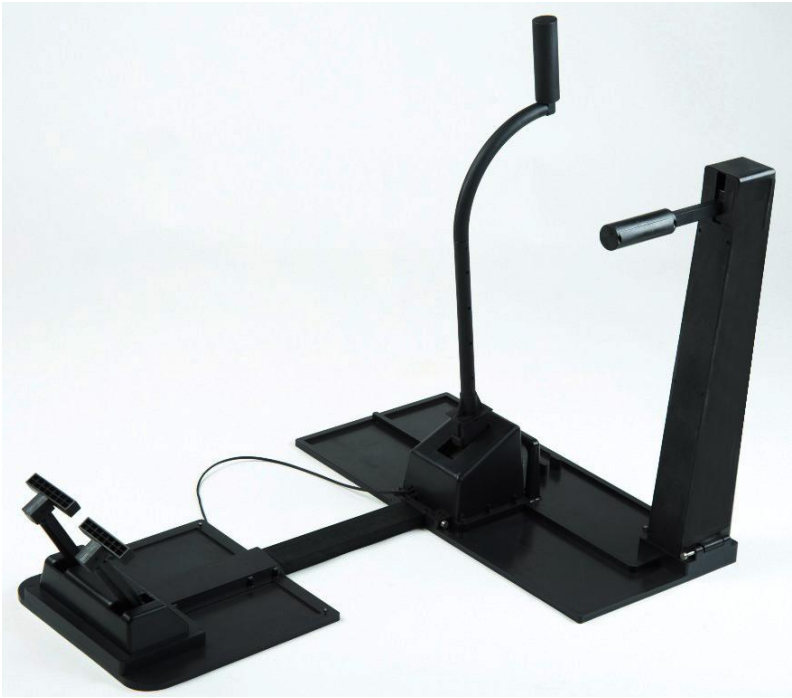
Test of

Heli-Kit (Full Helicopter Control System)

Produced by Heli-Kit S.A.

Flight simmers around the world are continuously trying to increase their flightsim experience by upgrading their software and hardware. I have already seen and tested various hardware as sticks, yokes, pedals, throttle quadrants and much more, but flying a flightsim helicopter using a yoke or a fixed-wing throttle quadrant just doesn't seem that realistic.

The solution for this could be the Heli-Kit from the company Heli-Kit in Panama. They have developed a complete helicopter setup with S-stick, real vertical pitch collective including twist throttle handle and torque pedals. I have had the pleasure of testing this quite unique piece of hardware which indeed gave me a completely new flightsim experience when flying the virtual helicopters.

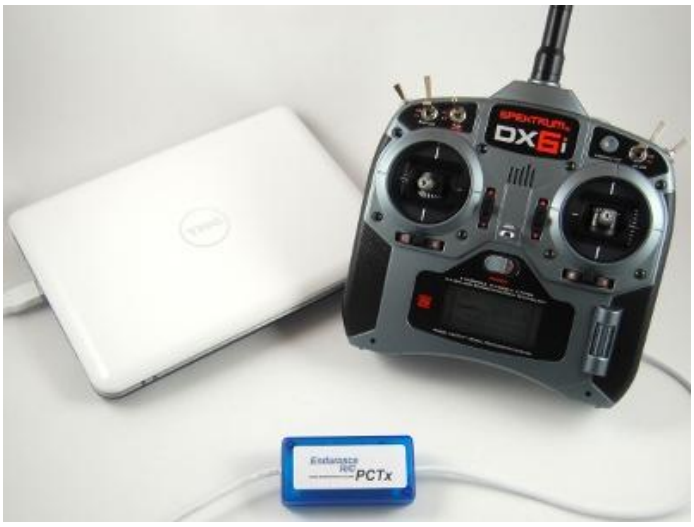


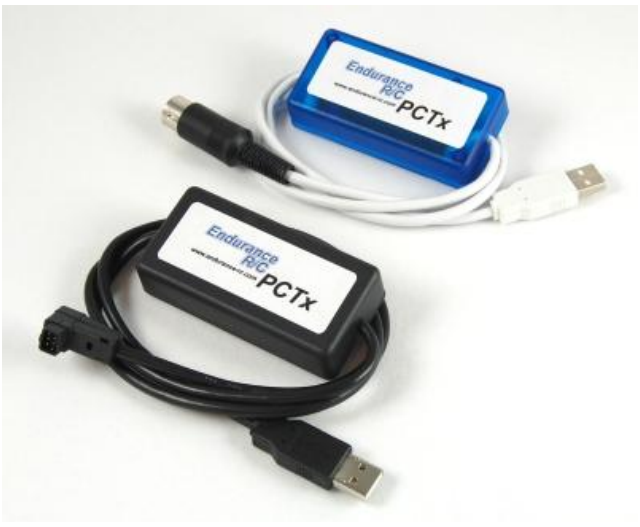
I received the Heli-Kit directly from Heli-Kit, Panama and the transport went without any issues. The packaging of the Heli-Kit is good and thorough so it arrived without any transport damages. The Kit consists of a basis plate where the collective is mounted in a fold down position and the base control for the S-stick is also mounted on the base plate. From the base plate is a wire that connects the torque pedals to the base plate and the S-stick comes as a separate piece that very easily also is mounted on the base plate.

The assembly is easy and quick and you don't need an instruction manual. When the assembly is finished you connect the controls system directly to your computer by a USB cable (included). You don't need to download or install any drivers, the Heli-Kit is a plug and play piece of hardware, and works immediately when connected to your computer. Of course you will probably have to calibrate the setup, but this can easily be done through the FSX calibration program. When calibrated you are then ready for flight.

This Heli-Kit is primarily developed for the use with flight simulation as e.g. flightsim FSX, but it is also compatible with X-plane and other flight simulation programs. It works on both Microsoft Windows and MAC without any issues.

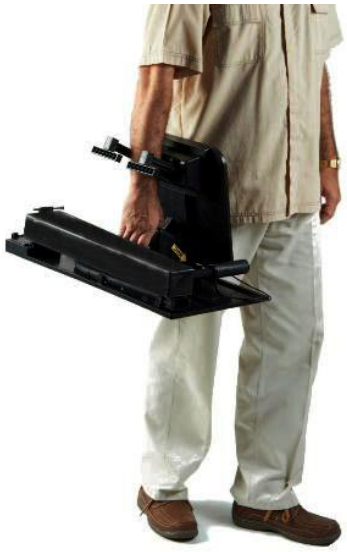
At Heli-Kit's website you can also get information and download drivers etc, so that you can use the control system for RC-flights also. (RC = Radio Controlled). This is a superb idea and hereby Heli-Kit expands their target group for this product significantly. I can imagine the realism the RC pilot will get when using this unique piece of hardware instead of the usual box transmitter control. I have previously flown quite a lot with RC fixed winged aircrafts, so this is of course an idea I like very much.

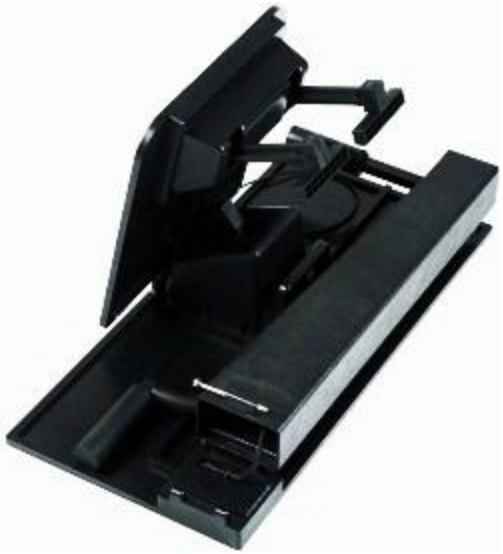




To make the Heli-Kit aligned with the RC transmitter you will need the PCTx interface (this is not included). This interface is used to connect the RC transmitter to your Heli-Kit through your computer, and now you will be able to control your RC helicopter with real look alike controls.

The issue with a complete portable control system is, that it can be huge and difficult to transport and setup at the RC airport, but here Heli-Kit has really done a great job. They have developed their portable Heli-kit to be easy to pack/unpack and carry. The weight is limited due to the material that the Heli-Kit is made of (Nylon 66 GF-30) and when folding the collective, S-stick and pedals, the complete setup is smaller than your hand luggage when traveling and it can all be carried in one hand due to an attached handle. The total weight is only 3,1 kgs = 6.8 lbs and the folded dimensions for storage or transport is 30 x 60 x 32cm = 1 x 2 x 1.05 ft.

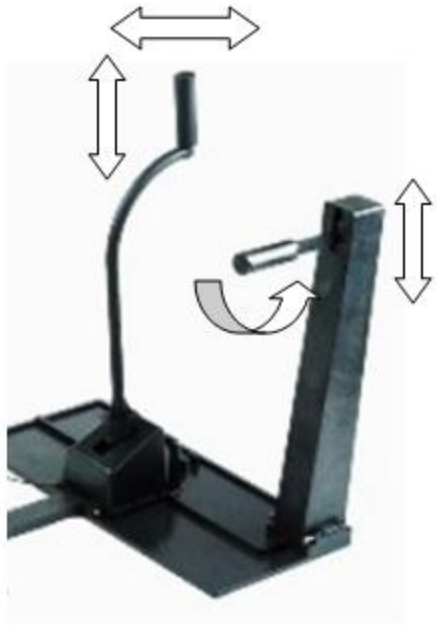




The Heli-Kit is made completely by Nylon 66 GF-30, both the base plate, the collective, the pedals and the S-stick – this I find to be quite unfortunate because that really takes away a lot of realism, but this of course contributes to keeping the weight down and also keeping the complete setup within an affordable price range.

Using the Heli-Kit was much fun and quite realistic – to control a helicopter with this setup actually made it a lot easier and I very quickly got used to this setup. One thing that I was really missing when flying with this setup was buttons, switches, hat switches, rotators etc but this was unfortunately not a part of this Heli-Kit – maybe for a version 2 ?

The S-stick is a long shaft cyclic command with square travel but without a spring load as in a real helicopter. The collective can move up and down to control the pitch of the rotor blades and the handle on the collective can be twisted to control rpms, so this is indeed a complete helicopter setup as in regards to controls.



I have tested the Heli-Kit for all default FSX helicopters together with various helicopters from both Virtavia and Area-51 Simulations and the Heli-Kit works perfectly with all of them. I find the Heli-Kit to increase the virtual experience greatly and will most certainly be looking forward for a newer edition that might include some metal parts and programmable buttons and switches.

This Heli-Kit setup is a unique hardware setup for flying virtual and/or RC helicopters. The setup is within an affordable price range and features all control functions as a real helicopter has. My virtual experience was indeed greatly improved and I would of course recommend fellow simmers to try out this piece of hardware – especially if you like flying virtual helicopters, then this is indeed a good solution to increase the realism and get the best possible experience.

I rate this Heli-Kit with 3½-stars and thank Heli-Kit S.A. for their very unique contribution to the flightsim community as well as the RC flight community.

Rays Aviation