Fall 2008

Editor's Forum

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EDITOR'S FORUM

Welcome to the fall edition of the editor's forum for 2008. Again we begin another academic year with high expectations for the world of aviation and aerospace education and research. In this edition of the *JAAER* we have two forum articles that I am sure you will find informative and interesting.

The first forum comes to us from Angela Olson. Her writing "Challenges and Opportunities in Recruiting Middle School Students into Aviation Careers", addresses two pertinent questions that arise when discussing when young people should become interested in careers in aviation like: When is the right time to start mentoring young adults to numerous career opportunities in aviation and how should this be accomplished?

Angela deems it the responsibility of the professional aviation educators to engage the youth prior to high school in preparing themselves for such a career. Her article reveals the research done in this area. It also addresses the need to market aviations careers and the importance of public display and education to put a positive light on aviation as more often we are faced with the negativity portrayed in the media. Many other factors play into the negative image our industry faces on a daily basis.

I agree that we all must get involved to recruit, at an early age, prospective aviation professionals. We then must do all we can to retain the best and brightest to carry aviation into the future. What to you think? Are you doing all you can in this area? Let the *JAAER* know your techniques for assisting young people in getting interested in aviation and aerospace.

The second forum is submitted from Nickolas "Dan" Macchiarella and Christian Meigs. Entitled "Virtual Air Traffic Flight Training Device Automated Air Traffic Control", their recent study of Flight Training Device (FTD) use revealed possibilities for improving the training environment for ab initio pilots. The improvement they propose is the design, development, and application of Virtual Air Traffic (VAT) functionality. VAT will use voice recognition technology linked to semiautonomous and autonomous virtual air traffic integrated into the FTDs virtual environment. The idea is that virtual aircraft and controllers will communicate via the radio functionality. The desired outcome of using VAT during training is to better prepare student pilots to function in flight while minimizing the need for actual airplane flight training.

I think you will find their research very interesting and the idea will certainly benefit flight training while reducing the risks of actual flight. They feel the integration of VAT into the FTD training environment has the potential to increase the behavioral fidelity to a level that mirrors the real world. I agree that this technology will have significant benefits. Could this technology help your training program?

I am confident you will enjoy and be informed with our forum articles in this issue. Let the *JAAER* be your conduit to a more informed world of aviation and aerospace!

Fly Safe.

Bill Kohlruss
Editor