

# FSInsider News

November 1, 2008

## Featured Articles

"That's the Spirit!"

"A Free Gift from FSInsider and Just Flight! "

"Old-Fashioned Navigation"

"Mission Building in FSX - Parts 3 and 4"

## FSX: Acceleration!

*Flight Simulator X: Acceleration* adds Red Bull and Reno-style multiplayer air racing, an AgustaWestland EH101 helicopter, F/A-18 aircraft carrier operations, and 30+ more missions to *Flight Simulator X*.



Take an [interactive tour](#), then get a copy today at your favorite retailer. Or ...

## From the Editor

by Hal Bryan

Flight Simulator Community Evangelist



It's Halloween!

Well, maybe not *exactly* Halloween, but it's that Halloween-ish time of the year, anyway—a time of tricks and treats. Last month's issue brought a pretty nice treat—a [free Cessna 152 add-on](#) for FSX from Just Flight—so we decided that this issue would bring a few tricks.

### Ghostly Panels

One of the harder things about re-creating reality in software is the challenge of cramming said reality into a (usually) single computer monitor of limited size. This limitation is one of the reasons we have so many different views, the ability to pan and zoom, etc. But there's one feature here that a lot of customers we talk to don't seem to know about—the ability to adjust the transparency of any 2D panel. This lets you fade the panel so that you can see right through it, while still being able to read the instruments.

**Buy it online now!**

## Want to work with us?

You can read about current openings on the [Microsoft Careers Web site](#). Help us create the next version of one of the most successful franchises in the history of entertainment software!

## Train Simulator anyone?

If you didn't hear, we're also hard at work on *Train Simulator 2*. As development continues, [TSInsider.com](#) will be your official source for information, news, and a look behind the scenes.



To make sure you stay informed about *that* project, you can subscribe to [TSInsider News](#).

## Miss an issue?



The most straightforward way to do this is to open the Display Settings dialog, then adjust the 2D panel transparency slider on the Aircraft tab. However, you can also do this "on the fly," as it were, by pressing **CTRL+SHIFT+T**, then using the **+** and **-** (plus and minus) keys to the left of **Backspace**, to fade the panel in and out. Those of you that use the Tower Controller feature in multiplayer will find that this is a great way to overlay the radar screen on top of the 3D cab view for the best of both worlds at the same time.

### Hocus Focus

The trick above uses the **+** and **-** keys, which most of you realize are used most frequently for zooming in and out in a particular view. You might have also found times when they do something unexpected, or don't seem to work at all. This is usually a problem with what's called "focus." In general Windows parlance, the window or control (say, a text box on a Web form) that is currently active is said to have the focus. In most cases, you give something the focus by clicking on it with your mouse. In Flight Simulator, that's the trick to making sure that the **+** and **-** keys zoom your view—clicking on the view window before using them.

If you've missed previous issues of the FSInsider Newsletter, not to worry. They're archived on the FSInsider site as .pdf files suitable for download, printing, reading and/or framing. Just click the link at the bottom of the [newsletter sign-up page](#).

## Tell a friend

Do you enjoy receiving this newsletter each month? Share your joy and [tell a friend](#).

## Feedback

We want to know what you think! If you have questions, concerns, feedback, ideas, hopes, fears, doubts ... or just want to say hello, [here's how to get in touch with us](#).

However, as you've seen, those keys can be used to modify a number of different commands that might have the focus, based on what key or keys were pressed immediately prior. In addition to panel transparency, the **+** and **-** keys can adjust the simulation rate when used after pressing the **R** key, they can tune your Comm 1 radio after pressing the **C** key, your transponder after pressing **T**, and will even cycle magnetos after pressing **M**. And these are just a few examples of many.

The keyboard can be a quick and powerful tool for virtual pilots, as long as you stay aware of where your commands are actually going. Remember that the full list of commands is available on the Kneeboard (press **SHIFT+F10**).

## Who's Flying This Thing, Anyway?

A lot of customers send us feedback or call for support when they run into situations where their joystick simply stops working while they're flying. A lot of them will go to great lengths to troubleshoot the problem by recalibrating their controller in Windows, trying different hardware, and in some cases removing and reinstalling Flight Simulator or even the entire operating system! In my reasonable-sounding-but-ultimately baseless estimation, somewhere around 80% of these cases can be solved by simply pressing the **Z** key. For those that don't know, **Z** is the default on-off toggle command for the autopilot in those aircraft so equipped.



It's surprisingly easy to hit it once by accident, turning on the autopilot, at which point the aircraft no longer pays much attention to what you're telling it to do. So if you ever run into this situation where it seems as if your airplane has a mind of its own, press **Z**! If you hear a beep, that means the autopilot was on, and you've just turned it off.

In a similar vein, one of the most frequently asked questions we get by email comes from people having trouble flying the "Quito Approach" mission. The trouble is almost always the same: they can't land because they're going too fast. In this case, they've disconnected the autopilot at the appropriate time, but aren't aware that, in the 747, the autothrottle is separate from the autopilot and needs to be disengaged separately. In this case, the default key command is **SHIFT+R**, or you can just click the "A/T" button at the top left of the 747's mode control panel.

### **Mysterious Missions**

Speaking of mysterious things occurring in missions, some of the mystery was intended. Our designers try to make every aspect of Flight Simulator as realistic as possible and while many of the missions are truly "As

Real As It Gets," some of them admittedly push the envelope a bit. If you're a hard-core realist, you can take solace in the fact that all missions are optional, and that even real-world pilots occasionally have some out of the ordinary experiences! For a taste of the ghost in the machine, try these missions:

- Tokyo Executive Transport (FSX)
- Lost in the Triangle (FSX)
- Secret Shuttle (FSX)
- Antenna Package (Acceleration)
- High Altitude Intercept (Acceleration)
- Secret Island Race (Acceleration)

### **The Case of the Missing Shortcut**

Another common customer question comes from people who install Flight Simulator X on Windows Vista but can only run it that first time, since once they shut it down, they can't find any way to launch it again. I've talked to some customers who have actually gone so far as to reinstall FSX every time they wanted to use it! This happens with all Games for Windows titles, not just Flight Simulator, and enough customers are initially stumped by it that we've published a support article that addresses it. Here's an excerpt:

"When you install Games for Windows on Windows Vista, the shortcuts to the games are located in the Games Explorer folder. The Games Explorer folder is the central location for all the games on the computer. In the Games Explorer folder, you can find and open the games that are installed on the computer, download game information, and keep track of the games that you have played most recently."

Something to keep in mind if you or someone you know

installs FSX on Vista, and wonders why the FSX shortcut seems to have vanished into the ether!

*Note:* You can very quickly add the FSX shortcut to your Start Menu by launching the Vista Games Explorer, right-clicking the icon, and choosing **Pin to Start Menu**. You can also use this menu to add it to your Quick Launch bar or your desktop by choosing **Copy** then right-clicking the desktop and choosing **Paste**.

### **Boo**

Presumably though, you already know how to launch Flight Simulator, and you've been exploring it for a good long while. Have you come across any mysteries (for better or for worse) of your own? Feel free to [share](#) them with us. It's a big world that we simulate, so in spite of our protestations to the contrary, we really don't know it all.

Well, the sugar high from the spoils of this year's trick-or-treating is wearing off, and my Batman tights are making my legs go numb, so I'll wrap this issue up.

Happy Hal-loween,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Hall', written in a cursive style.