

One inventor's dream machine takes flight

Doc Holloway, an inventor, loved to fly. Now, his passion lets others soar through the clouds

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In the heart of Canada's only desert, there lives what locals call the "mad scientist."

Doc Holloway, a chemist and serial inventor, is constantly sidetracked by curiosity and his latest invention is the culmination of a five-year tangent: a home-based flight simulator.

Watching him scurry around his utilitarian computer shop in Penticton, BC, you might miss the new object of his affection, the Dream Flyer, tucked away in a dark corner at the front of the store. "Everyone likes to fly, but few people actually have the money to buy their own plane," says Doc as he mounts the chair with the look of a kid playing his favourite video game.

Conceived and built in his private workshop, the Dream Flyer idea flourished after a friend donated an ejector seat from a Canadair CT 133 Silver Star. After five years of redesign, the flight motion simulator now consists of a chair-mounted gimble frame, which reacts to pedals, throttle, and an airplane sized joystick, all of which capture the motion of an aircraft during flight conditions on a mounted computer monitor and an overhead screen.



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A new version of Doc Holloway's Dream Flyer equipped with three LCD panels and a comfy seat.

Internet Links

- [Dream Flyer site](#)
- [Watch the Discover Channel's profile of Doc Holloway and the Dream Flyer](#)
- [Watch a home video of the Dream Flyer in action](#)



Using a home computer Microsoft Flight Simulator X Acceleration, the virtual pilot can take off from almost any airport in the world, accessing an immense variety of planes. Indeed, after flying a jet with moderate success, and wondering aloud what it might have been like attempting the first flight at Kitty Hawk, Doc reprograms the system and instantly I'm flying the Wright Brothers first aircraft — with, admittedly, only moderate success.

"You see," blurts Doc bounding around the room, "each plane has its own level of difficulty, and the very first airplane was very difficult to fly."

As an experienced pilot, Doc has not only successfully simulated the mechanics of flying a plane, but taps into our desire to soar above the clouds. Case in point: not too long ago Doc sold a unit to an army helicopter pilot in Texas who suffers from Gulf War syndrome. "Most people don't know how serious the disease is," says Doc, swiveling side to side on the padded chair of the simulator. "He was a vibrant, vigorous young man who can hardly move now. But he flies his Dream Flyer every day and has his flying fix."

Doc has also been approached by a Second World War veteran who used to fly Lancasters. The retired airman said he wanted to try flying a DC3 or even a Spitfire. "For me," muses Doc, still having as much fun as his customers, "I like flying an F18 upside down at one thousand miles per hour."

But he's got to be careful. He was almost a casualty himself last year, when he crashed his paraglider and injured his back in several places. After suffering through months of painful rehabilitation, he now says the accident has served as his significant other's ultimate justification for simulated flight. "My girlfriend is terrified that I'm going back up and do that again. But I get my fix on the Dream Flyer now because it's almost as real."

The real draw of such technology may be its affordability. Professional flight simulators can cost anywhere from about \$150,000.00 to several

million dollars, not to mention the price tag and maintenance of private airplanes. However, for the price of an average big screen television, you can fly a Boeing 747 commercial airline in the comfort of your own living room.

But isn't it really just an oversized video game? Microsoft may be banking on it, hosting closed door media events showcasing how their new flight simulator program can prove to be more realistic when flown through the Dream Flyer.

Yet Doc believes his invention far exceeds the regular gaming experience. "When you fly on a (home) computer, the plane goes wherever you point the joystick. A real airplane doesn't do that." With the Dream Flyer, you quickly learn that every physical movement affects the flight. "You even have to lean into a turn," just like a real aircraft.

Flying perhaps his most successful invention to date, Doc reflects on some of his lesser known attempts. As an avid traveller, he once put wheels on his suitcases, but was laughed out of the patent office when attempting to coin the idea. "A few years later, they were everywhere." Another unsuccessful invention was a snowshoe you could fold up and store in your pocket.

Never one to stop moving, he is in the planning stages of his next invention: a personal submarine. "They make portable submarines that are death traps because if something breaks on them you're in a very hostile situation. I've designed one that limits your depth. It eliminates all the possible danger. It will save people's lives and give them a thrill."

Saving lives and delivering thrills — not a bad legacy for a mad scientist.

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