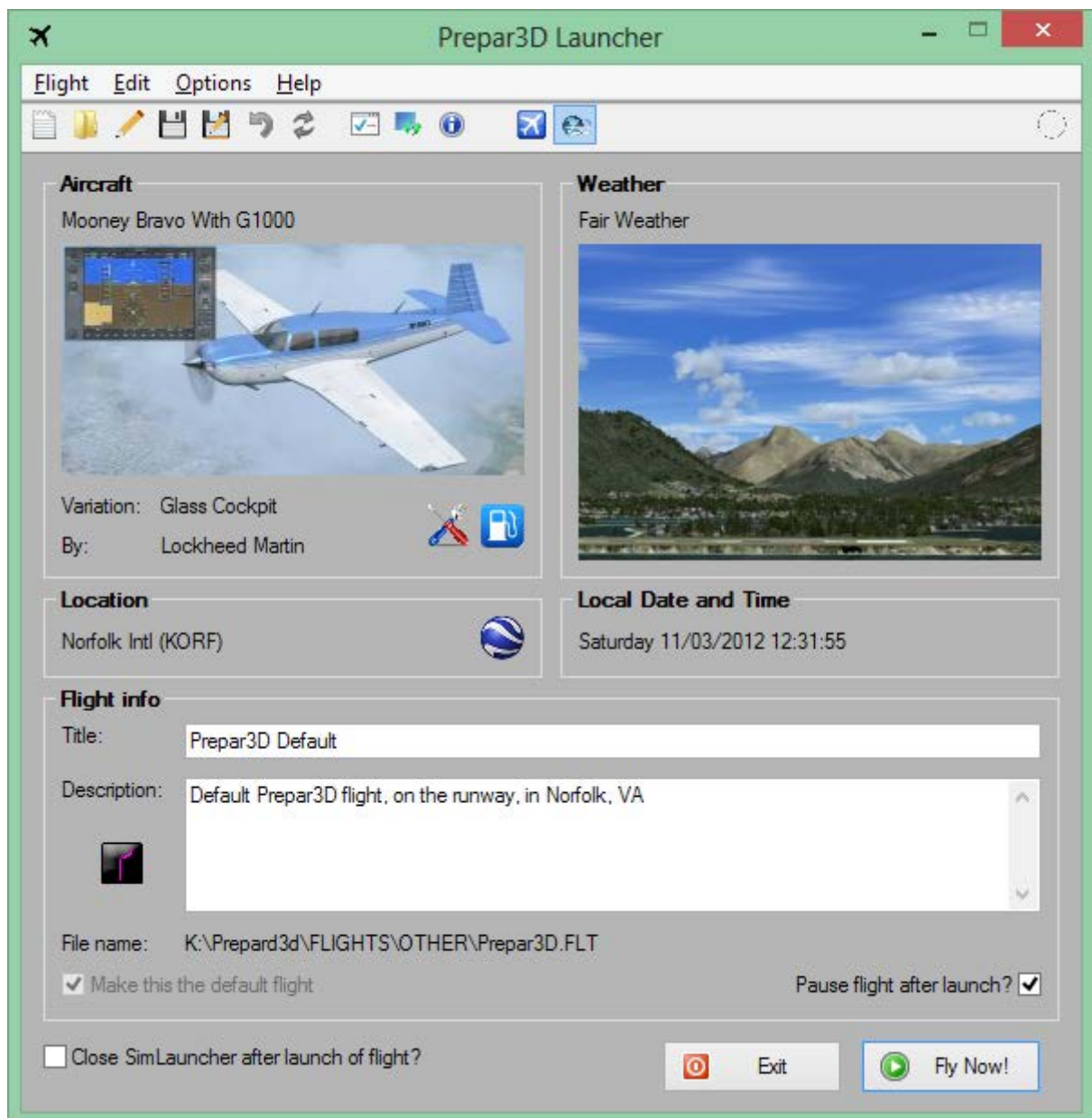


SimLauncher

V5.3



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1 Introduction

This application can be used as a launcher application for both FSX and Prepar3D. Flights can be loaded before launching the simulator or when the simulator is already running. New flight files can be created by selecting one of the installed aircraft, selecting the start location (runway or parking position), selecting the type of weather and the time of day.

The application is freeware and can be redistributed as long as the original SimLauncher.zip file remains intact and as long as you give me some credit.

If you find this application useful, please consider donating to your local animal shelter or to the World Society for the Protection of Animals:



www.wsipa-international.org

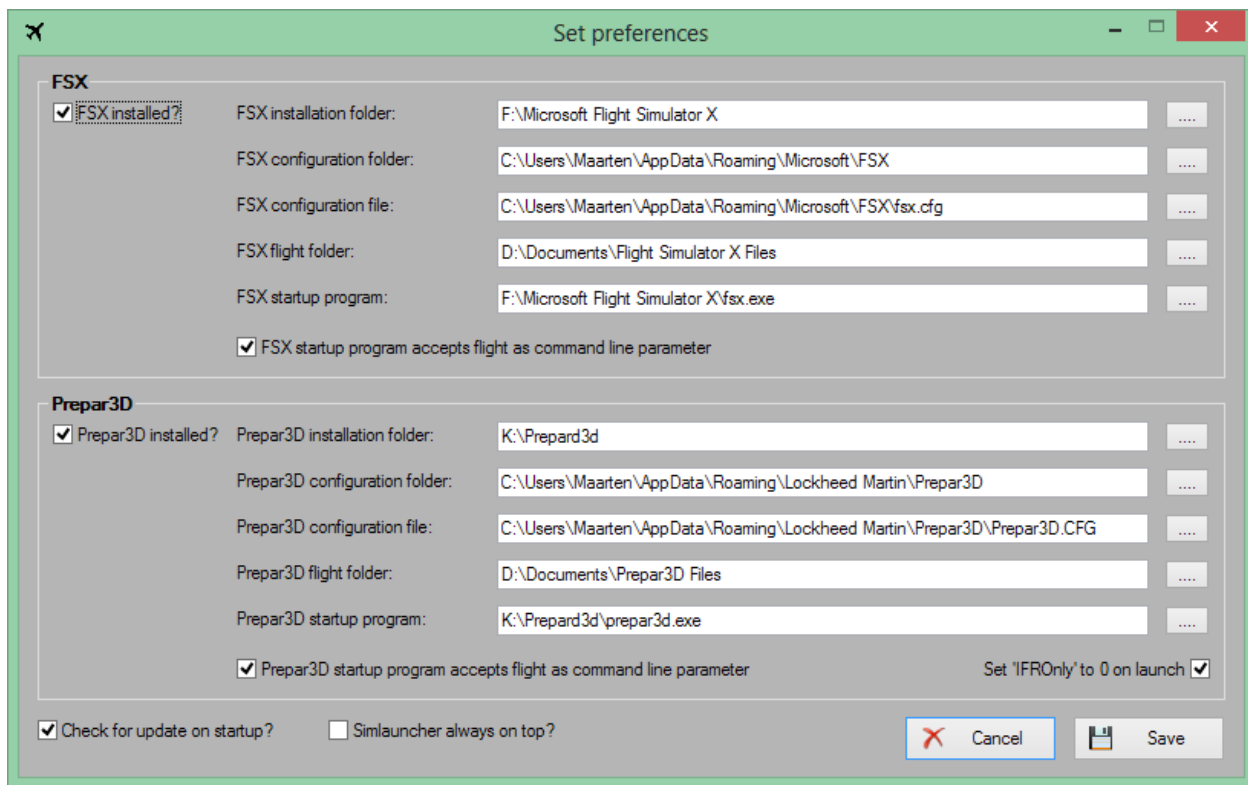
For the full license agreement see the included license.txt file.

2 Installation

Run the included install.exe application and follow the instructions. It is advised not to install in the Program Files or the Program Files (x86) folder due to the special access rules for these folders.

Before running the application, make sure you have installed and run the [makerwys.exe](#) application (version 4.6.1.4 or later) by Pete Dowson in your simulator folder(s). This will create the runways.xml, g5.csv and f5.csv files that contain the information on installed airports, runways, gates and frequencies that this application needs. If you use several scenery.cfg files that each serves a different simulator configuration, please make sure that you have a scenery.cfg file active (C:\ProgramData\Lockheed Martin\Prepar3D\scenery.cfg or C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\FSX\scenery.cfg) that contains all of your installed sceneries before you run the makerwys program.

When you first run this application, you will be presented with the following dialog box:



The initial values for the FSX/Prepar3D installation folders are read from the Windows registry. You need to specify the folder into which your simulator is installed and what program will be used to launch your simulator (can be anything). You can include command line parameters to be passed to your startup program; if these command line parameters contain any spaces, enclose them in double quotes; /min can be used as a command line parameter to launch the startup program minimised.¹

If your startup program does not accept “-flt:(name of flight).flt” as a command line parameter (e.g. FPS Limiter) the flight cannot be send across to the simulator, unless you uncheck the ‘FSX/Prepar3D startup program accepts flight as command line parameter’. In that case the simulator will be started first, and when detected running, the flight will be send across.

The settings for the configuration files and folders are meant to be used when SimLauncher is not installed on the same machine as the simulator or when you startup the simulator with an alternate .cfg file (using the “-cfg:.” command line switch). The flight folder is the default folder to load and save flights from and to.

If you uncheck the ‘... startup program accepts flight as command line parameter’, the simulator is launched first and when detected running (with a timeout of 3 minutes) the flight will be sent across. This is to support startup programs that do not accept command line parameters (like e.g. FPS Limiter).

Prepar3D version 1.4 contains a bug where the IFROnly setting in Prepar3D.cfg will be set to xxxxx e.g. after you change the display settings. This will cause VFR AI flights to not show up. If you check the “Set ‘IFROnly’ to 0 on launch”, then on every launch of a flight this setting will be reset to 0. You can also reset this setting back to 0 on demand via the Options menu.

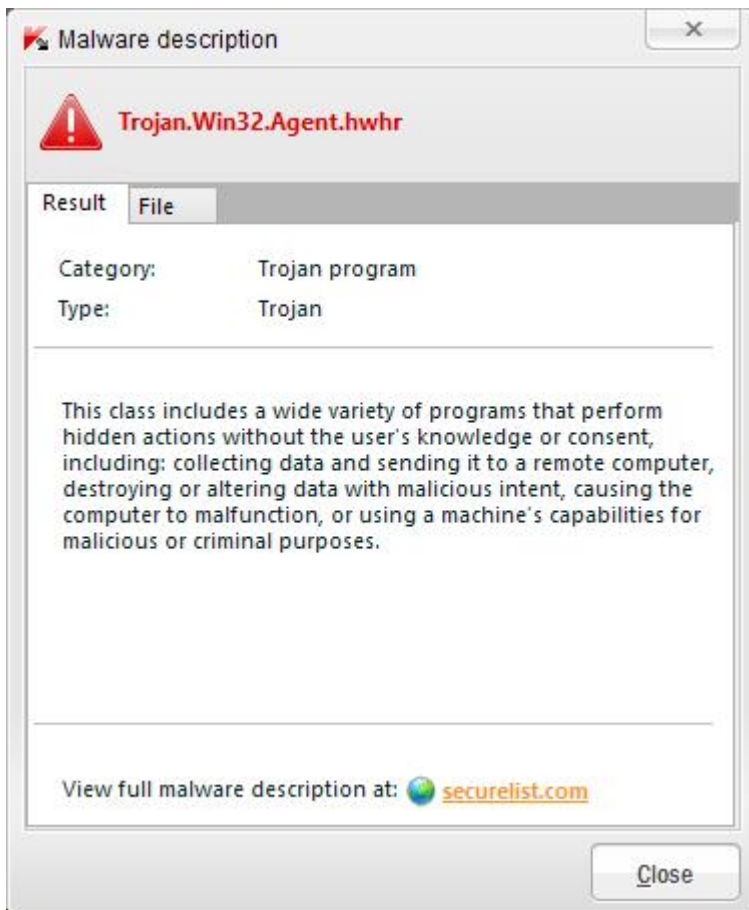
Of course you need to have either Microsoft Flight Simulator® 10 (FSX) or Prepar3D® (or both) installed for this application to run. The application can check for an update (both on startup and by selecting ‘Check for update’ from the Help menu). After you have specified the required folders and startup programs, the application will restart.

3 Virus warning

¹ Please note that “-flt:(name of flight).flt” will be inserted as the first command line parameter when you launch the startup program.

20121103:

Please note: Kaspersky Antivirus will detect the following virus: **Trojan.Win32.Agent.hwahr**



This is definitely a false positive due the Url.exe helper program. Url.exe is used to asynchronously download metar data from weather.noaa.gov and aviationweather.gov; to contact ourairpot.com and to retrieve update information from my site: www.maartenboelens.nl Kaspersky thinks it is a trojan because I'm downloading things from the internet without you knowing about it. It is completely harmless however!

Here's the source code of Url.exe:

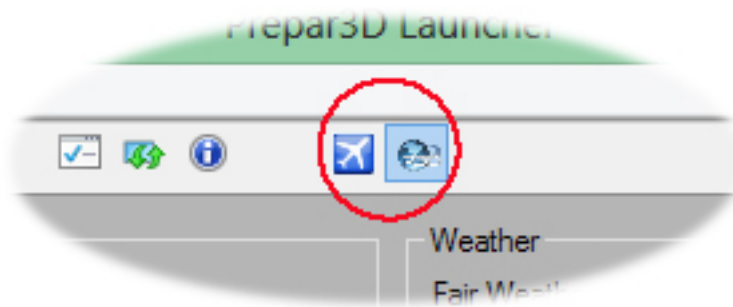
```
UrlDownloadToFile, %1%, %A_Temp%\tempurl.txt
exitapp
```

It's an Autohotkey script. You can monitor you temp folder and you will find that a tempurl.txt file is created with info from sites mentioned above. The SimLauncher.log file contains all of the url requests for you to check. The url.exe helper program is needed in order to set a timeout on url requests. Without it, you would sometimes have to wait a long time if one of the above sites is slow or unreachable.

Please exclude the whole installation folder from Kasperky's virusscanning.

4 Main window

If you have Prepar3D installed or both FSX and Prepar3D the application will initially start as 'Prepar3D Launcher'. If you have only Prepar3D installed the application will start as 'Prepar3D Laucher'. If you have both FSX and Prepar3D installed you can switch between simulators with the icons on the toolbar:

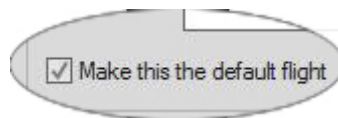


or by choosing FSX Launcher or P3D Launcher from the Options menu. If you switch to another simulator the application will restart. Your choice of simulator will be remembered the next time you start the application. If you have only one simulator installed, neither the menu entries nor the toolbar icons will be shown.

The location shown is the closest airport within a range of 25km from the GPS-location specified in the flight file. If no airport can be found within this range, the GPS-location will be shown. If the loaded flight has the aircraft moving, an asterisks (*) will be shown next to the airport/GPS-location; if the aircraft is in the air i.s.o. on the ground, two asterisks (**) will be shown.

The title of the flight and the description can be changed and saved to disk.

If you want to change the default flight for the simulator, load the flight you want to make the default and put a checkmark in the box next to 'Make this the default flight' in the bottom left hand corner of the window:



If you created a new flight that you want to make the default, you first need to save this new flight to disk. If you have changed the default flight but made a mistake, you can uncheck this checkbox and the previous default flight will be selected as default flight again.

The default flight cannot be changed when the Simulator is running.

5 Load a flight

Select "Flight|Load..." from the menu, click on the 'load flight' icon on the toolbar or press Ctrl+O and you will be presented with a standard Windows dialog box to select a flight (.flt) file.

You can always revert back to the default flight for the respective simulator by clicking the 'Reset to default flight' icon on the toolbar or selecting 'Flight|Reset to default flight' from the menu.

6 Save a flight

Select "Flight|Save..." or "Flight|Save as..." from the menu, click on the 'save flight'/'save flight as' icon on the toolbar or press Ctrl+S/Ctrl+Alt+S and your flight will be saved with the new title and the new description.

If you created a new flight, only "Flight|Save as..." will be available. You do not need to enter the .flt extension, this will be added automatically.

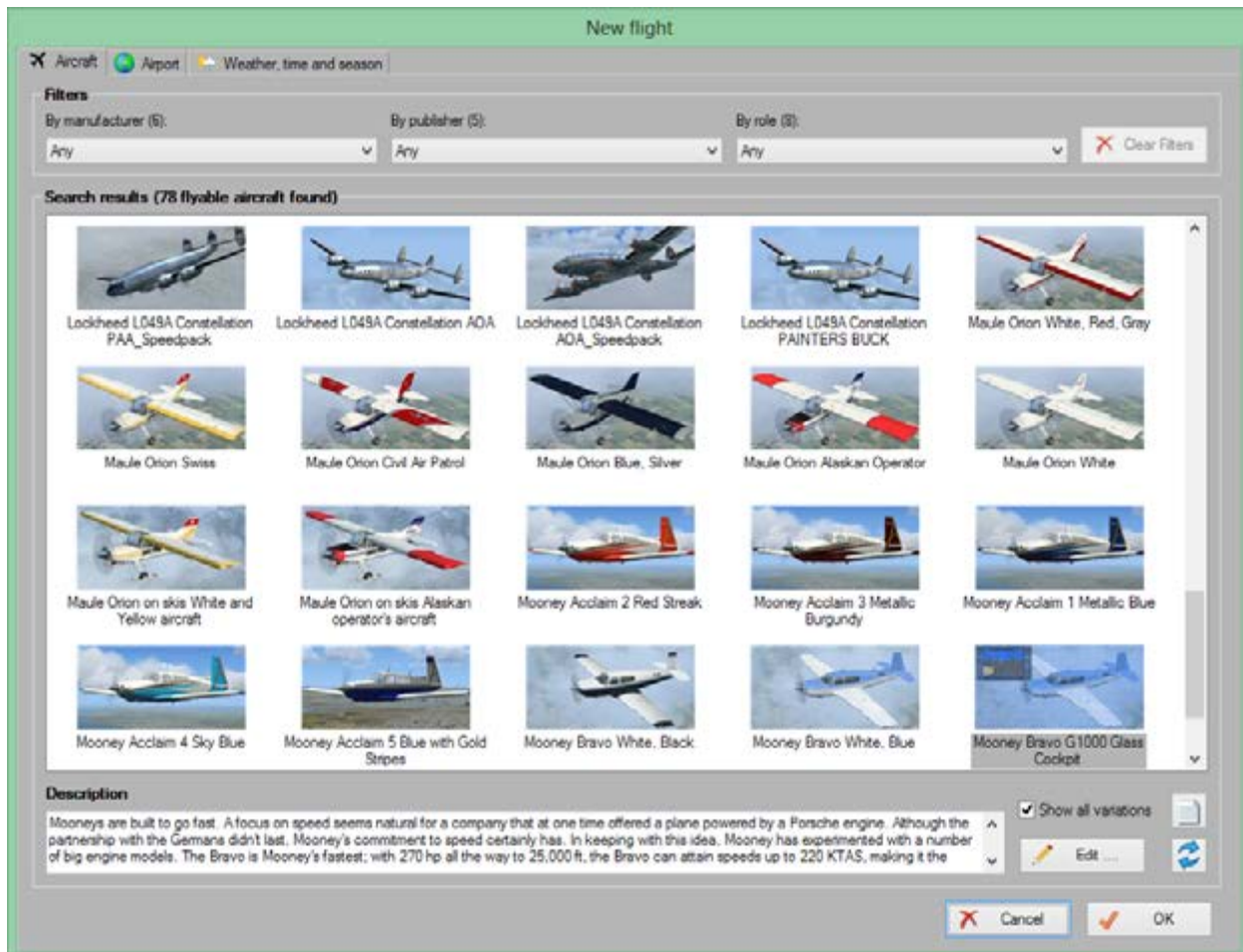
7 Create a flight

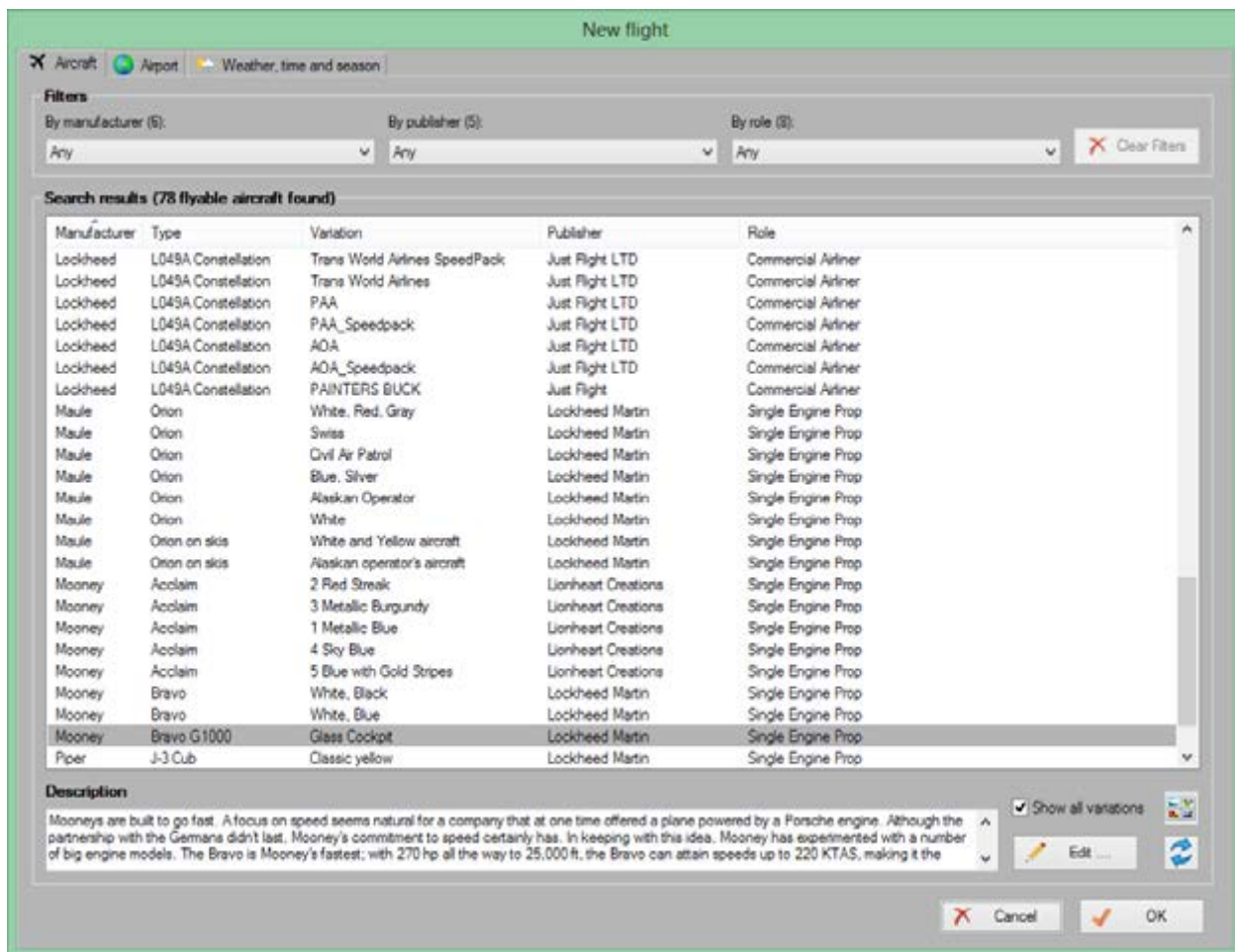
You can create a new flight by selecting “Flight|New...” from the menu, by clicking on the “Create new flight” icon on the toolbar or by pressing Ctrl+N.

7.1 Select aircraft

The initial aircraft selected, will be the aircraft of the currently selected flight.

You can filter the list of aircraft by manufacturer, publisher or role. There is a check box in the bottom right hand corner that will toggle between showing all variations of the aircraft or just showing the first variation of each aircraft. Next to the ‘show all variations’ check box is a small button that will toggle between an icon view or a list view of the installed aircraft:





Click on 'Edit ...', the following window with aircraft details will be shown:

Aircraft details

Mooney Bravo With G1000

Manufacturer: Mooney

Type: Bravo G1000

Variation: Glass Cockpit

Publisher: Lockheed Martin

Role: Single Engine Prop


Description: Mooneys are built to go fast. A focus on speed seems natural for a company that at one time offered a plane powered by a Porsche engine. Although the partnership with the Germans didn't last, Mooney's commitment to speed certainly has. In

Cruise speed: 180.0 kts

Wing span: 36.10 ft; 11.00 m

Engine type: piston

Empty weight: 2189.00 Max. gross weight: 3368.00



ATC

Tailnumber: N1000B

Show tailnumber? ☐

Airline callsign:

Flightnumber:

Heavy? ☐

Parking types:

Parking codes:

Performance
 Reference
 Checklist

Maximum Speed
220 kts 253 mph 407 kmh

Cruise Speed
195 kts 224 mph 361 kmh

Engine
Textron Lycoming TIO-540-AF1B 270 hp

Propeller
Three-bladed McCauley constant speed

Maximum Range
1,050 nm 1,204 sm 1,945 km

Service Ceiling
25,000 ft 7,620 m

Cancel
 Save

Most of the details of the aircraft can be edited and saved.

If you change aircraft details through other means while this application is running, you can reload all aircraft from disk by clicking on the small 'reload from disk' button next to the 'Edit ...' button.

Any errors found while scanning the aircraft installed in your simulator, are logged in the SimLauncher.log file in the application folder.

7.2 Select runway/parking position

The initial airport selected is the closed airport within a range of 25km from the GPS-location specified in the currently selected flight (if no airport can be found within that range, the first airport in the list, sorted by ICAO-id, will be selected: usually 00AL: Epps Airpark, Harvest, Alabama).

You can search by airport name, ICAO-id or by city and filter the list of airports by country, state/province or by city:

New flight

Aircraft

Airport

Weather, time and season

Search airports

By airport name

By airport ID: eham

By city:

Filters

By contry/region (223): Any

By state/province (55): Any

By city (15769): Any

Clear Filters

Search results (24493 airports found)

Name	ID	City	State	Country
Schiphol	EHAM	Amsterdam		Netherlands
Budel	EHBD	Weert		Netherlands
Maastricht-Aachen	EBHK	Maastricht		Netherlands
Deelen AB	EHDL	Amhem		Netherlands
Drachten	EHDR	Drachten		Netherlands
Eindhoven AB	EHEH	Eindhoven		Netherlands
Eelde	EHGG	Groningen		Netherlands
Gilze-Rijen AB	EHGR	Gilze-Rijen		Netherlands
Hoogeveen	EHHO	Hoogeveen		Netherlands
Hilversum	EHHV	Hilversum		Netherlands

Runways

RW	Length	Hdg	Type	ILS Freq.	ILS Hdg
04	6619 ft	43	Asphalt		
06	11430 ft	59	Asphalt	110.55	59
09	11303 ft	88	Asphalt		
18C	10812 ft	185	Asphalt	109.50	185
18L	11134 ft	185	Asphalt		
18R	12453 ft	185	Asphalt	110.10	185
22	6619 ft	223	Asphalt	109.15	223
24	11430 ft	239	Asphalt		
27	11303 ft	268	Asphalt	111.55	268
36C	10812 ft	5	Asphalt	108.75	5

Gates

Parking	Nr	Type	Radius	Airlines
Gate B	9	Gate Small	18 m	
Gate B	10	Gate Small	18 m	
Gate B	11	Gate Small	18 m	
Gate B	12	Gate Small	18 m	
Gate B	13	Gate Small	18 m	
Gate B	14	Gate Small	18 m	
Gate B	15	Gate Small	18 m	
Gate B	16	Gate Small	18 m	
Gate B	17	Gate Small	18 m	
Gate B	19	Gate Small	18 m	

Info

Local wind (magnetic): 19205KT

Show metar/taf

Latitude, longitude: 52.320831,4.780169

Google Earth

www.ourairports.com

Frequencies

Name	Type	Frequen
AMSTERDAM	APPROACH	118.0
AMSTERDAM	APPROACH	120.0
AMSTERDAM	APPROACH	130.0
AMSTERDAM	APPROACH	134.0
EHAM	ATIS	122.0
EHAM	ATIS	130.0
EHAM	ATIS	132.0
SCHIPHOL	GROUND	121.0
SCHIPHOL	GROUND	121.0
SCHIPHOL	GROUND	121.0
SCHIPHOL	TOWER	118.0
SCHIPHOL	TOWER	118.0
SCHIPHOL	TOWER	118.0
SCHIPHOL	TOWER	119.0
SCHIPHOL	CLEARANCE	121.0
SCHIPHOL	APPROACH	118.0
SCHIPHOL	APPROACH	119.0
SCHIPHOL	APPROACH	121.0
SCHIPHOL	APPROACH	126.0
SCHIPHOL	APPROACH	118.0
SCHIPHOL	APPROACH	131.0

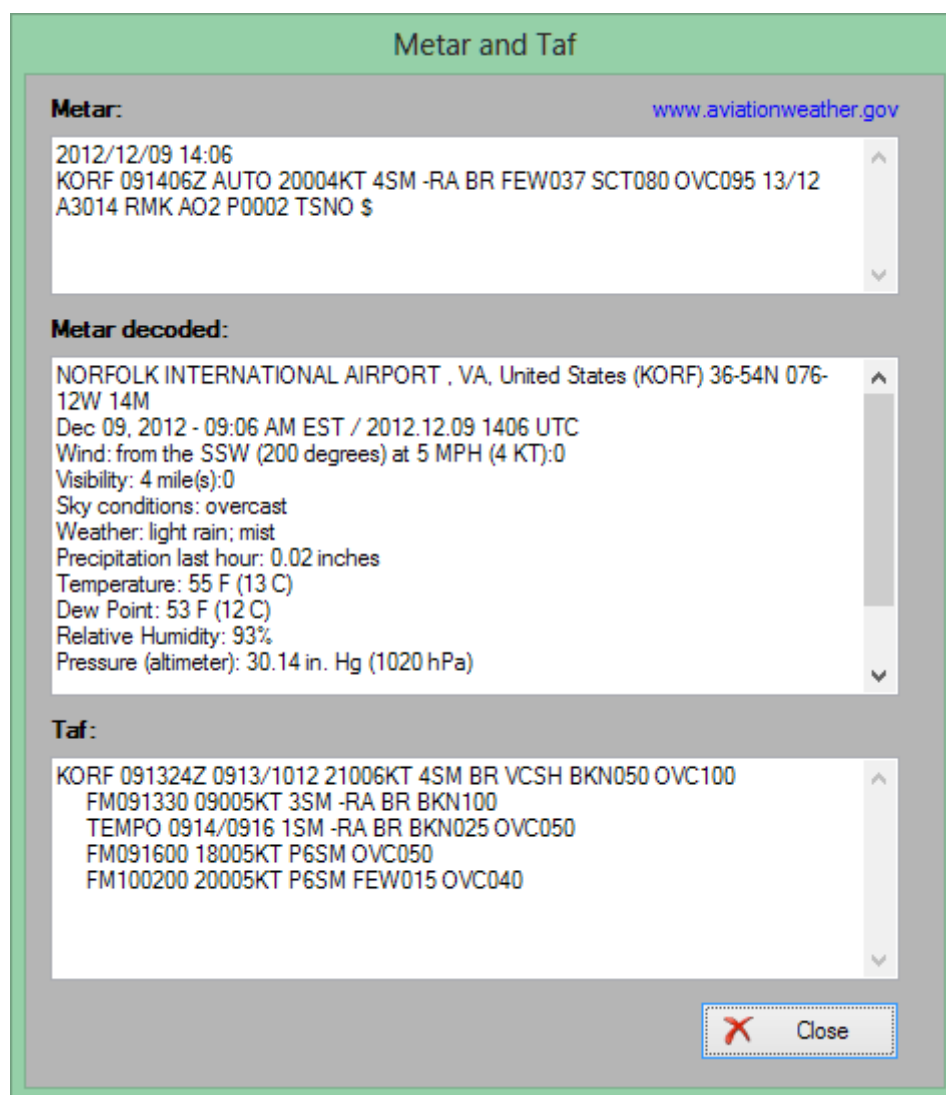
Cancel

OK

Metar information is retrieved from www.aviationweather.gov and the runway closest to the current magnetic wind direction (shown in the upper right hand corner of the window) is pre-selected. If no wind information can be found, the first runway in the list will be pre-selected. If the selected airport has runways nor parking positions, you will be placed at the GPS-location for the centre of the airport.

The gates are sorted according to the entries found for 'Parking types' and 'Parking Codes' in the aircraft details (see par. 7.1).

If you click on 'Show metar/taf' a new window opens up with the (decoded) metar information and TAFs (if available for the selected airport):



If no metar information is found on www.aviationweather.gov for the selected airport, the 'Show metar/taf' button will be disabled.²

Click on the 'Google Earth' button and the selected runway/parking position will open up in Google Earth (if installed on your computer) or any other application associated with .kml files.

Click on www.ourairports.com and the OurAirports website will open in your default browser with all kinds of information on the currently selected airport.

² Note that both the 'Show metar/taf' button and the 'Google Earth' button will be disabled if you have no internet connection.

If you double click on the list of frequencies, this list will be copied to the clipboard.

7.3 Select weather and time of day

Select the type of weather you would like to see when launching the flight.

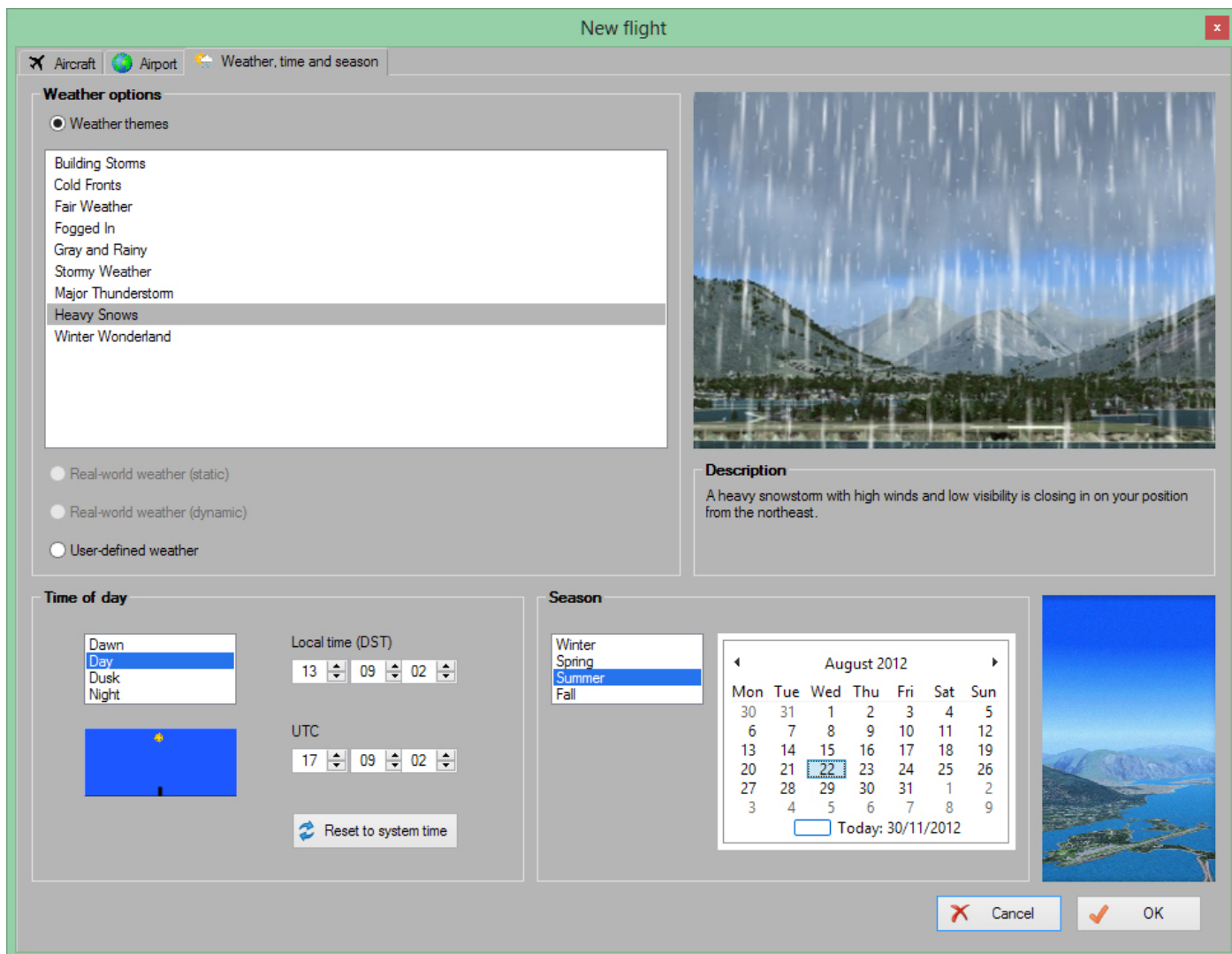
User defined weather (cloud layers, wind layers etc.) information is stored in .wx files. Unfortunately the file format of .wx files is not documented. The user defined weather option is provided only to preserve the weather settings of flights saved from within the simulator.

If you would like to set the weather parameters yourself, you will have to do so within the simulator after launching the flight or by using one of the excellent weather programs like REX or Active Sky.

Prepar3D does not support real world weather, so these controls are disabled for Prepar3D.

There's a strange issue with the .wx file of the original default flights of the simulators (...\\flights\\other\\FLTSIM.FLT for FSX and ...\\flights\\other\\PREPAR3D.FLT for Prepar3D): if you send the weather from SimLauncher to the sim, it doesn't seem to hold, but if you then look in World|Weather you will see the weather setting you choose in SimLauncher. Now here's the workaround:

1. launch the sim with the default flight (not with SimLauncher, but directly)
2. save the flight from within the sim to something like 'my default flight'
3. change the weather theme and click ok
4. change the weather theme again to the original setting
5. save the flight again with the name you choose in step 2, i.e. 'my default flight', check 'set default flight' and allow to override
6. exit the sim (this is important because fsx\\prepar3d.cfg will only be updated with the new default flight once you exit the sim)
7. start SimLauncher and changing the weather will work now (at least on my machine)



You can change both local time and UTC for the selected airport and the other one will be changed accordingly. If the selected local time is within the period defined as daylight saving time for this location, (DST) will be indicated. The position of the sun in the sky is shown below the time of day selections and changes when you change the time or the date. Click on 'Reset to system time' to set the local time to the current local time and date of your computer.

Local time is what is going to be sent to the simulator. Since the changeover dates from standard time to daylight saving time and vice versa, or even the bias of local time to UTC, have changed in some cases since the simulators came out, the selected local time will be converted first to UTC according to present rules and then converted back to local time according to the rules in effect when the simulators came out (both these rules are defined in the registry of the Windows operating system):

local time selected in application -> UTC (current rules for standard time and DST) -> local time according to FSX/Prepar3D (old rules for standard time and DST)

Events like dawn or dusk are defined in terms of UTC and doing the conversion this way ensures that if e.g. you would like to fly at sunrise and select 'Dawn' for the time of day it will indeed be sunrise time in FSX/Prepar3D. So, local time within the simulator might differ from what you selected here.

The time zone for a particular location is determined by looking up the country of the selected airport in a timezones.csv file (located in the resources folder), selecting the name of the time zone for that country and looking up UTC and DST offsets in the Windows registry for that particular time zone; if there's more than one time zone in the selected country, one of the locations in the same country within the timezones.csv file, that has a longitude coordinate closed to the longitude of the selected airport, is used to determine the time

zone. However: FSX and Prepar3D use a slightly different approach to determining the time zone for a particular location³, so in some cases a discrepancy might arise.

You can click on the top of the calendar to quickly change the month, year or even decade.

³ In FSX/Prepar3D the world is divided into multiple rectangles and each of these rectangles has a UTC/DST offset assigned. This method of determining UTC/DST offsets is different from the method used in this application but not any better. The FSX/Prepar3D method can also give false results compared to the real world in some cases due to the strange and jagged boundaries of real world time zones.

8 Edit a flight

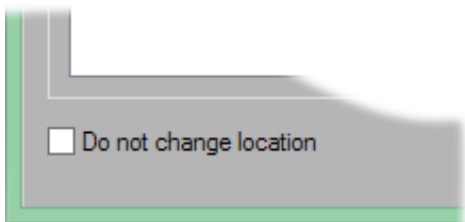
In the main window you can click on the aircraft picture to change the aircraft, click on the weather picture to edit the weather of the flight, click on the local date and time to change the date and the time of day and you can click on the location to change the starting location. If you choose an aircraft from a different aircraft.cfg file, you will get a warning telling you that changing aircraft might produce unpredictable results.

You can also edit a flight by selecting Edit|Edit flight ... , by clicking on the 'Edit flight' toolbar button or by pressing Ctrl+E.


When you have edited the flight the file name of the flight will be shown with an * at the end, indicating that you have unsaved changes. If you click on Fly Now! and you have unsaved changes you will be asked if you want to discard all changes or not.

You can undo all changes by selecting Edit|Undo changes or by clicking the corresponding icon on the toolbar.

You have the option not to change the location of the aircraft in the flight, by unchecking 'Do not change location' in the bottom left corner of the 'Edit Flight' dialog.



8.1 System and engine settings

You can click on the tools icon :  , select Edit|System and engine settings... from the menu or press Ctrl+Y to change several system and engine settings:



These settings will take effect when you launch the flight. There are three presets: 'Cold & dark' (everything off), 'Electrics on' (battery, avionics, navigation lights, panel lights and parking brake on) and 'Engines on' (= Electrics on + beacon lights, wing lights, logo lights, left magneto and right magneto on, mixture full rich and propeller max RPM).

8.2 Fuel and Payload settings

You can click on the blue petrol pump underneath the aircraft thumbnail or choose Edit|Fuel and payload... from the menu or press Ctrl+F to change the fuel and payload for this particular flight:

Change fuel and payload

Mooney Bravo With G1000

Empty weight	2189.00	Pounds
Fuel	95.00	Gallons
Payload	573.00	Pounds
Gross weight	3332.00	Pounds
Maximum gross weight	3368.00	Pounds
Maximum allowable fuel	95.00	Gallons

Fuel

☐ Display fuel quantity as weight

Tank	% Full	Gallons	Capacity
Left main	100.00	47.50	47.50
Right main	100.00	47.50	47.50

Payload

Station	Pounds
Pilot	170.00
Front Passenger	170.00
Rear Passenger	100.00
Rear Passenger	100.00
Baggage	33.00


Weight in: ☒ Pounds ☐ Kilograms

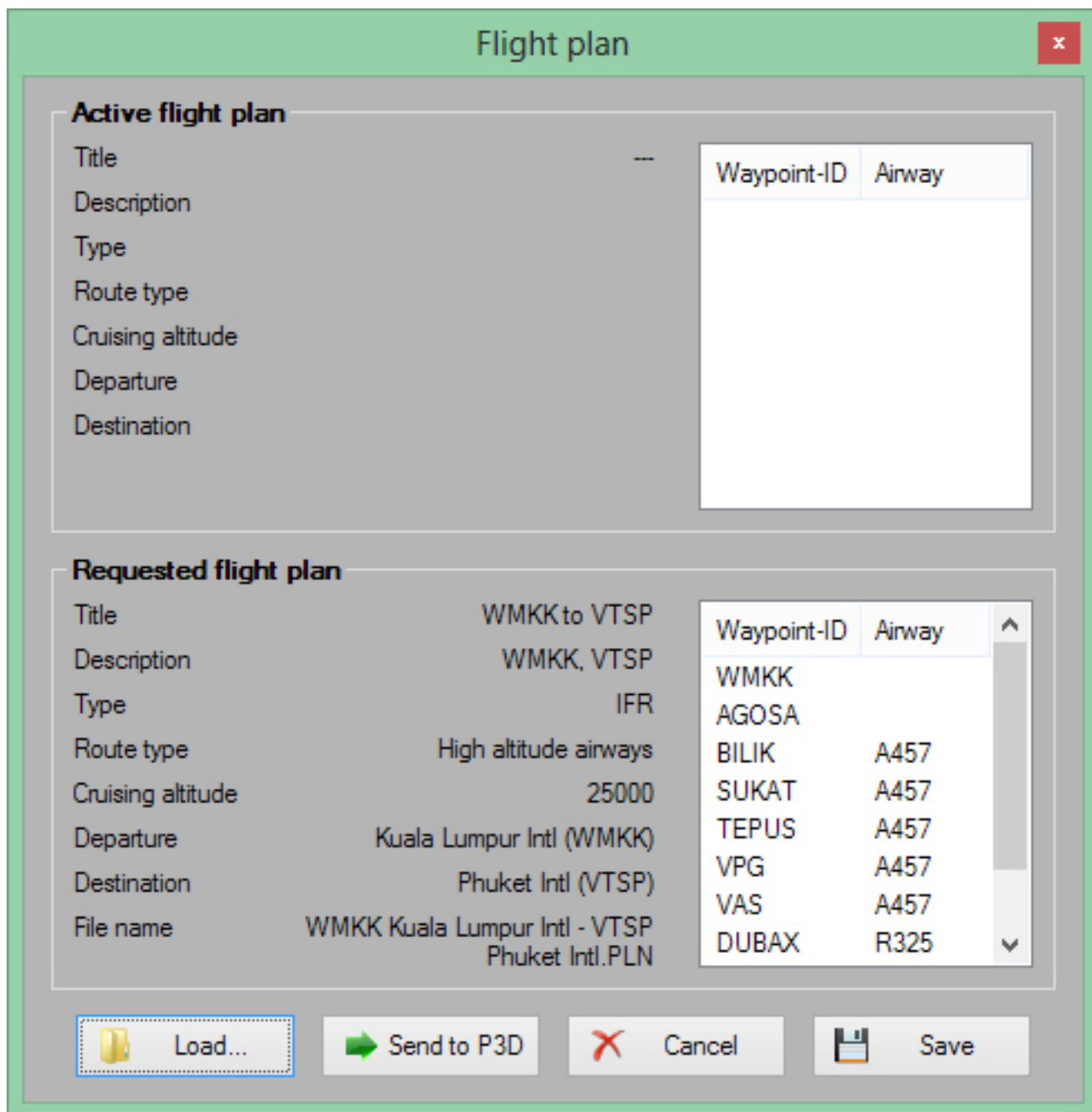
Cancel

Save

Double click on the entry you wish to change, press ENTER to save or ESC to cancel. You will get a warning when the aircraft gross weight is over the maximum gross weight.

8.3 Flightplan

When you click on the flightplan icon:  , select Edit|Flightplan from the menu or press Ctrl+P the following dialog window opens:



You can load a flight plan (details will be shown in the ‘requested flight plan’ section) and then either send this flight plan directly to the simulator (if the simulator is running and you have the green light on) or save the plan to the flight file. If you send a flight plan directly to the simulator, a message along the top of the simulator window is shown, indicating that the flight plan has been loaded.

If the loaded flight file has an active flight plan, this will be shown in the ‘active flight plan’ section of the dialog.

9 Launch a flight

Click on 'Fly Now!' to launch the simulator (or whatever program you selected as your startup program for this simulator) with the selected flight.

If the simulator is already running, the flight will be sent to the simulator directly without starting the startup program. A message will appear along of top of the simulator window, indicating that a flight is about to be loaded. It might take a couple of seconds before you notice any response from the simulator.

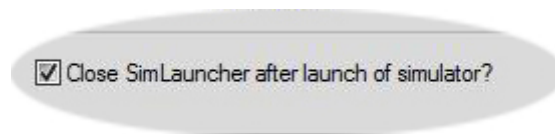
If you launch a new flight without having saved this new flight, a temporary SimLauncher.flt file will be sent to the simulator.

There's an indicator in the top right corner of the main window that indicates if the simulator is running; this indicator is updated every 3 seconds:



- Blank: simulator not running
- Green: simulator running and ready to accept flight
- Red: simulator running, but busy or in dialog mode, not ready to accept flight

If you check the box next to 'Close SimLauncher after launch of flight' the application will close after you launch the flight, otherwise it will stay open for you to launch another flight while the simulator is running:



10 Updates

You can check for an update at startup (setting in the preferences dialog box), by selecting Help|Check for update in the menu or by using the toolbar button 'Check for update'. Updates will be uploaded to the Avsim library as well.

11 Contact

The application has been tested with Microsoft Flight Simulator® 10 SP2 and Prepar3D® 1.4. It is not unlikely that I made a mistake somewhere along the line while programming this application. I apologize if this has caused you any inconvenience. Questions, suggestions, bug reports, typos, feature requests, constructive criticism and yes, even a 'thank you' are welcome and can be sent to:

Maarten Boelens
Leiden, The Netherlands
maarten@maartenboelens.nl

12 Credits

Special credits go to Pete Dowson for creating the Make Runways utility.

ENJOY!