

## AVSIM Commercial FS9/FSX/X-Plane Utility Review

# *Real Environment Xtreme v2 for FSX*



Product Information		
<b>Publishers:</b> <a href="#">Real Environment Xtreme</a>		
<b>Description:</b> a weather-influenced and high-definition texture environment add-on.		
<b>Download Size:</b> 3 GB	<b>Format:</b> Download	<b>Simulation Type:</b> FS9/FSX/X-Plane
<b>Reviewed by:</b> <a href="#">Aaron Graham</a> AVSIM Staff Reviewer - January 14, 2012		

### What is Real Environment Xtreme 2.0 (REX 2.0)?

Sometimes when you see something, you know it will be great before you use

it, and that is the feeling I had when I purchased REX! Now time to get reviewing. What is REX? I have seen many people ask that on the AVSIM Forums. The reason they ask is simply. The product is so huge and covers some many things that 'newbies' can be bewildered and confused.

Real Environment Xtreme is basically a complete graphics package for Microsoft Flight Simulator X. Anything to do with textures in FSX; you can bet REX will have it covered. It covers land textures, water textures, cloud textures, airport ground textures, sky colors, lighting effects and finally sun and lens flare textures and effects.

REX also includes a weather engine and flight planner. This is the only add-on you will ever need for FSX judging by its description (with the exception of scenery and aircraft). REX almost transforms FSX into a different simulator, graphical wise. I have also included an interview with a REX developer for your reading pleasure.

Test System
Intel Core 2 Quad Q8400 8GB RAM 1TB HDD NVIDIA GeForce 330 GT Windows 7 Home Premium 24" 1920x1080 Display
<b>Flying Time:</b>
54 hours

### Q1. What inspired you to create REX?

The idea started out as a study to see how far the textural and weather environment inside FSX could be taken. However, as we continued with the weather aspect, we came upon some shortcomings inside the FSX engine that posed many hurdles for us. It took much research and coding changes to make REX a success.

### Q2. Did you have to travel the world to take images of each cloud and ground texture?

Thankfully our team relied upon a professional photographer to supply all of the base imagery for REX. He has an extensive portfolio pertaining to weather and environmental subjects. He was commissioned to capture some of the ground imagery while we were hard at work digitally scanning the material from film. That's not to say we haven't used some of our own imagery taken from the team's previous travels, especially when it came to producing REX OverDrive.

### Q3. How many years did you spend developing REX?

From a code and technical standpoint, we spent about a year and half developing REX version 1. Then we spent about eight months developing REX version 2. From a texture creation standpoint we spent about two years developing and testing. Add another eleven months of development time to OverDrive, the free nine gigabyte add-on for REX.

### Q4. What would you market REX as and why?

We would market REX as your all-in-one tool for improvement of the Flight Simulator environment. It is a utility that greatly improves the visible environment with realistic textures and an embedded weather engine.

### Q5. Did you ever imagine it would be such a success?

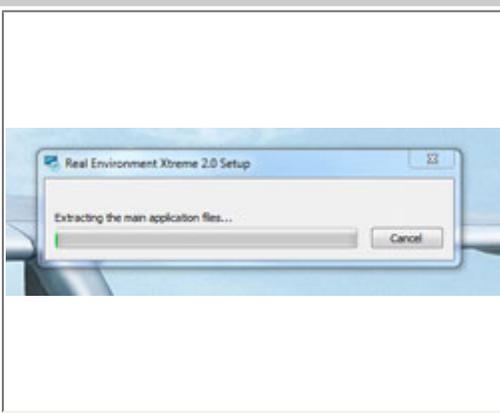
Frankly, we were not sure of how successful REX would be. We can only contribute that to the great support we have from our customers and the feedback that they give us.

Thank-you Reed Stough for taking part in this interview and best of luck with future endeavors.

## Installation and Documentation

Installation is a bit of a pain in that it takes an awful long time, but overall it is a breeze to install. Everything is simple and well explained. The installer will automatically detect your FSX location. The only thing I didn't like was the amount of time it took to install. I timed it at 18 minutes. I think its long installation time is more than justified by the fact that it is installing hundreds of different textures which are high definition. REX makes a small change to your .cfg file, it simply changes the texture\_max\_load to 4096, which has no frame rate impact.

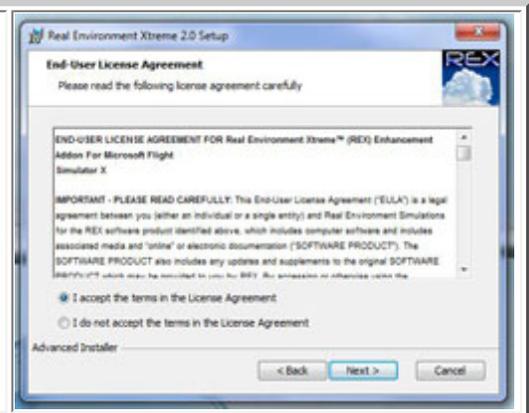
The documentation included is superb. It is one of the best manuals I have ever read, and I have read many. It tells you exactly how to use the product and answers any questions you may have. The documentation has a 'special' feeling to it which makes you read all 67 pages.



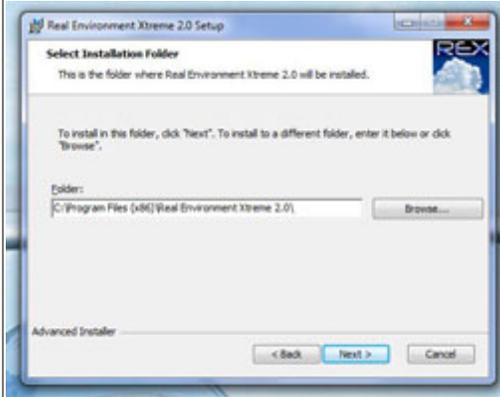
Extracting the Data .....



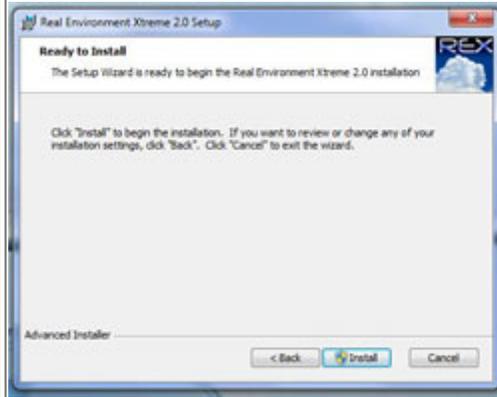
Start of the Installation



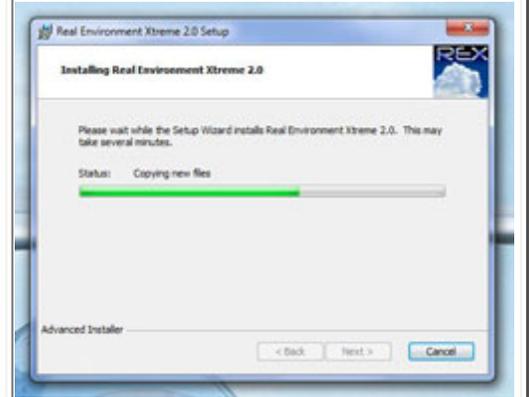
Read and accept the EULA



Detects your FSX location



Finalization Screen



Installation commences

## User Interface

The user interface is superb. It is extremely well designed and is logical. The REX interface is flawless. When you first launch REX it will attempt to find your .cfg file. You will also be presented with a configuration manager in which you can adjust the REX settings. This configuration automatically pops up upon the first run of REX and doesn't after that, although you can go back to it at a later date to change your settings. When you launch it you are presented with the following options:

- I Just want to Fly
- I like to create
- I want to follow a Flight Plan

I believe these basically describe themselves. I will start with the 'I want to fly' option. When you select it, it will ask you if you want to download real world weather and REX will select the textures for it. If you select yes and wait for the weather to download and the textures to load FSX will then automatically launch with everything configured. It is simply and easy to use. I did find one annoying thing about it in that it would often become unresponsive for 2-3 seconds when selecting an option of browsing through the textures.





**Cloud Textures**

The cloud textures are nothing short of spectacular. They are light years ahead of the default FSX cloud textures. They are crisp and sharp high definition photos of real clouds that have been edited to work in FSX. You could almost fool yourself into thinking you are looking at real clouds. That is how realistic they are.

There is a grand total of 57 different cloud textures/types for you to choose from. REX does not have actual 3D clouds as there is an FSX limitation which means that the clouds you see in FSX are just images rotated to the right angle to look 3D. There was nothing the REX team can do about this. I would buy this package just for the wonderful clouds.



Look at those wonderful clouds. Images 2, 3, and 4 are copyright to REX Game Studios and used with permission

**Water Textures**

The water textures will leave you speechless. In default FSX when you are close to the water, the water turns 'blocky' and somewhat pixelated. The REX team has managed to fix this issue by using higher resolution textures. There are water textures for tropical oceans, sea bay areas, coral reef simulations, stormy seas; the list just goes on and on. I wouldn't blame you if you couldn't decide which one to use.

All the water textures look beautiful and incredibly realistic. When flying transatlantic routes it is great to be able to look out of the virtual cockpit and look down at the life like ocean textures, and when you are flying more 'tropical' routes you will enjoy looking out at the spectacular light blue water. Flying into Ioannis Kapodistrias is a real treat with

the Aerosoft add-ons Corfu X and the REX cloud, sky color and water textures, it is as real as it gets.



### Sky Colors

This is an area you will love going into. There are many amazing color schemes from ones that are pure orange to the more natural orange/yellow/blue sunset. Some of the sunset textures make it seem as if a nuclear bomb just went off, although I am told you can experience those pure orange sunsets in some areas of the world.

The dawn textures are just as beautiful as the dusk textures. You can also use preset default ones which look just as good. A personal favorite of mine is the Arctic Chill as it is current winter in the Northern Hemisphere and it matches exactly what I see outside.

The daytime textures look just as suburb. For the Arctic Chill theme, the daytime textures are a pale 'washed out' blue instead of FSX's default bright blue textures. Once you have experienced these sky color enhancements you will never want to fly with the default sky textures again.



### Sun Textures

In this area I didn't notice as much as I did with all the other textural changes. The sun textures look fantastic and the lens flare is awesome but I never did find myself staring at the sun in FSX. To me the sun was always there but I didn't care what it looked like. Once I had chosen my REX sun textures things changed.

The sun looks so realistic. It looked like a sun, not a white circle which is what the FSX default sun looks like. You won't be disappointed and if you make flight simulation videos for YouTube is nice to have a good looking sun in the sky.

### Lighting System

The lighting system looks specular. It changes the entire default FSX lighting system. When it's dusk and you have an orange sky, there is an orange



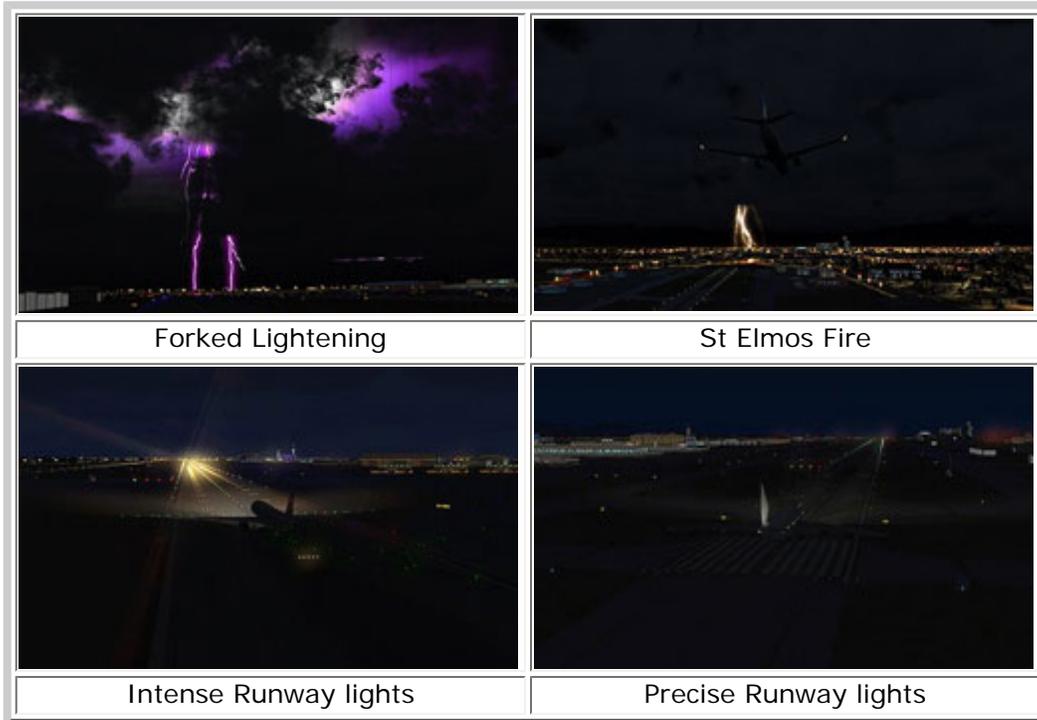
'tinge' to everything. Now it looks much more lifelike. On the topic of light, REX also includes lightning textures for different types of lightning. There are three textures for lightning.

The image says it all

Forked Lightning, Default Lightning, St Elmo's Fire

All the lightning types look fantastic. Some also look scary if you are flying at midnight when no one is around and the lights are out, then you hear this rubble and a huge flash in front of your aircraft, it can really set your heart racing.

There are seven different landing light textures, if that is even the right word. Some of the landing light textures are really intense and have a lot of bloom, while others are really precise with virtually no bloom or flare. There are different runway light textures in which some are precise while others are full of bloom and flare. There are also different aircraft strobe lights, some are soft some are intense. The possibilities are endless. You can customize the light system to your heart's content.



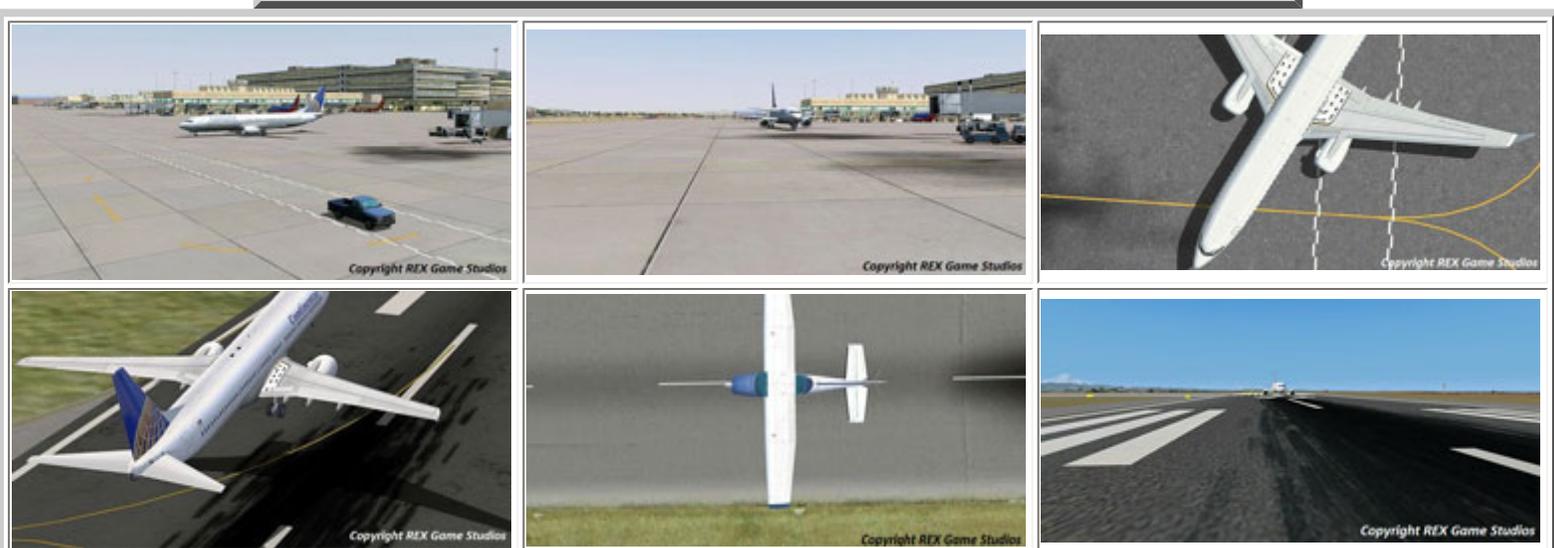
**Ground Textures**

This is an area that really makes you ask yourself, why do I purchase add-on runway textures when the ones in REX are light years ahead? The runway textures in REX can make a default airport look like an add-on airport if you do the runway and apron textures correctly, although the eagle eyed of you will notice that the buildings are the same and they haven't moved.

There are a total of twelve runway textures for asphalt strips and another thirteen for concrete runway strips. They all look suburb. Each one has a slightly darker or lighter shade of black/grey with different amounts of wear and tear and skid marks.

There are twenty six asphalt taxi/apron textures, each one a slightly different color with more or less cracks and wear and tear effects. There are twenty seven concrete taxi/apron textures. All of them look absolutely brilliant.





Ground textures are nothing short of amazing! Images copyright REX Game Studios used with permission

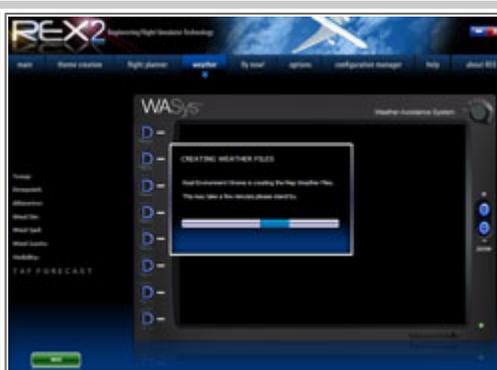
## Weather Engine

The weather engine is leaps and bounds ahead of the default FSX weather engine. I was very impressed with the REX weather engine, although I feel Active Sky's weather engine is superior when compared to the REX weather engine. It correctly simulated the weather I had outside at the time of writing this but it had the winds 12 knots too fast and when flying the PMDG Boeing 737NGX, I did encounter some sudden gusts where my aircraft's heading changed by 29 degrees. I also encountered some 'L' like winds which caused sudden changes in direction.

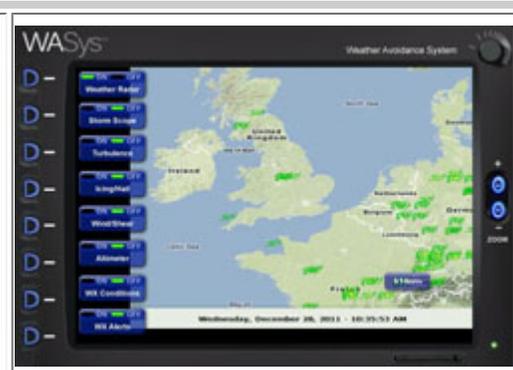
The REX weather engine also includes a 'weather radar' that runs outside of FSX. It is called the WX Avoidance System. REX also loads textures for the weather conditions. It did take some time for the weather avoidance system to load on several occasions.



Weather front end



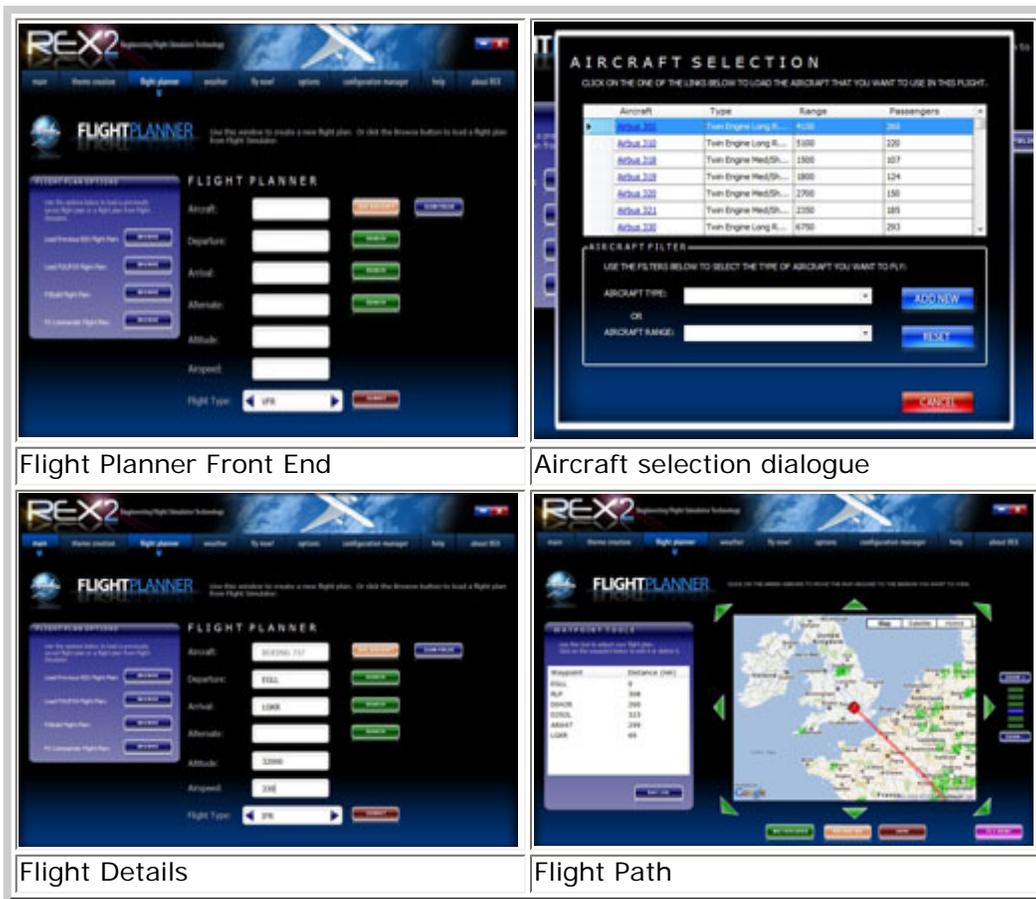
Wx Avoidance initializing



Wx Avoidance System

## Flight Planner

This is an area I never used, although I experimented with it because I am reviewing the product. The flight planner is good but for some reason I preferred the simplicity of the default FSX flight planner. I liked the customization options of the flight planner but many of my flights are ones which are time constrained and I didn't have time to make sure everything in the flight planner is filled in and setup correctly. If you have plenty of time before a flight, the Flight Planner is well worth using.



Flight Planner Front End

Aircraft selection dialogue

Flight Details

Flight Path

**Frame Rates**

I noticed no frame rate impact when using REX, even when using the high definition textures. The maximum amount of FPS loss I noticed, if any, was 4FPS compared to the FSX default textures. This is suburb considering how much it does. If your system can handle default FSX textures you will be able to use REX textures without any issues. I do not know how the developer managed to do it.

**Closing Remarks**

Well, what can I say? I am stunned by this product. It is a marvelous piece of programming that many graphical packages should aspire to. I feel it is the benchmark for which all graphics packages for FSX should be judged by.

With REX Essentials on the radar things are only going to get better, and it will be a free upgrade to REX 2 costumers. The only phrases I can use to describe this product are suburb, amazing and out of this world.

All FSX products have issues and this one is no exception, however REXs 'niggles' are so small you can forgive them and I am told that they will be fixed in REX Essentials, so this product will be "near perfect". If you are in doubt as to whether you should purchase it, just get it.

**What I Like About REX v2**

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- User Interface
- Manual
- Textures
- Sky color enhancements
- Unlimited mix and match environment combinations
- Real world weather feature
- Flight Planner
- Frame Rates
- Costumer Support/Technical Support

### **What I Don't Like About REX v2**

- User Interface can freeze
- Long texture loading times

### **Printing**

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### **Comments?**

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