabbed a copy of Freddie directly from the FSFS website. Look for him anywhere you see FS Flying School!



Meet Flying School Freddie!
Here's his free lesson for you:
Basic Flying Rules. Try to stay in
the middle of the air. Do not go
near the edges of it. The edges
of the air can be recognized by
the appearance of ground,
buildings, sea, trees and
interstellar space. It is much
more difficult to fly there.

What I Like About FSFlyingSchool 2009

- Streamlined and easy to use!
- Improved aircraft and runway database
- Greater interactivity with flight instructors
- More detailed flight log
- Active online community, easy to get good tech support
- Generous try-before-you-buy freeware version

What I Don't Like About FSFlyingSchool 2009

- Instructor not willing to comment on certain events like engine fires
- Few structured lessons or drills
- Volume control for voices resulted in unacceptable crackling on my system
- Sound quality of voice recordings could be improved

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Comments?

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