

Two ends of pilot training

Reconciling automation & basic flying skills

The challenge:

Today's pilot training is facing a special challenge. On the one hand more and more automation is put into flight decks and that requires training on how to use this automation safely and efficiently.

On the other hand, in the unlikely event of a failure, basic flying skills of a pilot are the key to safely handling a situation. Those need to be trained as well to build a strong fundament that every pilot can fall back to when necessary.

1st: Flying in the complacent 'cosiness' of automation

Recent studies reveal that knowledge about performance based navigation for example does leave plenty of room for improvement. Also there is a need to increase flight efficiency in terms of optimal use of automated systems in order to save unneeded costs.

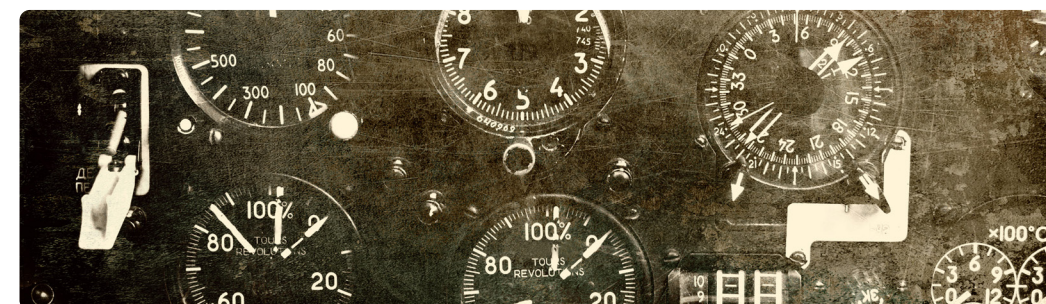
This all shows the need to widen pilots' training on the side of automation targeting an increase in flight safety and efficiency by optimum use of today's available automation.

2nd: The future requires us to reclaim some basic aviation principles from the past.

As today's automation usually works without failures pilots tend to rely on automation. Even more, pilots tend to not crosscheck automation for any possible failure.

Second big issue is the problem of eroding basic flying skills of pilots because most of the time they are using and relying on automation.

Today's pilot training needs to focus on the ability to use automation when it is appropriate and safe, the ability to detect any malfunction quickly and the basic flying skills to safely bring an aircraft to safe landing in the absence of any automation or assisting tools in case of breakdown of automation and assistance.



THE SOLUTION

Pilot training must be expanded!

Even initial pilot training must contain elements of automation and safe and efficient movement of aircraft. The "old fashioned" way of pilot training in terms of basic-T scanning, pitch & power and all what is not routinely used in daily flying must be trained to keep these abilities up.

The ladder of automation starting from VNAV/LNAV on top of the ladder going down to hand flying without the assistance of flight directors need to be present in today's pilot training.

For more information
download ECA's Pilot Training Compass "Back to future"
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