

Review of

AirTrack v3.5

Developed by IP Objects GmbH

The AirTrack v3.5 is an app for use with both iPad and iPhone and is designed to be integrated with a flight simulator as e.g. FSX, FS9 or X-Plane. The AirTrack reports flight and navigational data in real time and with the possibility of doing so wireless, and hereby providing the simmer the opportunity to monitor the virtual flight, even though not actually being in front of the computer but doing various other things.

The app is easy to download from the App Store, which only takes a few seconds, and it works immediately after downloading. You of course have to sync it with you flight simulator but this is done quickly and completely without problems.

To be able to sync with the flight simulator there is needed a plug-in, this can be downloaded free of charge from IP Objects website www.ipobjects.com, just remember to download the plug-in that fits with your flight simulator. I mean that if you are using FSX, then download the FSX plug-in and not the X-Plane etc.

When the plug-in is downloaded then it must be installed on your computer. This is done very quickly, simply just by activating the installation wizard - after just a few seconds the plug-in is installed and you are now ready for starting up your flight simulator and begin the sync between your flight simulator and AirTrack. My test and review is done using flight simulator FSX and an iPad.

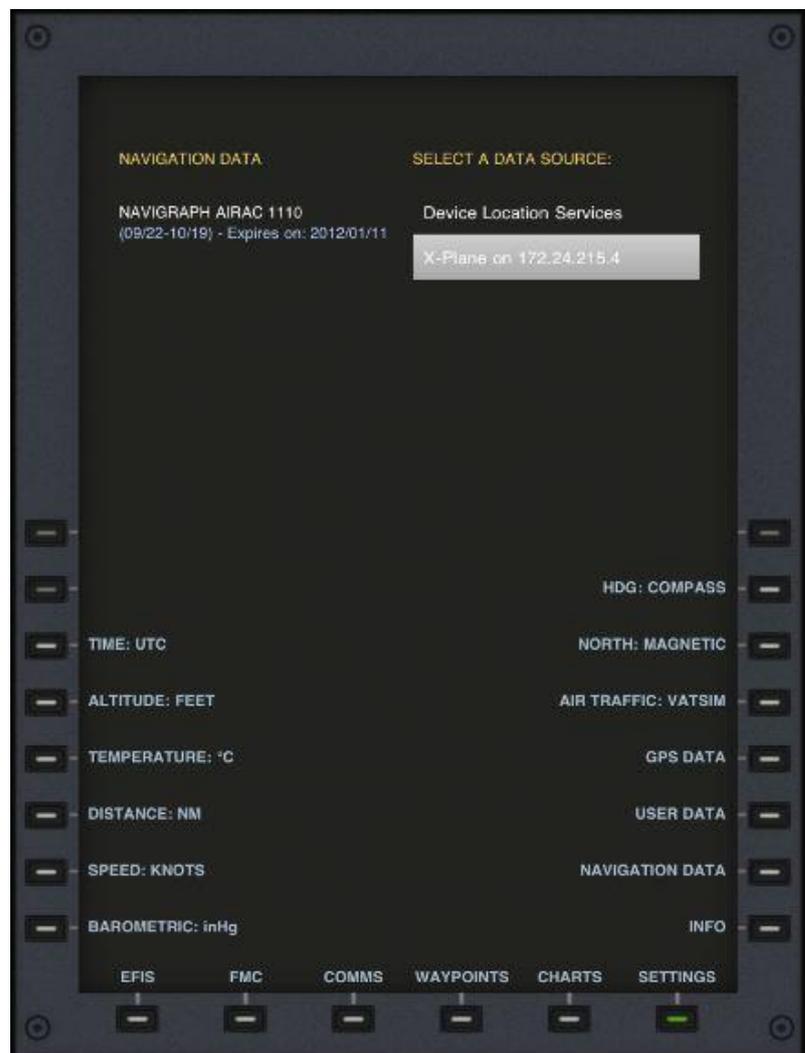


When you have downloaded the correct plug-in I would also recommend to download the operations manual. This can also be downloaded free of charge from IP Objects website and features a 77 pages PDF manual, that will guide you through the entire AirTrack and the possibilities that this app provides.

I will of course recommend to read or skim this operations manual, but after using the AirTrack a couple of times, everything make sense and is very realistic and logical set up. I skimmed the operations manual and then did the "learning by doing" which was perfect for me.

When starting up AirTrack, primarily you will need to go through the settings to make sure that the settings are as you want them to be - this is e.g. information of time (UTC), how AirTrack should report altitude, if this should be in feet or using the metric system. Also how to report distance in e.g. NMs or KMs, if you are using hPA for your barometer, how to report IAS as knots or km/h etc.

After applying the settings you will need to sync the AirTrack to your flight simulator. This is very easy - just setup a flight within your flight simulator, select your view to be the 2D cockpit and the AirTrack will now automatically be synced with all information that you have programmed your flight with. Now you are free to select any view that you like the best as e.g. the virtual cockpit, and the sync will still be there.



The AirTrack features a variety of reporting possibilities as a complete EFIS, FMC, MCP, COMMS, Way Points and also various airport charts. Included in the AirTrack is default some demo charts, but there is a possibility to purchase additional 5Gb of real FAA charts for a fair price. You can also create user charts by first creating a free Air Account on IP Objects website, but in this review I have just used the few demo charts that was included.

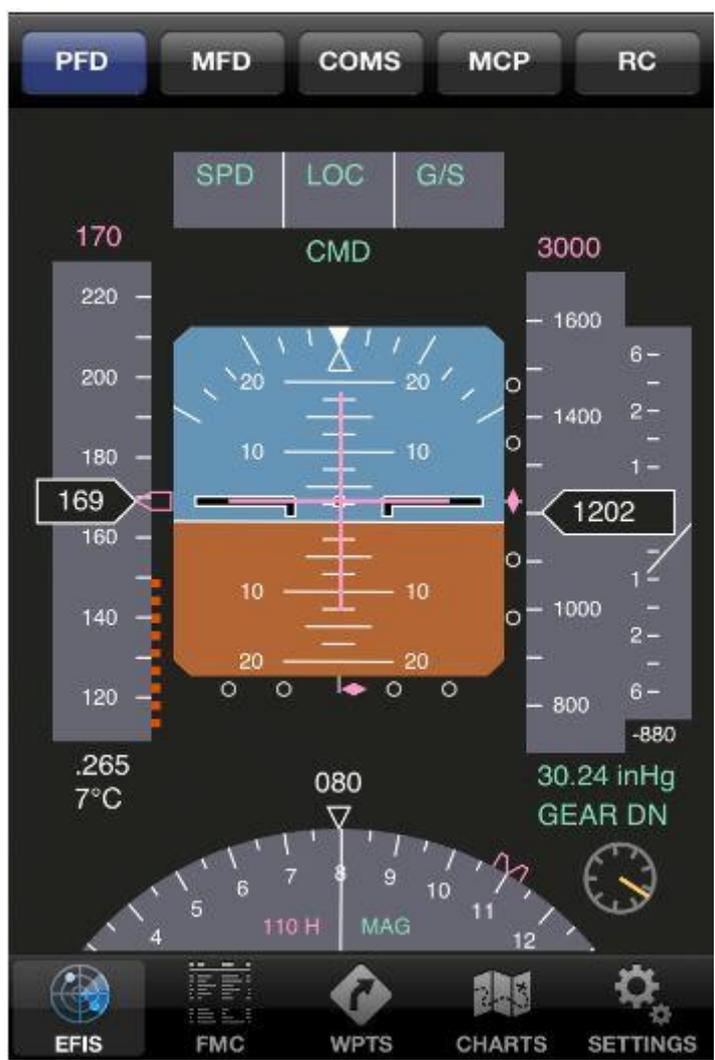
Navigating around the AirTrack is extremely user friendly, and using an iPad or iPhone enables the usage of the touch screen, and that is how to navigate the AirTrack.

Taking a look at the EFIS function you actually get more than just an EFIS, you get the EFIS with a variety of functions as NAV settings, VOR, TCA, APT, GEO, PLN, STP, VAS etc which works perfectly and is incredible realistic and quickly to load - we are actually talking about mili-seconds or even less so the motion is super smooth.



But within this EFIS function is also your PFD (primary flight display) that reports your primary flight data as IAS, Altitude, VSI, Attitude, autopilot settings and your flight director. Secondly the PFD also reports information about current heading, autopilot heading, gear status, QNH and outside temperature.

The PFD is very realistic and the movements are extremely smooth as also in the EFIS. The loading time is very fast which you as a simmer will see as a very smooth motion in the gauge. This PFD is very similar to the real PFD located in e.g. the Boeing B737 series and an absolute delight to use because it is so realistic and smooth, that it provides the simmer with a very realistic experience.



The last function of this EFIS is actually a combi view where both the PFD and the EFIS is shown in one screen. When doing so the PFD and EFIS is of course smaller to view, but now the simmer gains a complete overview and this really contributes to add a huge amount of realism for the simmer. Since we are using an iPad we can manually choose to view the combi as 16:9 format or

9:16 format = laying down or standing up. This of course applies for all features included in the AirTrack.



Next report feature is the MCP (mode control panel) that displays information about autopilot altitude settings, Baro, IAS/Mach, VSI, Course 1 and 2 and the selected heading. Within this feature the simmer also has the possibility to activate the flight director, the A/T Arm function which is Auto Throttle arm function and various other selection and setting possibilities, that is included in an autopilot.

I tested this feature together with the GoFlight GF-MCP-PRO, and the AirTrack and the MCP-PRO interacted perfectly. I flew the aircraft using the MCP-PRO and all settings and changes were perfectly displayed on the AirTrack. This was indeed very realistic and perfect that they could work together and not just the default FSX together with the AirTrack.

This opens up new possibilities for this software and for using apps for iPad or iPhone together with flight simulators. I wanted to build my own home glass cockpit and was looking for various possibilities using several USB monitors and various downloadable software, but the price tags for this solution became very high - using the iPad or iPhone which is found in almost every home, all you actually need is just this piece of software that are created as an app, and you already then have your home glass cockpit with the cost of only the software.



A software program as the AirTrack of course also has to include a fully working FMC - this is a MUST and of course AirTrack also features an FMC. Programming the FMC is primarily done through the flight simulator, but several functions are also available using the iPad.



When flying I find this feature to be very important because it provides you with a huge amount of very specific and useful data. Most of the data shown here is of course also shown in the EFIS, but I really like the Route Statistics that is provided. That reminds me a lot of when flying in a real airliner and seeing the various flight information on the screen (passenger view). Tracked distance, Total planned distance, ETA, Current time, Distance remaining in both nmi's and time etc, this is really a superb information feature, that adds a lot of realism to my virtual flight, flying an airliner on route or for a holiday destination etc.

Only one thing that I could not understand was the Tracked Average Speed which I encountered some issues with. I don't know if I have misinterpreted it or if there is actually a small error in this feature. When flying, the TAS just accumulated and ended on a value of several thousand knots which I can't believe is correct, but other than that it worked perfectly.

The AirTrack also features a complete COM section with COM 1 and 2, NAV 1 and 2, ADF 1 and 2 and of course the XPDR which is the transponder. In this feature the simmer actually also has the possibility to e.g. switch on/off the transponder - well on/standby.

There is not that much to be said about this view, other than it provides the simmer with a quick and powerful overview of all communication systems within just one view.



The final view included in the AirTrack is the overview of Waypoints. This is also a powerful view that enables the simmer/pilot to plan ahead and setting the autopilot properly. The view consists of a list of each waypoint (saved waypoint) marked with ICAO code, name and specific data. When marking one of the saved waypoint the list to the right updates with additional information for this specific waypoint as e.g. IATA code, Latitude and Longitude, Elevation, Bearing, Distance, Weather information and the various ATC frequencies etc. This is indeed a very helpful tool when making preps for the approach.



My conclusion for this very unique add-on or app is, that it is indeed a very powerful and useful addition for the flight simulator experience. It is a must have for home cockpit builders that want to create a glass cockpit of modern world aviation.

The fact that this software is created as an app for both iPad and iPhone instead of a separate program for an additional USB monitor as we are used to, opens up a completely new world filled with new possibilities for all flightsim enthusiast.

The AirTrack is an excellent add-on for flight simulator and I will most certainly recommend fellow simmers to get this app. After that I have now tried it, I honestly cannot make a flight without it. It has increased the realism of flying and my virtual experience greatly - I love the fact that all movements within the AirTrack are super smooth and very realistic, the usage is simple and very user friendly and the download, installation of plug-in and sync can be done even without a manual.

I rate this app with a full house of 5/5 stars and also awards the AirTrack with the Rays Aviation Gold Award. I thank the people at IP Objects for creating this awesome app, that helps getting the flight simulator experience into the modern age of flight simulation. I also thank IP Object for contributing to the flightsim community with such an excellent addition to the flight enthusiasts virtual experience, and I hope to see more products from you in the future

Rays Aviation

