



Release of FSX: Steam Edition

Evan ('Evanet')

BVA Administration Team

U.K.-based Dovetail Games re-released FSX Acceleration on December 18 for sale via Steam and has re-branded the product to FSX: Steam Edition (referred to as FSX:SE).

The only major change that has been made from the original version of FSX is that Steam is now used to power the multiplayer (rather than GameSpy). As a result of this change, FSX:SE is not compatible with BVA's network. Users on FSX cannot connect to servers running on FSX:SE, and vice versa. Therefore, multiplayer in FSX:SE is not compatible with Boston Virtual ATC's server, or any other server that is running FSX.

There is no indication as to whether Dovetail will, at some point, support backwards compatibility between FSX:SE and FSX. Unless that happens, BVA will continue to be available to users running FSX and will not be accessible to those on FSX:SE.

There are a few [very limited changes](#) in the version of FSX released on Steam when compared with FSX Acceleration. These include Steam support, some changes in the default FSX configuration file, and the fixing of a few small bugs with the FSX UI like enabling FSX to work with "Aero" mode in Windows 7. Based on the changelog that Dovetail has posted, there does not appear to be anything that would dramatically improve performance. For example, the

program still uses the same graphics engine and still relies on a 32-bit infrastructure.

The user interface in FSX:SE is identical to FSX. Menus, available aircraft, missions, and settings are all the same. As far as we can tell, there is no new content in FSX:SE. Despite that, FSX:SE installs as a new product, whether or not FSX is installed. Existing add-ons, tweaks, and configuration changes are NOT ported over from an FSX installation. In fact, products many add-on developers like ActiveSky and PMDG currently do not work with FSX: Steam Edition because it was re-compiled using the VS2013 compiler (instead of the original VS2005 libraries). It is expected that most add-on products will eventually be updated for compatibility with FSX: Steam Edition.

In our opinion, FSX:SE is a re-branded version of FSX Acceleration with some minor changes. It is not an upgrade to FSX but rather a standalone program that is not compatible with FSX or BVA's network. Therefore, little to no reason exists for current BVA users to purchase the program.

BVA is interested in exploring eventual compatibility between FSX and FSX: Steam Edition. However, we do not have the internal resources available to undertake this challenge. If there are any programmers in the community knowledgeable of the networking challenges associated with creating backwards compatibility between multiplayer in FSX and FSX:SE, please [Contact Us](#).

2014 Year-In-Review

The community always looks forward to the Colorado Getaway. In fact, in the past several years, Colorado in January has become something of a tradition—just like this article, which wraps up the year that was and talks about what's on the horizon for Boston Virtual ATC in 2015.


The Colorado Getaway is one of those really cool events where you have something for everyone: a large, international airport for those who like airliner operations, mountain flying for those who want to brave the approach into KASE, simpler, flatland flying between KDEN and KCOS, and difficult navigating in the VFR Challenge. Much the same way, our community has grown to offer something for everyone. We have an active set of virtual airlines, many kinds of training, unique events, and a mix of general aviation and airliner flying.

Like Denver International Airport, we're BIG. With almost 4,000 total members, we are the largest independent FSX community, and we're continuing to grow. On average, we add at least one new member every single day. We're also expanding our reach, working more closely with other FSX communities through FSX Beyond GameSpy and Cross-Community Flights. In 2014, we better

defined our image for potential sponsors and partners through a series of marketing materials. The result was new relationships that we hope will draw more new members next year.

The air traffic control team of approximately 30 active controllers has grown in its seniority. While we have approximately the same amount of controllers as last year, we certified three new Center controllers in 2014: Jay ('JKLovelace') in March, Jeremy ('jrvalent') in April, and Chris ('ChrisOlmstead') in July. The ATC Instructor Team led by Matt ('slayer816'), our ATC Director, works with the ATC Training Staff to ensure that controllers at all levels continue to develop and are able to provide the best ATC available online.

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Cape Air Virtual >>
Pilot of the Month

This month, Cape Air Virtual recognizes the pilot who had the highest pilot rating. For December, that pilot is Jean-Phillippe ('Viking238'), who had a 113.85 rating over 18 flights! Congratulations!



Regional Circuit

Rc

Tuesday, January 13
(8-11pm ET)

KASE (Aspen) &
KDEN (Denver)

Our controllers fully staff two airports and provide complete ATC coverage for flights between the two; pilots are encouraged to file preferred routes and can expect multiple handoffs and busy frequencies throughout the event

Domestic Journey

Dj

Thursday, January 29
(8-11pm ET)

KMSY (New Orleans) &
KTPA (Tampa)

The Domestic Journey provides BVA pilots with the opportunity to enjoy medium-haul flights across North America with air traffic control coverage from gate-to-gate.

Pack the Pattern

Pp

Monday, March 2
(8-10pm ET)

KMDW (Chicago Midway)

Pilots are encouraged to fly into the event or fly IFR or VFR circuits of a busy Class Bravo airport, with full ATC coverage for the entire evening (including Clearance, Ground, multiple Tower and Approach controllers, and maybe even a Center!)

Fly-In

Fi

Sunday, January 25
(3-6pm ET)

Hawaii
(PHKO, PHMU, and KHTO)

Tower (Local) Controllers will feature several small airports designed for General Aviation aircraft. Fly IFR or VFR within controlled airspace; general aviation aircraft (anything from a Cessna to a LearJet) are preferred.

Challenge

Ch

Sunday, January 11
(4-7pm ET)

Colorado VFR Challenge

BVA's Challenge event will test your piloting skills in the realistic atmosphere of BVA. This event is about exercising your multi-tasking ability in challenging and unfamiliar situations—something pilots have to do all the time.

Getaway

Ga

January 9-18

Colorado
(KASE, KCOS, and KDEN)

BVA's Getaway Event takes pilots and controllers for a change of scenery, and features various airports across North America. Join BVA as we 'Getaway' to explore new airports and destinations

Controller of the Month

Evan ('Evanet')

BVA Administration Team

Each month, one member of our controller community is selected by ATC Instructors for special recognition for outstanding performance and ongoing dedication. As essential frontline service providers, controllers play the most important role in ensuring the satisfaction and enjoyment of our membership.

In the final month of 2014, the ATC Instructors wish to recognize the efforts of the entire air traffic control team this year. While

the final statistics aren't quite available yet, we know that more than 4,200 hours of air traffic control were available this year, and controllers on BVA's network handled well over 50,000 takeoffs and landings.

As our members know, air traffic control training at Boston Virtual ATC is a long, challenging process. The ATC Training Staff works hard to ensure that each controller has the knowledge, professionalism, and ability that's required to perform to real-world standards. As a community, we are grateful to the many controllers who dedicate their time and efforts to being part of the finest air traffic control staff available online.



Mountain Flying

In preparation for our 2015 Colorado Getaway (beginning on Friday, January 9), this month's Pilot Tip is focused on Mountain Flying. Operating aircraft in the mountains, in winter, opens up new opportunities for unique destinations and spectacular scenery. However, it also presents numerous challenges and is less forgiving of poor training and planning than flatland flying.

When operating at airports with high elevations like KASE, which sits at 7,838', density altitude will be a major factor. A normally-aspirated engine will lose 3% of its power per thousand feet of density altitude increase. The wings have less dense air with which to create lift. And the propeller—itsself an airfoil—will also be less efficient. Be aware of aircraft loads, and plan to fly the airplane to no more than 90% of maximum gross weight. For a typical light airplane with a maximum gross weight of 3,000 pounds, reducing the loaded weight to no more than 2,700 pounds will regain much of the lost performance.

When flying around mountain ridges or passes—like during the Colorado VFR Challenge—aim to cross the ridge 1,000' above the highest point. If the winds at mountaintop level are above 20 knots, increase this amount to 2,000'. Plan to be at that altitude at least three miles before reaching the ridge, and stay at that altitude until at least three miles past it.

During winter operations, be alert to icing. Many of the default FSX aircraft's anti-icing systems can be turned on by clicking the "H" key. The default Beechcraft Baron 58 is particularly tricky, as there's a critical anti-ice switch that's only accessible from the virtual cockpit (or the "H" key). If the engines are losing power or the airspeed seems to be decreasing unexpectedly, icing is likely to be the culprit.

Finally, keep in mind the importance of leaning the mixture when operating at high altitudes (where applicable). Default propeller FSX aircraft will have a lot of trouble climbing unless the mixture is leaned appropriately when operating at high elevations.

Source: FAA Aviation Safety Program "Tips on Mountain Flying".

FlightSimCon 2015 Registration is Now Open!

Evan ('Evanet')

BVA Administration Team

Early bird registration for FlightSimCon 2015 is now open! From now until the end of the month, register for FlightSimCon to receive a discount of up to \$10 from the regular purchase price. Right now, conference registration starts at \$50 for the weekend, with discounts available for students and student pilots.

FlightSimCon is an annual aviation and flight simulation conference that Boston Virtual ATC has been proud to sponsor since 2013. BVA will continue to play a central role in FlightSimCon this year. Many of our air traffic controllers will be attending the event and providing ATC live. We also expect several members to attend in

person—along with their flying rigs—and plan for many more members to participate remotely.

If you are planning to attend, FlightSimCon has a preferred rate for all BVA members at the Sheraton Hartford Hotel at Bradley Airport. More hotel information will be posted on the FlightSimCon website shortly.

BVA members who are attending the conference can register online at www.flightsimcon.com. While BVA is a sponsor of FlightSimCon, please note that it is not a BVA event, and the registration fee and personal information you provide to FlightSimCon is not governed by any of our policies.

Full registration will open on February 1, 2015.

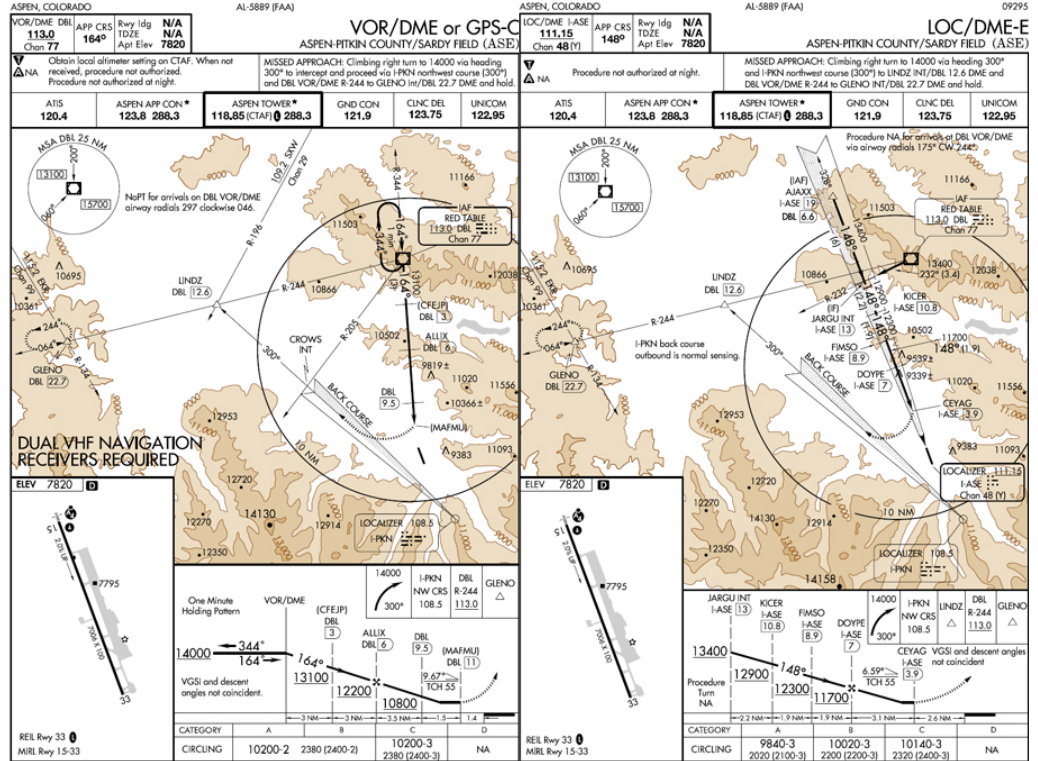


Aspen Approaches

There are three approaches available at Sardy Field (KASE), but only the LOC/DME-E and VOR/DME or GPS-C approaches are shown to the right. Notice how both of these approaches only lead to Runway 15—that’s because it’s the only runway that aircraft are permitted to land on. The other end of the runway (33) is used for departures only. Both the Localizer and VOR approaches are referred to as ‘circling’ approaches because both of the descent paths are too steep to be associated with a particular runway. Thus, in a landing clearance, you might hear something like “N107KR, Runway 15, Wind 150 at 9, Make Straight In, Cleared to Land”. You might also hear an instruction like “Make Right Upwind” or “fly overhead the field, make right downwind to Runway 15”. In either case, even though you flew an instrument approach, because the VOR and LOC approaches aren’t necessarily ‘attached’ to a specific runway, you would effectively enter a right traffic pattern as you overfly the runway and land after flying the right-hand traffic pattern (see the diagram below).

Note as well that the Red Table (DBL) VOR on both charts can be the start of the approach; if you’ve filed “DBL” in your flight plan, be prepared to hear an approach clearance that sounds

like this: “N233DL cross Red Table at or above 13,000’, cleared Localizer-DME Echo Approach, circle to land Runway 15”. If you are cleared for this type of full approach (either for the localizer or VOR approach), **it is your responsibility to follow the chart and align yourself with the final approach course after crossing the Red Table VOR at the prescribed altitude. Also keep in mind that you could be vectored onto the final approach course (just like any other approach).**



If you’re confused about ‘circling approaches’, don’t worry. The easiest thing to do is “make straight in”—after you follow the localizer or VOR final approach course in and pick up the field, you can just land the plane normally (and if you miss, there are defined go-around and missed approach procedures). Feel free to continue to discuss this more—post on the forums, ask questions in the session, and we’ll help ensure approaches into Aspen are a lot less confusing (if not any easier to actually fly). This is without question one of the most difficult airports to fly into in the world.

charts (charts are available from websites like www.airnav.com and www.myairplane.com) will be instrumental in landing your aircraft successfully—even if it takes a couple of attempts. In the event of a “Go Around” or “Missed Approach”, be ready to make a quick right turn to the northwest; otherwise someone will be scraping your airplane off the side of a mountain.

There is some very challenging terrain to watch out for, so listening closely to ATC instructions and coming prepared with the necessary

Because the entire approach to Aspen is done above 10,000 feet, speed will be very important—listening closely to controllers’ instructions regarding speed and watching the airspeed carefully between the mountains will be instrumental in completely successful approaches.



Year End Article

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We have also grown our administration well beyond our small formal Administration Team. BVA's Events Team works hard to ensure that we have airports, routes, and .PLN files for an exciting lineup of events every year. Meanwhile, Pierre ('pierul') and the Scenery Design Team have produced 20 Airport Updates for various events throughout the year, ensuring that our airports match up with the latest FAA publications. Members volunteer to run Cape Air Virtual, United Regional, support other members, and come up with great ideas like the Ground School seminars we held in the second half of the year. Most of our core FSX technology is developed by just one member, and another member helps manage our financials, tracking all of the donations we receive each year. As an Administration Team, it's humbling to see so much support from the many members who want to give something back to the community.

Like the approach into Aspen (the feature of the upcoming Getaway), Boston Virtual ATC has experienced our share of challenges this year. Recently, we made the decision to postpone 60 Hours of ATC. That decision was made in response to intermittent instability we were experiencing with our FSX server. While that instability has since subsided, we are still working to improve the reliability of our services during large events. Our goal is to offer consistent service on our website, forums, and in FSX. We have tried to be as transparent and proactive as possible when outages occur, posting updates on our website, forums, and social media profiles. At the same time, we're working on improving all of our platforms and servers to provide the most consistent experience possible in 2015.

This very Informer contains information about the release of FSX: Steam Edition. We were all hoping that the sale of FSX to an active developer would represent a new beginning for the Flight Simulator franchise. Unfortunately, what we received in the week before Christmas was a less-compatible version of the FSX we know and love today. At the moment, FSX: Steam Edition doesn't have anything to offer us as a community, but we do hope to eventually offer users of FSX: Steam Edition the same experience you enjoy today.

Colorado Springs has to be a favorite airport for our Scenery Design Team—in several years of this Getaway, we haven't had to make a single update to KCOS. Its close proximity to KDEN, generally favorable weather, and flatland location makes it an easy, safe destination when compared to mountain airports like KASE or KEGE. Like some of the fixtures of the community—events, our member survey, the Pilot Ratings Program, and our operations—KCOS is a piece of the ZDV ARTCC we couldn't do without.

In 2014, we created a team of volunteers to help plan and manage events. We held a number of exciting, new, and challenging events including various IFR Procedures Challenges, Landing Competitions, and events focused on VFR procedures and holding patterns. We held two "Training Day" events focused on new members in April and September. And, thanks to a suggestion from a member, we

launched [Ground School](#), a 10-part series of briefings on topics like weather, flight planning, and VFR operations. Some of the sessions were run by CFIs. They will definitely be repeated—and added to—in 2015.

2014 was a Member Survey year, and the Administration Team was happy to see that members were extremely happy with their experience in the community. Several changes came about as a result of that survey, including better awareness of our Member Support Team and New York-area alternate airports for each of the Pilot Ratings Program flights.

Thanks to you, we continue to be in a (reasonably) healthy financial state. We received just under \$2,000 in donations in 2014. We have good relationships with our internet service providers and as a result are well-positioned financially for the next few years. Of course, we are extremely grateful for the generosity of the many members who donate to the community on a regular basis.

One of the most popular events of the Colorado Getaway is our VFR Challenge—a fun, community-oriented activity that we do together. We've done more community-building than ever this year, starting with FlightSimCon 2014. Many of us made the trip to the New England Air Museum at KBDL in June 2014. If you were there, you know how special it was to be in a room of people that you've never met in person—and feel like you are surrounded by close friends. The community is gearing up to have an even bigger presence at FlightSimCon 2015, and more information about this year's event is available at www.flightsimcon.com.

Through our new Member TeamSpeak, members now have the option to talk outside of the structure of the radio frequency. Discussions in the TeamSpeak server often start with a focus on aviation and become late-night online games or midnight flights on the server. Our active forum community and social media have offered more opportunities than ever for our members to get to know each other.

Getting ready to fly out west for the Colorado Getaway usually means the end of a year of flying and controlling on Boston Virtual ATC. However, it also marks the beginning of a new year and another chapter in our journey as a community. As always, we as a team are proud of the progress we've made as a community and simultaneously humbled by the challenges ahead. The laws of growth dictate that we'll need to increase our efforts in every area of the organization. The beginning of another year represents an invitation to all of us to do what we can to make this community a better place. Whether that's through flying or controlling, investing time, donating money, or sharing skills and intelligence, BVA members make the community what it is.

One of the biggest improvements members will notice in 2015 is a new focus on New York. In the first half of the year, we'll be opening a new training base for controllers in New York, meaning that you'll see KJFK, KPHL, and New York Center online much more

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Year End Article

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frequently. Additionally, we plan to grow the number of controllers by making it easier for members to join the ATC program. As a result, we plan to offer 'dual Center' coverage on a regular basis, and see more and more flights along the Boston-NY corridor.

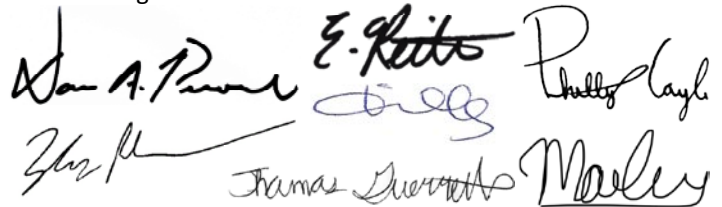
Just like last year, we have a full schedule of events ready to go—in fact, we've already planned out our Regional Circuit, Domestic Journey, and other regular events through to August (you can find them on the Events Calendar). Ground School and Training Day will continue to be part of the event lineup, and we'll be adding new Challenge events to the rotation. The Pilot Ratings Program will also continue to grow, with new jet-focused flights scheduled to be added to the program this year.

Just like the Getaway, spending time with the community is something we as administrators look forward to every year. We work with great people, do interesting and challenging things—but, most importantly—we get to do what we love on a regular basis. We're proud to offer a realistic, professional environment for enthusiasts who want to explore the world of aviation, and a training base for those who are fortunate enough to fly in the real world.

There are many flight simulation groups out there. Some are new, others—like us—have been around for many years. Our organization is differentiated from many of the other options by the true spirit of community that powers everything we do. This community spirit is present in our events, communications, software, and, most importantly, the pilot and controller interactions on our frequencies.

We are the most realistic air traffic control community, and the only group where everyone is willing to learn and happy to help. You make the community the place that it is. From jumping into a new member's aircraft to filling the server during events, it's our community spirit that really makes our aircraft fly.

Thank you for your support, membership, donations, time, and flights in 2014. We wish you and your family blue skies and calm winds throughout 2015!



Handwritten signatures of community members: Dan A. P... E. Keith... Phillip... [unclear]... James... Marley

