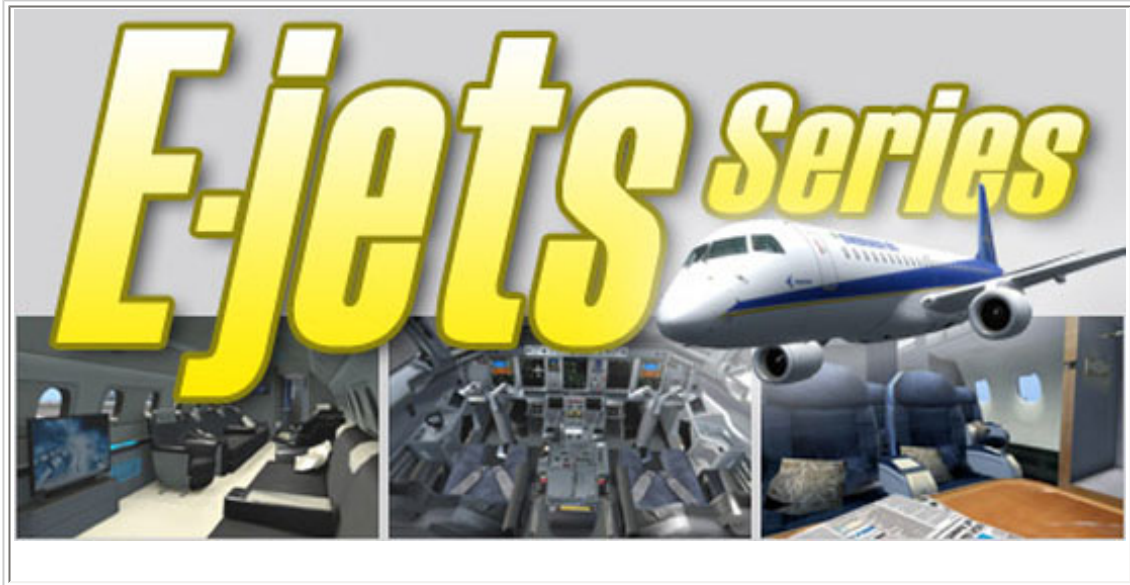


AVSIM Commercial Aircraft Review

Wilco *E-Jets Series*



Product Information

Publisher: [Wilco Publishing](#) (Developed by feelThere)

Description: Complex Aircraft add-on.

Download Size:
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Format:
Download

Simulation Type:
FS9 & FSX

Reviewed by: [David Rogers](#) AVSIM Staff Reviewer - August 22, 2008

Introduction

The Embraer E-Jet range was announced at the Paris airshow in 1999 and entered production in 2002. The E-Jets are narrow bodied, twin engined, medium range 'regional jets' comprising the E170, E175 and stretched E190 and E195 airliners. Seating capacities range from 78 to 118 in single class configurations (which is how most E-Jets are configured).

The E-Jets sit immediately above the Embraer ERJ145 range (which includes the shorter ERJ135 variants), and it's main competitors are the regional jet offerings from Bombardier (CRJ series), as well as the Dash 8-Q400 turbo-prop. The larger E-Jets such as the E190 arguably compete with smaller variants of the Boeing 737 and Airbus A320 series (namely the 737-600 and A318).

So what does a prospective airline buyer get for his money when considering the purchase of an E-Jet? Well, these aircraft are stacked full of state of the art avionics and systems. Whilst offering a high degree of safety, redundancy and operational features, the E-Jets are easy to operate on fast turnaround, short regional flights.

The E-Jets feature fly-by-wire technology, although not quite to the degree of sophistication as seen in the Airbus A32X and A34X and A38X series. (In the E-Jets, only selected flight control surfaces adopt Fly-By-Wire, while some are traditional pulley and wire systems, such as the Elevator). This 'FBW lite' approach was adopted to offer some of the benefits of FBW, while still balancing costs, to ensure the E-Jets remain competitively priced.

Ok, so unless you have a few tens of millions of dollars, pounds or euros burning a hole in your back pocket, you're probably going to be more interested in the virtual version of this range of airliners.

Although a few freeware and 'lite' payware versions of this range are available, Wilco has released what is currently the only complex, realistic simulation of this range of jets. Developed by feelThere, the 'E-Jets Series' features the E170, E190 and Lineage 1000 (a high end corporate jet, based on the E190).

The feelThere / Wilco partnership is well known in the flightsim community and releases over the last few years have included the 737 PIC, Airbus Series 1 / 2, The ERJ145, Legacy Jet, and the Citation X.

My own experience of feelThere-developed products is that they generally feature excellent, realistic systems coverage and are quite well modeled against their real world counterparts. However, I have also found that feelThere offerings can be rather buggy on release, (often in fundamental areas), although service packs are usually released quite quickly to address most serious areas.

It should also be noted that both feelThere and Wilco have something of a mixed reputation across the community in terms of customer support. Although I've not approached Wilco directly for support, I can say from my own experiences that in terms of feelThere, I have on occasions received helpful, prompt support. On other occasions I have been left feeling disappointed and frustrated at the attitude sometimes shown towards paying customers, by some support representatives on the feelThere forums. Every simmer has their own experience and customer support is difficult to judge objectively.

Anyway, back to the E-Jets.

Installation

Installation is, as per all Wilco products, straightforward and pain free. After purchase, you're given a download link and a product key. Download the software, run the installer, enter the key, and you're off. Great, that was a short chapter!

Documentation

Documentation consists of a couple of supporting PDFs and what is positioned as the 'manual'. The manuals for the last few Wilco releases have been written by Chip Barber. Chip writes in a very individual, light hearted style. He includes a high level of screen shots to help explain operation of these products. Unfortunately though, it would be difficult to describe these documents as 'user manuals' or 'operations handbooks' in the real senses of the words.

In effect, these documents (including that included with the E-Jets series) are more like detailed, thorough tutorials. They will walk you through a typical operation but will not provide detailed instructions on using all features of the aircraft. They tend to work well if you follow them as you would a tutorial but once you run your own flight, and depart from the exact scenarios and specifics of the tutorial, you could find yourself short on answers to your questions.

Without meaning to sound conceited, I have over 5,000 hours flying complex aircraft in FS, so I know my 'APU Bleeds' from my 'Hydraulic Pumps'. Thus, in FS, I can generally get a complex jet aircraft started, set up, and off the ground before I read the specifics in the manual.

The less experienced simmer who wants to operate the E-Jets in a realistic manner (ie. Avoiding CTRL+E to start engines) may well find it more difficult learning to operate these jets using the documentation provided.

Configuration

One of the things I like about feelThere add-ons is the inclusion of a 'Configurator' to help set up your aircraft before

flight. E-Jets Series comes with a Configurator that allows you to set passenger numbers for loading. There is also the ability to 'tune' the refresh rates of the displays in the aircraft, so that optimal frame rate performance can be balanced with the desire for nice visuals.

You can also set things like the aircraft state when it is loaded (Dark and Cold, etc) and there are other settings for things like Squawkbox 3 support (used when flying on-line) as well as other miscellaneous settings. Best of all, we have a fantastic set of assignable key commands. This is so important to a growing number of simmers.

Having assignable key commands means that you can assign a number of features either to your PC keyboard, or to a wide variety of available hardware devices that provide buttons and rotary knobs that can control your aircraft. For example, I use a Go-Flight RP-48 device as my autopilot. It has 8 buttons that I can assign to autopilot modes such as NAV, FL CH and VNAV, etc and (using FSUIPC) I can even assign the rotary knobs to control the Speed, Heading, Altitude and Vertical Speed knobs in the E-Jets.

This gives a huge boost in realism as compared to being tied to clicking everything with a mouse on the screen. Despite this usefulness, a number of developers continue to neglect to include assignable key commands in their otherwise excellent add-ons. (The recently released Captain Sim 757 Pro V2 being a good example). So top marks to feelThere as they are strong in this area – there really is a great range of available features that can be assigned to keys (and therefore buttons) in the E-Jets.

Enough talk already!as my American cousins would say. It's time to load up the sim and fly the E-Jets.

In the sim (which sim?)

Well, I use both FS2004 and FSX. There are things I like about each of them. In FS9, I get rock solid stability and smooth, fluid frame rate performance, even with all my settings maxed. In FSX, I get better visuals and better flight dynamics, especially regarding the effect of wind on the aircraft and the feeling of inertia. (FS2004 can sometimes feel a little like the aircraft are flying on rails, whereas FSX feels more like your forcing a big lump of metal through inherently unstable air, as it should be!).

Anyway, I am going to deliberately jump ahead in this review. Let's go 'back to the future' and imagine that I have already tested the E-Jets for 8 hours in FS2004 and 8 hours in FSX. Don't worry I will go into the detailed features and operation of these aircraft, but at this stage I want to say that the differences in enjoyment between the FS2004 and FSX versions were for me, flight levels apart.

In FS2004, I generally saw truly excellent frame rates, in all scenarios including complex weather settings, detailed add-on scenery, and lots of traffic. I saw great stability and operational accuracy of systems and functions.

In FSX, I could only achieve Frame Rates of 13-19 FPS (my personal benchmark for what is acceptable in simulating smooth, fluid flight is 20 FPS minimum) in fair weather and in plain, default scenery. I am using an older generation video card (albeit a fairly juicy Nvidia 7950 GT OC), so this may be connected with the issues I saw with performance of the E-Jets in FSX.

Unfortunately, my problems with E-Jets in FSX were not limited to frame rates. I also suffered persistent CTD (crash to desktop) errors, almost always during the approach phase of my flights. From a scan of a number of forums across the internet, I believe this problem stems from the E-Jet's Flight Management System (FMS) and how it copes with 'discontinuity' in a given flight plan.

My final issue with E-Jets in FSX is that I was unable to load a default FS flight plan into the FMS, as should be the case. Six out of the eight flight plans that I attempted to load resulted in a "cannot load flight plan" message on the FMS (two worked ok). All of the flight plans I was attempting to import were standard, created by the default FS Planner. The E-Jets FMS does allow the entering of a flight plan manually using waypoints and airways but doing it this way seems to link in with the earlier mentioned problem of the CTD when you reach (or sometimes try to clear) a discontinuity.

Now, clearly I have launched straight into some pretty fundamental problems and issues experienced here, but believe me: THIS IS NOT THE WHOLE STORY! ... so make sure you read on.

FSX is still a very difficult platform from both the developer's and users' perspectives. We have 3 different versions

(FSX RTM, FSX SP1 and FSX SP2). Ok, so nobody is using FSX RTM any more, but things seem split pretty evenly out there in terms of those who believe FSX SP1 is superior, versus those who are using the latest SP2 version.

This is a headache for users, but it's also a big headache for developers as each time the version changes, a new SDK (software developers key) is released. The SDK contains a number of 'rules' that must be adhered to for software to work in FSX, so you can imagine the problems caused by the rules changing.

FSX also seems prone to becoming a little messed up in terms of it's entry in the Windows registry too. (If FSX and the subsequent SPs are not installed in exactly the right manner). All of these problems mean that one person's experience of an add-on in FSX is tied closely to their installation experiences, and may wildly differ to the next person's experience.

With this in mind, the remainder of this review should be considered as a review of the E-Jets for FS2004. Sorry, I did not want to take this approach to this review but this is the position we are in as a flight simming community. I don't think anyone could have predicted that so many people would still be on the 'old' platform so long after the release of a 'current version' of FS. We are where we are.

The outside world

By this, of course we mean the exterior models. Now I'm not a rivet counter. My focus tends to be towards the functions, systems and flight dynamics of the aircraft but certainly from my perspective these are very good looking exterior models.

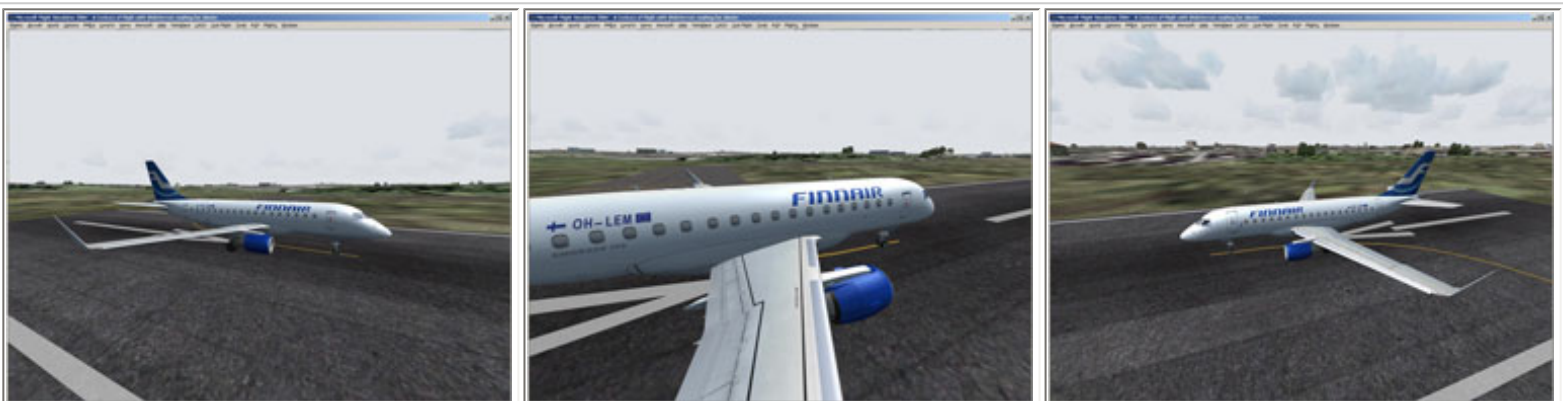
From the outside, these aircraft do not immediately strike you as regional jets. Unless your first glance is at the front (The E-Jets have the distinctive long, straight nose of an Embraer), you could be looking at a 737. Ok, it doesn't look like a 737 but the point I'm making is that the E-Jet's engines are mounted off the wings, whereas most aircraft in this category have fuselage-mounted engines.

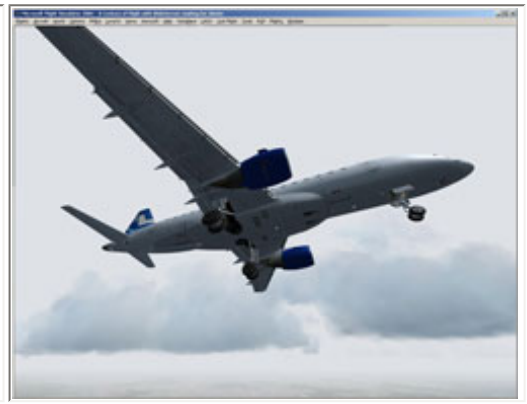
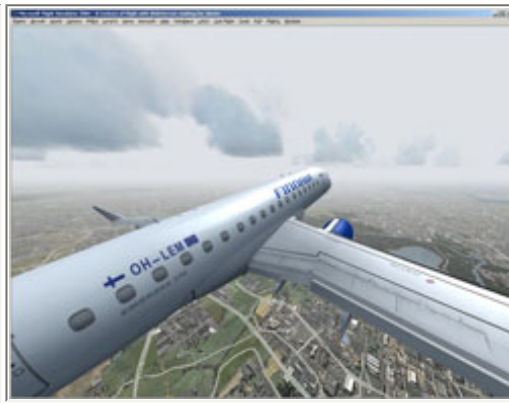
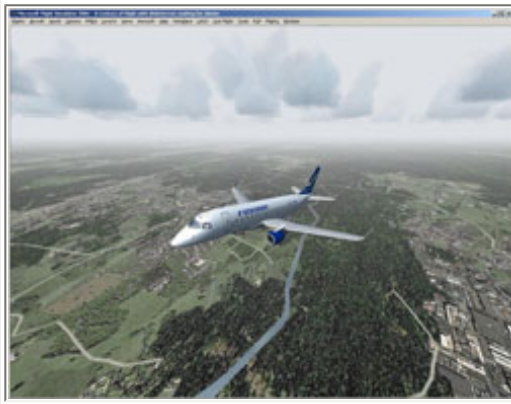
The level of detail of the models is not quite up to the likes of Captain Sim's exquisite exterior models but it is certainly level pegging with many other good models out there. Proportions all seem good and the aircraft looks particularly good from the outside during climb out.

When you purchase E-Jets, you can buy the standard package which gives you installers for FS2004 and FSX along with a fairly small but well covered selection of liveries. You can also buy the 'Airliner' pack, which is a huge collection of additional liveries painted my McPhat Studios.

In case you've not heard of McPhat or seen their work, they are THE premier aircraft painters in the FS world. Their liveries are simply stunning without exception. They can recreate the dirt and grime of real aircraft that is so often missing from FS models. My review copy of E-Jets did not include the McPhat airline pack, so the screen shots below are of the standard 'feelthere commissioned' liveries.

Since taking the screenshots and writing this review, I can honestly say that the McPhat liveries are so essential to this aircraft that I purchased them myself separately. All I can say is that if you are going to buy E-Jets series, you SHOULD buy the McPhat airliner pack too! The McPhat liveries take the E-Jets models to a different level.





In the 'pit

It's difficult for me to get excited about 2D panels these days because I just don't use them. I am lucky enough to have a TripleHead2Go device, which gives me 3 x 19" TFT monitors connected into one huge 3870x1024 resolution display, which believe me, really puts you IN the virtual cockpit.

I combine this with a Track IR device and together, well.... it's hard to imagine things getting any better in terms of immersion. Anyway, this equipment renders the use of 2D panels pretty much obsolete, so I will admit and apologize for the fact that this review will favour heavily towards flying from the VC. What I will say, is that feelThere have always made good 2D panels. Nice clear images and high quality artwork, and the E-Jets panels are consistent with this.

On loading up a flight in the E170 in FS2004, I was immediately impressed with what was in front of me in the virtual cockpit. The panel, glare shield and pedestal are all really crisp and this VC definitely seems like a marked higher level of quality compared to previous feelThere 'pits. (and most of those are quite impressive).



There is one thing that has always annoyed me about feelThere's VCs – they all have nice clear, crisp graphics on the main instrument panel, overhead and pedestal of the VC, but are always let down by the peripheral area graphics. What do I mean? the worst example is feelThere's Citation X stunning graphics on the main instrument panel in the VC but now turn to the left and look at the window pillars – yuk!

The window frame areas in most of the feelThere VCs look like they've been done by a 10-year-old on their first play with Photoshop. Ok, that sounds harsh, but this is a persistent weakness from this developer. Things aren't quite that bad in the E-Jets but there is a degree of the problem; the window frames and other aspects of the VC that sit to the left and right of the main instrument panel certainly aren't up to the quality of the rest of the cockpit.

One nice touch I immediately noticed was that I can click on the said yukky window frames and they open. So I can move them out of my view for a while, at least until we're ready to leave the gate!

One other thing that you immediately notice when entering the VC is the distinctive Embraer 'Bull Bar' yoke. The rendition in this model seems to have been improved since the feelThere ERJ145 and Legacy jet. It seems more crisp and detailed.

All in all, from a visual perspective (bearing in mind we haven't even switched on the Batteries yet), this is nice VC. I do notice that the viewpoint within the VC seems rather high but this is easily adjusted.



Cranking the handle

On initiating the systems (which in the E170 involves turning the Battery switches to ON and AUTO respectively), I immediately noticed some nice high quality ambient electrical noises. This is nice – gone are the days of those add-ons with absolutely no sound until you start the engines!

Next we start the APU so the aircraft can generate its own electrical and pneumatic power. Like the real Embraer, the feelThere E170 is easy to configure for engine start. The overhead panel uses a system where, for standard operation, all the lights on the overhead switches should be extinguished and all of the knobs should be pointing to 12 o'clock. This means that for some buttons, the light will emit when the function is 'on' whereas for other buttons, the light emits when the function is 'off'.

In practice just ensure all the lights are out and you know things are set correctly! Parking brake set and our NAV and BEACON lights set, it's time to start the engines. This is easy in the real E170 and in the feelThere depiction. The engine start sequence is automated, controlled by FADEC. We just need to flip up the plastic button guards, and rotate the Engine 1 start knob to 'Start'.

The engine knobs are the same as those in the ERJ145 and 135 / Legacy but in the real E-Jets they have been relocated to the pedestal. This works well in the simulated E170 too because you can turn the knob and immediately see the engine start sequence (N2, EGT, N1) on the Engine Indicating System screen, (which is close to the start switches). Again, my attention is drawn to the high quality sounds during the engine start process.

With both engines running, I shut down the APU and need to start thinking about configuring the E170 for flight. This involves setting up the Flight Management System via the CDU and the Mode Control Panel (ie the Autopilot / Flight Director system).

Setting up the FMS is reasonably straightforward if you have experience with these units from other add-ons, and particularly from the ERJ145 or Legacy. One issue I had is that Chip Barber's tutorial correctly states that you need to enter your present position into the unit. However, in his guide and on its screen prints, the system is already on the correct page where this is done.

On all of my flights, the FMS powers up on the 'RADIO' page, which is NOT where the present position is entered. Perhaps this has changed since the original release of E-Jets. (Current version at time of writing is 1.1 which includes an early Service Pack). A quick visit to the feelThere forum had this issue resolved by a friendly, fellow user.

So the present position is entered via GPS into the NAV page and the system will initialize. (It now knows where it is!). Next, the flight plan needs to be loaded by going to the FPL page. In the FS2004 version, the flight plan that is loaded into FS default planner can be loaded into the E-Jets FMS at the press of a button, and in my experience this worked perfectly and reliably every time.

In FSX, as previously mentioned, I could not get this function to work on most occasions. If you want to be very realistic, you can enter the flight plan manually by entering the origin airport, destination airport and en route waypoints. Again, in FS2004 this worked flawlessly for me, whereas in FSX, there was often problems when I tried to select my Arrival information (where the flight plan had been entered manually).

With the flight plan entered, we can now see it on the navigation display on the LCD screen to the left. To ensure the aircraft will follow this route when we press the 'NAV' mode of the autopilot, we need to press the 'FMS' button on the EFIS controller. (This switches NAV mode to LNAV mode, or from conventional radio based navigation to GPS based navigation via the FMS).

You'll see that the HSI is now displaying course deviation relative to our first waypoint in the FMS. Back to the FMS, we need to program some performance information. Here we enter aircraft weight, transition altitude and if we want we can, change the speeds and altitudes for each flight phase (ie. Climb, Cruise, Approach) that will be used by the aircraft if we fly in VNAV mode.

Next we set up the flight director. This is more complex in the E170 as compared to most jets as there is a seemingly endless list of modes that are used. For example, a Boeing 737 has a VNAV mode, the E170 has VNAV but also has 4 VNAV sub-modes all of which are annunciated separately on the PFD. Expect to see VARM (VNAV armed), VFLCH (VNAV flight level change), VASEL (VNAV altitude select) and VPATH (VNAV path). The E170 seems unnecessarily complex in this regard but to its credit, the feelThere E170 depicts this realistically and well.

On my initial flights with the E170, I was unable to get VNAV mode to engage in flight. The FMS would show a 'VNAV disconnect' whenever I tried this. This turned out to be because I was missing one step when programming the FMS. There are many people on the feelThere forum talking about problems that are not problems and bugs that are not bugs – this is an incredibly complex simulation and user error is a major factor.

You should not expect to get everything right the first time you fly this aircraft. The fact that such a complex aircraft comes with what can only be described as "lite documentation" aggravates this problem. Anyway, the VNAV function is one area that is difficult to master. Once you get it right, you can arm LNAV (easy) and VNAV and enjoy a highly automated flight experience.

With engines running, FMS and AP/FD systems set up for our flight, with flaps and trim set (an easy job thanks to the excellent amount of info featured across the various LCD screens in this glass beauty), we're almost ready for the off.

Before we depart, let's take a closer look at those screens. The E-Jets display a huge amount of information between these screens and representation of these in this feelThere model is excellent. Refresh rates are smooth and fast (tunable using the configurator). The real E170 has a number of screen modes that can be selected on the MFD using a small finger operated joystick on the pedestal.

For ease of use, feelThere has allowed access to these screens by simply clicking on the sub-screen title on the MFD. This is a fast and intuitive way of accessing the pages of info and certainly easier than twiddling a tiny little joystick with the mouse would have been!

One or two features are quite well hidden – for example, one of the aforementioned sub-screens of the MFD is for TCAS and various TCAS settings are adjusted there. However, I couldn't for the life of me find the button that actually switches the TCAS between its "Standby, TA and TA/RA" modes.

On my first few E170 flights I flew with no TCAS on because I couldn't find the mode button! This turned out to be set using the RADIO page on the FMS, so again a word of caution; read the 'manual' and also don't expect to get everything right first time. Go to the feelThere forum and patiently ask your question. If the moderators don't answer,

chances are you'll get help from one of the superb, helpful users that exist in our community.

Changing the 'Range' on the navigation display is also easy to miss. There is no range button. You need to click 'over' the range indicator in the navigation display, then scroll your mouse wheel to change the range. This was a bit fiddly. There may be another way to change the range, I just didn't find it.

Let's get the pointy end into the air

Before we take off, there's one last thing that can catch us out – the auto throttle system on the E-Jets is not like that on any other airliner. First, we need to click on the AT master button. Next, you must select either 'FMS' or 'Manual' on the Speed mode selector. Finally, you must either hit the appropriate click spot for the TO/GA mode or even better, assign a key and hit that.

In almost every other airliner, this would send the aircraft screaming down the runway with take-off power set. In the E-Jets however, this merely arms the AT and arms TO/GA mode. In all AutoThrottle-endowed Embraer aircraft, the throttle must be pushed fully forward to engage the auto throttle and TO/GA modes.

Whilst aircraft configuration for take-off may need some sharp focus in the E-Jets, take-off and climb out are simplicity incarnate. Push the throttles as far forward as they'll go and you're off. The E-Jets will set correct take-off power. They will even retard to Climb power automatically at the correct point, based on other flight parameters. If flown by the book, you won't be touching those throttles levers again until just before you land (or perhaps even just after you land!).

One thing I did notice during the race down the runway, is that the eye point level of the VC is very high. This is not to be confused with the eye point level within the VC, this is the apparent 'height' of the VC off the ground. It seems very high in the E170. Almost like you'd expect in a 747. One effect of this is that ground roll seems slower. 80kts feels more like 40kts and the feeling of inertia and rush of speed seems reduced.

As soon as I rotated the aircraft I was enjoying some WONDERFUL flight modeling. The Flight Dynamics Engine for this aircraft was built from the ground up by Rob Young. In case you haven't heard of Rob, he is THE guru of FS flight dynamics. If I mention RealAir simulations and the wonderful flight modeling of the RealAir SF260, Scout/Citabria, and Spitfire 2008 – well Rob is one half of RealAir simulations. (Sean Maloney being the other half).

When you see Rob's name on an add-on (RealAir or otherwise) you can be sure it is going to feel amazing to fly. He has the magical ability to translate numbers and code into something that just feels absolutely right. The E170 does not disappoint. It feels buttery smooth in flight and all axes of flight control feel really great.

If you're flying this bird by the book, your climb out should be in either FL CH (flight level change mode) or VNAV. In flight level change mode, the speed selector needs to be in the manual (not FMS) position. You can then dial in a speed and the aircraft will control pitch to maintain that speed, with the engine thrust fixed at N1. The autopilot mode annunciator correctly displays "SPD-E" which means that speed is being controlled by the (E)levator (ie..pitch axis) not engine thrust. Once level, the aircraft appropriately displays "SPD-T", indicating engine (T)hrust is now maintaining speed.

Remember that if you're intending to use VNAV, one of the conditions is that you should have the speed selector set to "FMS".

At this stage, things were going really nicely and I was thoroughly enjoying my flight in the feelThere E170 – then something horrible happened. Something that has plagued recent feelThere releases, which I was praying would not exist in the E-Jets.

The aircraft entered a turn (in LNAV mode) and the control yoke in the VC started jumping and twitching around violently!! This happens in the feelThere 737, the ERJ145, the Legacy and the Citation X. It is one of what I would call the "quality issues" that seem to persist from one feelThere release to the next.

The effect is truly awful and ruins the immersion and feeling of realism. The Yoke flicks around wildly like nothing that would occur in a real aircraft. It's clear to see that the yoke is in some way illustrating the complex 'thoughts' and individual movements that are required in order to manage the banked turn within the sim coding. However, all other aircraft add-ons, other than those from feelThere, manage to avoid this depiction being so visible on the yoke.

FeelThere – this has gone on long enough, when will you address this? I am not a programmer, but there must be a way of dampening the movement of the yoke in the VC so that this phenomenon does not occur during turns. I would personally rather see the yoke not move at all in the VC than see this behaviour.

Another serious issue, again with the banked turns, is the fact that the aircraft seems to bank to a severe angle (close to 45 degrees) and also seems to lose altitude (which the AP later has to recapture). This has been improved somewhat in the service pack 1 but autopilot turn behaviour still seems erratic and just not yet right.

The next negative issue I observed was that once in the cruise, the auto throttle was having a really hard time maintaining my speed. On reaching cruise altitude, the thrust level scaled back too far to around 55% N1. This led to the aircraft speed dropping too low, which then led to the N1 screaming back up to 90%. After around 10 minutes, the aircraft eventually settled at the correct engine thrust N1 that maintained my selected speed, but the process of achieving this was messy and unrealistic to say the least.

Although I have had problems with the FMS in some other feelThere aircraft, the E170 FMS (in the FS2004 version) proved reliable. I was able to select my arrival with no problems.

On this particular test flight, I decided to try an autoland. This is another area where a lot of lesser experienced users go to the feelThere forum because they can't get autoland to work. Setting this up on the E-Jets is actually quite easy; you just need to ensure that you enter the ILS frequency into both NAV1 and NAV2 fields on the RADIO page on the FMS. When you do this correctly, you will see the "Autoland disabled" annunciation disappear. During my ILS approach, the aircraft tracked the LOC and GS very accurately.

As I came over the runway threshold the word "Retard" correctly annunciated on the FMA, however the aircraft did not appear to flare at all and thus landed with a rather heavy 'slam' that I'm sure would have led to some disgruntled virtual passengers! I am 101% confident that autoland was correctly configured and all annunciations supported this. (Plus, the throttle retarded correctly in AT mode, on landing). So feelThere, can we have a slightly more noticeable flare please?

Wasn't there an E190 included in this add-on?

Well, yes, this product contains three aircraft; The E170 and the stretched E190 and Lineage 1000 business jet. You will notice that my review has heavily featured the E170. The reason for this is that, although the E-Jets package certainly does contain separate exterior models for the E190 and Lineage, those model currently contain an identical copy of the E170 virtual cockpit. Although these aircraft share a common type rating and are around 85% similar, there are differences. One example is the flaps – the E190 and Lineage have a different trailing edge flap configuration to the E170.

Therefore in operation, currently all of the feelThere E-Jets are the same, and hence my focus on the E170 equally applies to the E190 and Lineage. As I have said, you certainly do get different models and (rather nice) virtual cabins to investigate, but I do hope that feelThere will provide an update that gives a true E190 / Lineage virtual cockpit.

Summing up – is the jury still out?

On it's initial release, the E-Jets included a number of fundamental bugs and both the feelThere and AVSIM forums were hot with discussion and customers were complaining about these bugs. To be fair to Wilco and feelThere, a Service Pack was released within a couple of weeks which addressed some of the most serious bugs.

This is a difficult product to summarize at this stage, because whereas it does hold stunning potential, it also has some serious bugs, even in it's SP1 patched state.

The systems coverage in this advanced jet are stunning and second to none, and most of the flight experience in FS is really enjoyable. But as often happens with feelThere products, there are a couple of issues that really pull the enjoyment factor down.

The main examples of these in my testing of these products are the violently shaking yoke during turns and the autopilot and auto thrust behaviour in the cruise (sharp banks and an auto thrust system that struggles to maintain speed).



Test System

Notwithstanding my severe troubles with the FSX version of this aircraft, if feelThere could resolve these issues, this product has the potential to be a true classic, at very least on the FS2004 platform. It will certainly stay installed on my FS2004 hard drive and I will continue to enjoy operating it – I will just need to look away from the screen during those banked turns!

For those who enjoy complex aircraft simulations, this is definitely worth buying and provides a lot of fun. Just ensure you only expect 'perfection' in a few specific areas (sound, flight dynamics, overhead systems), rather than perfection overall.

As I completed the writing of this review, I was contacted by Wilco and informed that a second service pack – SP2 – will be released shortly. I hope that by the time you read this review, some of the issues that are currently detracting from an otherwise excellent add-on will have been addressed.

Intel Core 2 Due E6600
2GB DDR2 RAM
Nvidia GeForce 8800 GTS
640Mb
Logitech 120w Sound with
Woofers
20.1" TFT + 19" TFT
CH Yoke, Throttle Quad,
Pedals,
TrackIR3

Flying Time:
20 hours

What I Like About The E-Jets Series

- Stunning virtual cockpit environment.
- Good exterior models
- Thorough systems coverage.
- Realistic and enjoyable flight dynamics modeling.
- Wonderful sounds.
- McPhat liveries are delicious!
- Assignable Key commands – thank you!
- Configurator.

What I Don't Like About The E-Jets Series

- A number of bugs including violent shaking and twitching of yoke in VC, during turns.
- Bank angle still too steep on turns and is not realistic.
- Loss of altitude on turns is not realistic.
- Auto throttle struggles to maintain speed in cruise.
- E190 model contains E170 cockpit, which is not realistic.
- Issues with frame rate performance and FMS stability in FSX version.

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