

FSUIPC: Application interfacing module for Microsoft Flight Simulator

Flight Simulator Universal Inter-Process Communication

by Pete Dowson, © 5th July 2004

Support Forum: <http://forums.simflight.com/viewforum.php?f=54>



Version 3.30 of FSUIPC.dll

Note: All my Windows based software is always available in the latest versions from <http://www.schiratti.com/dowson>. (Selected modules are also available elsewhere).

This is *not* my web site (I have none) but the list is there courtesy of Enrico Schiratti

This package contains the following parts:

FSUIPC.dll	The FS module itself, version 3.30
FSUIPC User Guide.doc	This document: please read it! (Word 97 format)
FSUIPC User Guide.pdf	This document: please read it! (Acrobat format)
FSUIPC History.doc	A list of changes in each version (Word 97 format)
FSUIPC for Advanced Users.doc	More technical information only (Word 97 format)
WeatherSet.exe	An 'Advanced Weather' application
WeatherSet.txt	Brief documentation for WeatherSet
WeatherSet2.exe	A 'New Weather' application, for FS2004 only
WeatherSet2.txt	Brief documentation for WeatherSet2
TrafficLook.exe	FS2002/FS2004 A.I. traffic details display
TrafficLook.txt	Brief notes about TrafficLook

If you want programming details you need to get the FSUIPC Developer Kit, (SDK).

Please try to read at least some of this document. It only grows as I add answers to some of the many questions folks send to me. If you have a question, please check here first. It has probably been asked and answered already!

In particular, your attention is drawn to the sections entitled "Important Notes ..." near the end of the document. These discuss assorted matters which are sometimes a matter of concern to FS user and which can impinge upon the use of FSUIPC.

... Thanks!

Introduction: what is FSUIPC?

FSUIPC is effectively a successor to FS6IPC.dll. Both modules are designed to allow external (i.e. *separate*) programs to communicate with and perhaps control Microsoft Flight Simulator. It seems some folks are rather confused about what this means, so I should emphasise here that Flight Simulator Panels (including their Gauges), Aircraft, Scenery and other graphics, and pretty much everything else *within* Flight Simulator, are *mostly* NOT correctable or influenced in any way by FSUIPC. Apart from some assistance in providing weather data to adventures (*pre-FS2004*), making adjustments in the weather itself, providing A.I. Traffic data and enabling better access to some engine variables for some Gauges, FSUIPC can only help external applications talk to FS, nothing more.

Some FS applications that may seem to be separate applications are, in fact, not: FSNav, WidevieW, FSAssist and FSTraffic are examples of applications for FS that are 'added-in' rather than 'added-on' and do not use the external FS6IPC interface.

FSUIPC.dll is a module for FS98, FS2000, FS2002 or FS2004, and it should be placed into the 'Modules' folder—see the **Installation** section below. Whilst its prime job is simply to do for FS2000, FS2002 and FS2004 exactly the same sort of work that FS6IPC.dll did for FS98, it also attempts to provide a compatible FS98 interface for these more recent versions so that applications written for FS98 will work with all of them. The prime aim has been forward compatibility throughout.

FSUIPC will also work within some versions of Microsoft Combat Flight Simulator. With CFS2 it provides access to many of the things that programs enjoy on FS, including full weather control. However, it should be noted that CFS2 is *not* the main target, and support for 100% of the features is certainly not guaranteed. With the original Combat Flight Simulator ("CFS1") the features are much more restricted: for instance there are no operating weather facilities in FSUIPC for CFS1. **FSUIPC will not work with CFS3. There is no place for add-in programs at all in CFS3.**

Whilst FSUIPC can be used in FS98 in place of FS6IPC, for most users there is no particular benefit in doing so. WideFS users will want to, as will any users of those more recent applications that specifically depend on FSUIPC rather than FS6IPC. Also, application developers may wish to use the IPC logging facilities, which are still provided in FS98.

Paying for FSUIPC Registration

Why should I pay for FSUIPC?

The short answer is that you do not have to. The registration by users of their copy of FSUIPC is not compulsory. Here are the pros and cons:

What you get if you don't pay:

- The ability to run all FSUIPC-dependent application programs which have an access key. Such programs are called "accredited", in the sense that their developers or suppliers have come to an agreement with me which permits them to access the FSUIPC interface and, if they wish, package a copy of FSUIPC with their product. For this access right, commercial and shareware products pay a fee or subscription. All genuine freeware programs get free access keys on application.

What you get if you pay:

- Facilities for joystick calibration, some fancy assignments, and button programming.
- Key press programming facilities.
- A few frills like locking FS panel parts in place, removing unwanted spikes from controls (as generated, for instance, by some panels), and other assorted facilities.
- Weather filtering options including wind and pressure, but **ONLY** for global weather. This is actually less important now, with FS2004's full local weather system operating in a much smoother way than in previous releases. However, the visibility facilities now incorporated are looking very effective!
- Automatic access for all compatible application programs whether they are accredited or not. No access keys are required for programs to use a fully registered user copy of FSUIPC. This may come in especially useful for programs that are no longer maintained by their developer and therefore not likely to become accredited.
- The possibility of additional user options to come. There are a few on my list, but I cannot guarantee any until I get to them and study the implications. I am also open to requests and suggestions, as in fact I have been over that last four years -- that is how FSUIPC has become what it is. If you are interested in the growth in this area even only over the last few versions, please review the History document, included in the ZIP separately.

- Support from myself for any queries or problems arising from the use of FSUIPC, or identifiable as FSUIPC even when using an application. I would still expect the application developer to be the prime support for his own application, and it is easier for him to sort out FSUIPC interfacing problems with me rather than between the user and me, if you see what I mean.
- All this for at least the life of FS2004, provided I live that long. I cannot guarantee to continue this into and beyond FS2006 or whatever, that would really be asking too much. However, your registration will certainly remain applicable for all version 3.xx releases, which will take us to the release of the next FS version, if and when that happens. Whether full or reduced price re-registration is needed for that next version will depend mainly upon the amount of re-writing found to be necessary at that time.

How much do I pay? How do I pay?

For most folks there is only one place for payment and registration, and that is via SimMarket, at:

http://secure.simmarket.com/product_info.php?products_id=538

For those who don't like Internet transactions, or don't have Internet access, don't worry, I provide details below of other ways.

There will be a special low rate that I hope to hold until at least Christmas 2003. If things work out well, then this special offer may be extended, possibly indefinitely. But I cannot guarantee that. These are the special offer prices:

User registration of FSUIPC only: 20 Euros

User registration of WideFS only: 20 Euros

User registration of both together: 30 Euros

Euros are stipulated because SimMarket operates in Euros. They accept other currencies, depending upon the payment method, but the price is always based on the Euro. As a rough guide at the time of writing the Euro is worth about \$US1.12 or about 70 pence in the UK, making the pricing for FSUIPC about \$US22, or £14 sterling UK.

A word about WideFS. This is a part of FSUIPC in the sense that it extends FSUIPC's interface to other PCs on a Network. Theoretically I could extend the application key access system to that networked interface too, so that the use of WideFS would be free for accredited programs. However, I don't think that is quite fair. WideFS has probably required more support from me than FSUIPC over the six or seven years that it has been around, and I think I really do need to account for that, a little. Furthermore, attempting to support the access key system across the network would make things much more complex, and I certainly would not be releasing an FS2004 compatible version for a long time if I needed to do that.

So, whilst I do expect applications rather than users to purchase the access rights to the FSUIPC interface, I expect the user to pay just a little for the ability to run them over a Network.

Here are the details of the different ways of paying at SimMarket (see <http://secure.simmarket.com/paymentoptions.php> for the latest. This is quoted directly from there, by permission):

Payment Options at www.simmarket.com

We want to make buying as smooth and easy as possible for you.

simMarket aims to provide the largest range of payment options available over the Internet today, allowing you to choose the payment option best suited to your personal and business needs.

All of these options have been designed to be as safe and secure as possible for your peace of mind. Our site uses the latest in security so you can be sure your transaction is 100% safe.

- [Credit Cards](#)
- [Checks / International Money Orders](#)
- [Bank Transfers](#)
- [Cash](#)

If you would like more information on any of these options, just click on the appropriate link.

Credit Cards

We accept all major credit and charge cards including Visa, MasterCard, American Express and JCB.

simMarket does not store your credit card details at any stage, other than during the processing of your purchase.

We use only German Industry recognised transaction Encryption and Payment Gateway Technology.

To help protect you, we use the international standard SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) security, which is the most secure way to send credit card details over the Internet. SSL works with Netscape Navigator / Microsoft Internet Explorer versions 3.02 or higher. It is automatic, and you will receive instant notification if your browser does not support SSL.

When you access a secure page in Internet Explorer a small padlock will appear at the bottom of your browser (for Netscape, the key at the bottom will be blue and unbroken), where you can verify our company and encryption level.

Checks / International Money Orders

Checks & International Money Order purchases are available. When you proceed to the checkout select the Checks/International Money Orders payment option, and follow the payment option information carefully.

Please make all Check & International Money Orders payable to **The simFlight Network**, and in EUROS or US Dollars.

Orders made using this option will not be despatched until we have received the Check or International Money Order and it has been cleared or verified by our Bank.

Note: You must add EUR10.00 or US\$10.00 to the total amount of your order to cover bank charges incurred when we clear your Check or International Money Order.

Note: We will accept only **International Money Orders**, please ensure you do not send money orders for national use only.

Bank Transfers

You can make bank transfers to us. When you proceed to the checkout select the Bank Transfer payment option, and follow the payment option information carefully. **You must ensure that all bank charges are covered by you, e.g. that the total amount of the order is fully credited to our account.**

Our Bank Details :

Account Owner: Miguel Blaufuks

Account # 1092294

Sort # 55060708

Bank Name: Raiffeisen-Volksbank eG Mainz, Germany

Reference: Your Order Number

International Bank Details for Non-German Transfers:

IBAN DE53550607080001092294 BIC GENODE51MZ1

SWIFT: GENO DE61MZ21 via GENO DE55

Orders made using the Bank Transfer option will not be despatched until the total amount has been received on our bank account in full.

Cash

Cash purchases are available. When you proceed to the checkout select the Cash Orders payment option, and follow the payment option information carefully. Please send to this address only:

The simFlight Network

Customer Sales Dept.

Anna-Stenner-Str. 42

55129 Mainz

Germany

We recommend sending by registered mail for maximum security.

Note: Currencies accepted are EUROS and US Dollars only

Orders made using the Cash option will not be despatched until we have received the full amount.

Installation

Copy the FSUIPC.DLL file into your flight simulator Modules folder.

IMPORTANT: If you cannot *see* the DLL, please go to the Explorer's View menu. Select "Folder Options" and then the "View" Tab. Then choose either the "Show all files" button or the "Do not show hidden files"—anything *but* the "Do not show hidden or system files" button! (Windows 98 now seems to regard all DLLs as system files and not the "application extensions" they usually are!).

That's it! If you already use FSUIPC and haven't updated it for a *long* time (and I mean many months) you should probably remove your existing FSUIPC.INI file, found in that same folder, before running FS. This isn't usually necessary (and it isn't *necessary* now), but a number of entries in the older INI file are no longer relevant to FSUIPC and may lead to confusion later. By deleting the file you ensure that you start off with a clean default setup.

The other programs (TrafficLook, WeatherSet and WeatherSet2) are not needed. You don't have to install them, they are only examples. If you do want to try them just place them in some folder of your own choice (e.g. "FsProgs"). You can run them by double-clicking on them in Explorer, or making a shortcut. They should only be run after FS is running, with FSUIPC installed.

WARNING: Do **NOT** keep multiple versions of FSUIPC (or any other module) in your Modules folder with simple renaming. If they are in that folder and still have the file type "DLL" (or one beginning with DLL) they will still be loaded and used by Flight Simulator. The name is actually not relevant at all—Flight Simulator looks at all DLL files in that folder and loads all those that show the right external links. If you want to keep older versions of any modules, make a separate folder (e.g. "OldModules") and put them in there, with any name you like. If duplicate copies of FSUIPC are running inside Flight Simulator you will get some odd effects which will be hard to pin down.

ADDITIONAL WARNING: It has recently come to my attention that FS2002 and FS2004 may also load additional DLLs inserted into the main FS folder, not just the Modules folder. This is most certainly *not* the correct place to install FSUIPC (or any of my FS modules), but take care not to have duplicates there even if you do install correctly otherwise.

Okay. If you are *not* Registering FSUIPC, because you are installing it only in order to run application programs or add-in aircraft panels which are approved for use with FSUIPC, and which already have access rights, then you have now completed installation and can simply load up Flight Simulator and go fly.

However, if you have obtained a Registration Key for FSUIPC, then there are more things to do before flying. First off, if you are using Windows 2000 or XP and you are *not* in a mode now in which you have full administrative privileges, you need to log out and log back in as the administrator (this is usually the first user of the system). Then, please load up Flight Simulator, get to the normal flight mode screen (not the initial selection menu), and continue at the section below entitled **Entering Registration Details**.

Note: If, after correctly performing the installation step, you find that some external program will not recognise that FS is running, or talks about FS6IPC, see the Help! section later, or consult the external program's author or web-site for assistance. If you have not registered FSUIPC yet, then the most likely reason is that the program has not yet been accredited—it needs an access key. This would be confirmed by a glance at the FSUIPC.LOG file in the Modules folder. Use any text editor to view this file.

De-Installation

If you ever want to remove FSUIPC from your FS installation, so that it cannot possibly have any further effect, just delete the FSUIPC.DLL file from the Flight Simulator Modules folder. You can delete the FSUIPC.INI and FSUIPC.KEY files as well, and any FSUIPC logs you may find there, but with the DLL removed those other files will be doing nothing. (*Also check that you don't have the DLL in the main FS folder too—if so, delete it there*).

Please note that with FSUIPC removed most of my other modules will no longer operate correctly. If you are a user of any of WideFS, EpicInfo, Esound or PFC, then you should *not* remove FSUIPC without also removing those other DLLs too. Under FS2002 this may also apply to AutoSave and GPSout.

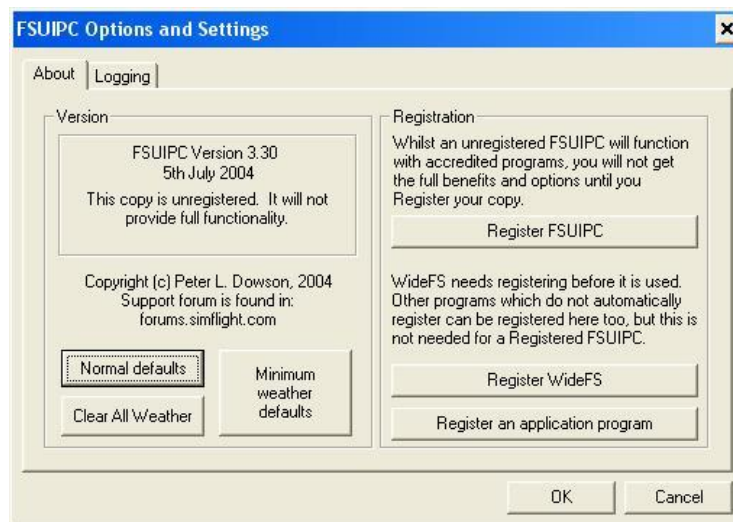
Entering Registration Details

With FSUIPC.DLL correctly installed, and Flight Simulator running and ready, look at the Menu. (Press ALT to bring it up if it is hidden). There should be a “Modules” item, probably the vary last word at the right-hand end of the menu. Select it. You should then see “FSUIPC ...”. If you don’t, press ESC to get out of the menu, wait a few seconds, and then try again. If you still don’t see it, then either you have not installed FSUIPC.DLL correctly or there is an older version running.

WARNING: No “Modules” Menu Entry!

The product called *WindowBlinds* can prevent the FSUIPC menu entry appearing in FS. In fact it can prevent any add-in menu entries. To get around this you should use *WindowBlinds* settings. Go to “Per Application” settings and search for the FS .exe. Then check the first option in the *WindowBlinds* settings box for the selected .exe and tell it to use the default skin. Then, I’ve been told, it will all work

If you have the correct menu entry, select it and you will get the FSUIPC settings display which will be similar to the one shown here (the version number and date may be different):



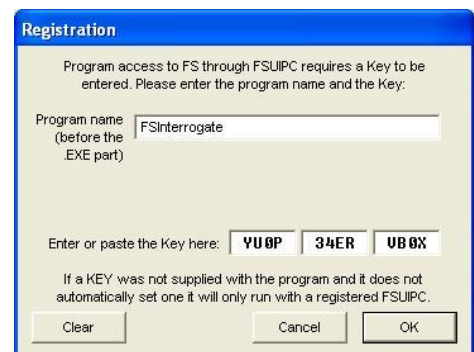
You will see that the copy is described as “unregistered”, and the entire right-hand part is entirely concerned with Registrations. If you are running on Windows 2000 or XP and you are not logged in as the administrator the message at the top right will be different, and warn you that you cannot Register at this time. You will have to close down FS and log in as administrator to register. The registration process is akin to program installation in this regard.

Program registration

Programs with appropriate credentials will run with an unregistered copy of FSUIPC provided that they are provided with an **Access Key**. If the key is automatically provided to FSUIPC when the programs run, then you do not need to be at all concerned. However, in some cases (hopefully very few), a manual method of entering the Key for a program is provided. This is accessed via the **Register an application program** button, and the details are entered into a dialogue box, as shown on the right. The details to be entered will be supplied by the program author or its suppliers, probably in the documentation or in a “read me” file. Once this is done and accepted, the relevant program can be run without restarting FS—but if that program is already running it will have to be restarted.

These keys are remembered by FSUIPC in a file called “FSUIPC.KEY”, which is saved in the Modules folder. Please be sure to keep a backup copy of that file, for safety.

Gauges and DLL modules installed by other programs and add-on aircraft also sometimes need an access key, and if necessary this can be entered this way too. In this case the “Program name” will include the “.gau” or “.dll” part, which is entered too.



User registration

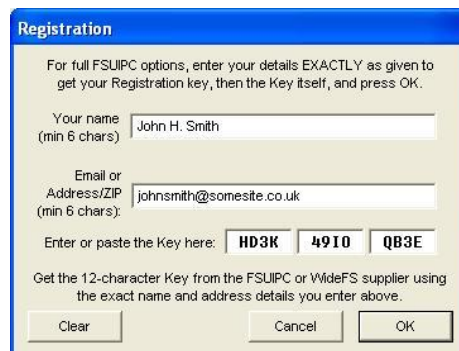
If you pay for a registration key for FSUIPC then you get access to all the facilities it provides, and all programs will interface to it whether they are accredited or not.

The 12-character key you will purchase is inextricably related to the name and address (normally your email address) you used when applying for the Key. It is this information you need to enter. Click the **Register FSUIPC** button and enter the details *exactly* as you are given in the details supplied with the Key—see the example on the right.

After successful entry, FS *must* be restarted before the registration becomes effective. Save a copy of your FSUIPC.KEY file (from the FS Modules folder). If you change computers, or reinstall Windows, you will need to re-enter the registration details and these are recorded for you in that. KEY file. You can use the same KEY file in multiple FS installations on the same PC (for instance, in FS2002 and FS2004). After registering in one, simply copy the file across to the other.

Note that Keys can be provided which expire on a certain date, or they can last forever. Normally, for full payment, an everlasting key will be provided.

WideFS registration follows an identical procedure and can be done at the same time. Please note that your name and address details *must* be identical for both, and, in fact, will be copied for you by FSUIPC when you press the **Register WideFS** button. But the access key will always be different. It, too, is saved in the FSUIPC.KEY file.

A screenshot of a 'Registration' dialog box. It has a blue title bar and a yellow background. The text inside says: 'For full FSUIPC options, enter your details EXACTLY as given to get your Registration key, then the Key itself, and press OK.' There are three input fields: 'Your name (min 6 chars)' with 'John H. Smith' entered, 'Email or Address/ZIP (min 6 chars):' with 'johnsmith@someite.co.uk' entered, and 'Enter or paste the Key here:' with three buttons labeled 'HD3K', '4910', and 'QB3E'. Below these is a line of text: 'Get the 12-character Key from the FSUIPC or WideFS supplier using the exact name and address details you enter above.' At the bottom are three buttons: 'Clear', 'Cancel', and 'OK'.

MUCH OF THE REST OF THIS DOCUMENT IS VALID ONLY FOR REGISTERED COPIES OF FSUIPC

Setting FSUIPC options (FS2000, FS2002, FS2004 or CFS2)

Options for registered installations of FSUIPC are controlled by parameters in a file called FSUIPC.INI. This is not supplied with FSUIPC, but it is generated the first time you run FS with FSUIPC installed. It sits with FSUIPC in the FS Modules folder. Most of the options of general interest are accessible whilst running FS (or CFS2), via a Menu entry. This is by far the best and easiest way to access the more popular options. There are still some you can only access by editing the FSUIPC.INI file, but most of these are not useful to most users and are only described in the Advanced User's Guide. The exception is the facility for running additional programs automatically when running Flight Simulator, but there is a separate ZIP packaged utility available to assist in this—see José Oliveira's "FSUIPC Run Options" package.

With FSUIPC.DLL correctly installed and registered, and Flight Simulator running and ready, go to the FSUIPC options. (You know how to do this now, as you had to go there to enter your registration details—use the Mouse to select the Modules menu entry, then FSUIPC, or simply press ALT then M then F).

Unless you are starting off with a copy of FSUIPC.INI carried over from a previous version or installation, press the **Normal defaults** button. This may not change anything, but it just makes sure that in the discussion below we are both talking about the same thing.

You don't need to understand all parts of the Options and Settings to use FSUIPC. But if you want to get maximum benefit it would be worth making a little effort. You can experiment anyway without doing any real harm, and you can always press **Normal defaults** at any time, and start again.

Another button here, **Minimum weather defaults**, is there mainly to help WidevieW users to set up their *client* PC (not the *server*) so that WidevieW can copy the weather over correctly without FSUIPC interfering. WidevieW is a system for multiple views of FS over a Network, and is made by Luciano Napolitano.

The **Clear All Weather** button is just a convenience provided for those who use FSUIPC's weather control and find it awkward to clear weather in FS's own dialogues. As you'll see, there's also a way of assigning this to a "hot key" so you can do it without going into menus at all. Note that FS won't actually clear the weather until you return to normal flight mode—i.e. exit the dialogues.

IMPORTANT: ProFlight2000 users, or users of other Adventure packages which (probably optionally) set their own weather, will also find it best to press the "Minimum weather defaults" button, as this ensures least interference in the weather being set by the Adventures. Problems in FS2000's weather engine can cause crashes if both Adventures and other programs, or even the user, attempt to control the weather simultaneously. The same probably applies to FS2002, though it is doubtful that Adventure programs will run so well with FS2002 in any case—support for Adventure Programming Language is being phased out by Microsoft in favour of "ABL", a more Basic-like language.

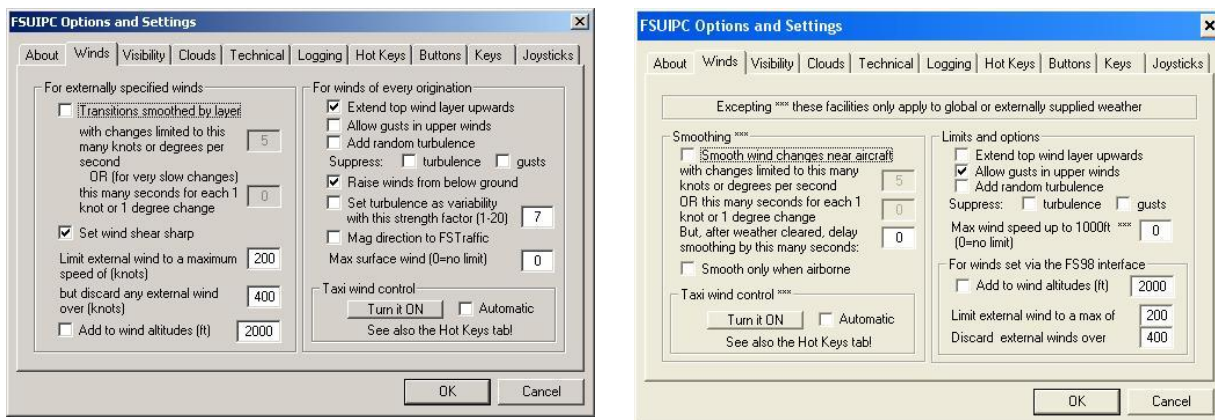
If you don't use the weather generation feature in your adventures, then you are free to use FSUIPC's weather facilities without any adverse consequences.

FS2004 does not support the older Adventure system, but there may well be similar considerations for packages and lessons using the newer ABL system.

Before going on to look briefly at each page of Options provided by FSUIPC, a quick word about how to operate the window. The tabs at the top select between various "pages" of options. You can visit all these, make changes, as you like, but nothing is actually changed until you press the "OK" button. If you press the ESCape key or "Cancel", or close the window using the close button at top right, then *none* of the changes you have made on *any* page will be effective. Pressing the "OK" button confirms *all* the changes made in *all* pages. You can re-visit any and all before confirming them in this way.

Winds

This is what the Winds page looks like (on FS2002, left, FS2004, right) with default settings:



FS2000 is like FS2002, the only difference being that the "raise winds from below ground" option isn't provided there (it isn't needed).

What about all these options? Well, first, they need to be considered separately for FS2004 and the others. When it comes to weather, FS2004 is in another plane from its predecessors (*no pun intended!*).

FS2000 and FS2002

Although it isn't enabled by default, I *really* recommend you enable Transitions. This gives controlled changes in the winds when you move from one wind layer to another. Combined with the wind 'smoothness' setting it stops all sudden wind changes (other than those from gusts and turbulence), even when flying from one weather area to another with an external program controlling the weather. The option can be controlled by the external weather program, in which case the main selecting checkbox is disabled in this Settings page.

Wind transitions do not operate when you use FS2000/2002's 'real weather'. On FS2000 there's only one layer of wind then in any case, and in both FS2000 and FS2002 Flight Simulator itself interpolates and thus operates the transitions with downloaded 'real' weather.

In case you ask, 'if wind transitions are so good, why doesn't FSUIPC enable them by default?' you should understand that there is a minor downside to using wind transitions. The transition from one wind layer to another is calculated over a 500 metre thick layer across the boundary. An appropriate intermediate wind is calculated for these altitudes, and this becomes the 'target' wind, subject to the smoothing. This is good, but if you fly level within this transition layer, your wind speed and direction won't be the same as the one below, nor the one above, but one in between. This may confuse you or your Air Traffic Controller (depending upon how the interfacing program works).

So, as long as you understand this and accept it, go ahead and enable the transition option.

FS2004

Not all of the options on this page are applicable to any of FS2004's own real weather downloads for local weather, nor to the "Themes" which are based around settings for local stations. They *are* applicable to weather injected into FS2004 from an external program—in fact in this case they all apply to both local and global weather.

However, the most useful facilities **do** operate on all FS winds, *from whatever source*. The smoothing, taxi winds and the limit on surface winds all operate on the final wind simulated in FS2004. They *do not* operate on the Weather developed in the FS weather engine. I could not find a satisfactory way into that, so one of the odd results of using these facilities is that the ATIS and other reported wind sources may sometimes not agree with the actual wind made to prevail at the aircraft. Additionally, the fact that the facilities are applied to the final resulting wind at the aircraft may lose you all turbulence and wind variation effects. I'm afraid it's either one or the other.

That accepted, you will find that applying at least the wind smoothing option will prevent that occasional 180 degree wind reversals you may see otherwise. Those appear to be due to a bug in the FS2004's wind interpolation actions, for deriving specific wind effects between conflicting weather stations. If you don't mind losing some of the variable wind effects in order to avoid sudden and drastic wind shears then enable wind smoothing.

For all (with some differences noted):

Remembering it only applies to global weather (it only needs to), you can leave the smoothing set to 5 (i.e. 5 knots per second and 5 degrees per second), or reduce it to, say, 1 or 2, for even greater smoothing. Consider, though, that it will take longer to get to the 'correct' wind for your altitude when it is constrained to change slowly. For folks who would like the winds changing almost imperceptibly, you can instead specify the number of *seconds* for each 1 knot and 1 degree change. Note that whichever smoothing is not in use is set to zero (0).

The other options in the Winds section can be left to default for now, but here are some notes on what they do:

- The **Wind shear** option is related to the FS2000/2002 option with the same name, and just tells FSUIPC how to set that option when setting winds on behalf of an external program. Note that, whilst the "wind shear sharp" seems wrong to be enabled by default, this is because of an apparent bug in FS2000's own smoothing action. (And in any case, it isn't effective when using wind transitions as then there's only one layer). Whether this applies to FS2002 is not clear. It doesn't apply to FS2004 and so the option is omitted.
- **Limit wind** and **discard ...**: These two limits on external winds are there to prevent odd things happening if a weather program operating across an Internet link gets corrupted data and attempts to set ridiculous wind speeds. This only applies to programs using the original FS98-compatible interface to FSUIPC, *not* to programs like FSMeteo, which uses the Advanced Weather Interface (AWI), nor to new versions which may use the New Weather Interface (NWI).
- The **Add to wind altitudes** option allows you to make FSUIPC add a specified number of feet to the altitudes of each wind layer specified by the external weather control program you are using, if any. This is only present to get around the problem apparent with some programs where, at high altitude airports, the surface wind is specified with an upper altitude at or below ground level! On FS2004 this is only used for winds provided via the FS98 interface.
- **Extend top wind layer upwards** gets over the problem with FS2000's own downloaded weather where only the surface wind is provided and it ends at 2000 feet or so above ground. With this option enabled, the same wind extends all the way up to 100,000 feet. In FS2002 you can get upper wind layers downloaded too, so this option is not so important in FS2002 unless you are saving downloading time and not getting the upper winds. [*Note that if wind transitions are in operation, the top wind layer is 'tapered off' to zero wind at its highest altitude, so extending this gets you zero winds above*]. In FS2004 this option may be useful when older weather programs are used.
- **Allow gusts in upper winds** does not make such gusts, but simply does not remove them. Normally FSUIPC stops gusts in all wind layers except the surface one, as upper wind gusts simply aren't realistic. This option can be controlled by the external weather program. In that case it is disabled in this Settings page.
- **Add random turbulence** does just that. The turbulence may be added to any and all wind layers. Note that the wind turbulence in FS2000 doesn't actually seem to do a lot in any case. See the next two options too!
- **Suppress turbulence** stops any wind turbulence or variance being set at all. This is primarily intended for use in FS2002 when the A.I. traffic density has been set high. It seems that FS2002 fails to optimise its weather handling when there is any turbulence and, with high numbers of AI aircraft flying, the frame rates can become intolerably low. You will also want to consider suppressing cloud turbulence (see the Clouds section). [*I don't think this AI problem applies to FS2004*].
- **Suppress gusts** is there for folks who don't like any gusts. Use this when learning to fly! (See also the Notes below about FS2000's gust settings).

- **Raise winds from below ground** (*FS2002 only*) makes FSUIPC alter downloaded real weather to ‘fix’ declared surface winds that appear to be below ground. Where the surface wind reaches only 1000 feet (above sea level) whilst the reporting station is actually *above* this altitude, FSUIPC extends the wind to within a 100 feet of the top of the next wind layer up, and copies that wind speed and direction too. This actually makes no actual change to the weather being experienced. It just enables several of FSUIPC’s options to operate correctly, the most obvious one being the Taxi Wind facility. *[Note that discussions with Microsoft reveal that the surface wind “altitude” is, in fact, a “thickness” instead, so applies to that amount above the ground—i.e. it is effectively the AGL upper altitude for the wind, related to the elevation of the specific METAR station. Global weather has an effective “elevation” of 0. This sounds plausible, but treating it this way did not produce the desired results in FS2002. FS2004, on the other hand, seems okay in this regard]*
- **Set turbulence as variability** makes FSUIPC convert wind turbulence, from whatever source, into “wind variance”, another FS2000/2002 feature otherwise inaccessible to users. Whilst this is not a precise simulation of turbulence, it does seem to provide some turbulent effects (by small random variations in wind direction), which is more than can be said for the turbulence option itself.

It is not needed or provided for FS2004. On FS2000 this option affects all wind layers. On FS2002 it is only applied to upper wind layers, not the surface wind. This is because the turbulence appears to work properly in FS2002’s surface wind (which it didn’t on FS2000), and having both turbulence and variance operating together makes it near impossible! <G>

If you enable this, you can also control the level of variability that FSUIPC generates. It is calculated in proportion to the turbulence levels, but different folks have different ideas about what is reasonable for each setting. My idea of the ‘correct’ level is represented by 10 (meaning 100%). The default, as shown in the picture above, is now 7 (for 70%). You can set any value from 1 to 20. *[Note that the effect of this factor is made greater in FS2002 compared to FS2000 as the results seem more feeble otherwise].*

- **Mag direction to Lago’s FSTraffic** (FS2000) is an interim way of correcting some of FSTraffic’s slightly dubious runway assignments, due to its use of the True wind direction instead of the Magnetic direction (runways are usually numbered according to their magnetic heading). This will make FSTraffic more likely to choose the same runways as ATC adventures such as those generated by Radar Contact and ProFlight20000.

Note: In calm conditions, ATC may assign a runway according to the remnant “direction” value of the non-existent wind. On the other hand, earlier versions of FSTraffic seem to provide no traffic with no winds, while recent versions appear to choose a runway at random. To deal with this FSUIPC now always makes sure FSTraffic sees a wind of at least 1 knot. This occurs whether or not the magnetic direction option is selected.

- **Maximum surface wind speed** is self-explanatory. Useful when learning to fly, or if you think the flight modelling in the simulator is all wrong with cross wind approaches. Note that, in FS2000 and FS2002, this operates on the actual surface wind layer, however far that extends. On FS2004’s localised weather this is not the same: it applies to winds within 1000 feet of the surface. This is because there are no such things as layers at the software level this facility operates at in FS2004.
- In FS2000 and FS2002, and if you are in the surface wind at the time, the **Taxi Wind** button change the wind speed between the correct requested value, and just 1 knot. This is to prevent the excessive weather-vaning of light aircraft, making taxiing difficult. The button is an **On** button when the taxi winds are off, and you set it by clicking this button. The button then changes to an **Off** button. This means you can tell whether you have it enabled or not quite easily.

I’d recommend checking the “Automatic” option, however. With this the wind is automatically set at 1 knot whenever the plane is on the ground, and it changes after take-off (smoothly if the wind transitioning facility is also enabled). **Note, however, that if you do this you won’t get the benefit of the wind on a short-field takeoff.**

If you prefer to control this manually, then to avoid having to go into the Settings to change it, you can assign a key combination as a “Hot Key”. Refer to the **Technical** page, later, for details of Hot Key options.

Note for FS “real weather download” users: Because of a combination of the way FS’s ATC decides on runways, and the way the surface winds are derived, selecting “taxi wind” for an easy approach at high altitude airports with an ILS approach only at one end, can result in ATC re-routing you on late finals. To stop this happening, try not to select taxi winds for such approaches.

In FS2004 the taxi wind option works at the simulation end of things, not in the weather engine. It is not limited to the surface wind layer because there are no layers in the part of FS where it is applied. It also is not likely to be noticed by ATC nor any of the usual weather read-outs such as ATIS.

NOTE about gusts (FS2000):

There are parameters within the FS2000.CFG file which control some aspects of FS2000's simulation of wind gusts. An FSUIPC user kindly wrote and informed me of the results of some experiments he had conducted with these, and as a result we can recommend these settings (all in the [weather] section of FS2000.CFG):

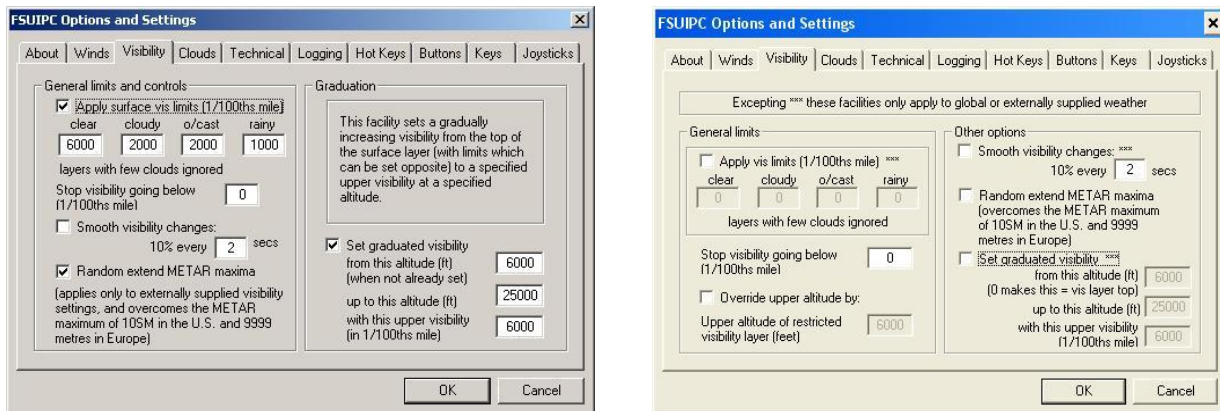
```
MinGustTime=150  
MaxGustTime=1500  
MinGustRampSpeed=1  
MaxGustRampSpeed=200
```

The default values for the first two give much too short a period for wind speed changes—more like turbulence than gusts. Leave the other values to their defaults (we aren't sure what they do yet! <G>).

Whether it is worth changing similar parameters in FS2002 hasn't been determined, and I'm pretty sure things are a lot better in FS2004 in any case.

Visibility

This is the Visibility page (on FS2002, left, FS2004, right) with default settings:



The main options here of note are the ones to enable the visibility to be limited and to provide a visibility that is graduated from a defined surface value up to a maximum at cruising altitudes. Except on FS2004 these are all enabled by default, operating up to 60 miles at 25000 feet. This graduated visibility option can be controlled by the external weather program. In that case the main on/off checkbox is disabled in this Settings page.

In FS2004 (only) you can set the graduated visibility option to start at the top of the visibility layer, and graduate the visibility value from there up to the upper altitude. To do this, set the lower altitude for graduated visibility to 0. There is no equivalent to this in FS2002 or FS2000 because FSUIPC operates in those by providing one very high visibility layer, not a graduated part above the layer.

There are four different maximum values for the surface level visibility. One is for when it's raining or snowing, defaulting to 10 miles, two are for cloudy conditions, defaulting to 20 miles, and the other is for 'clear' conditions, defaulting to 60 miles (so effectively defeating the graduated visibility action). Please note that in this context 'clear' means no cloud layer with more than 2/8ths cover, so allowing for nice "wispy bits" (and FS2000 jet trails), and 'overcast' is assumed when there are 7/8ths cover in any layer. If it is cloudy or overcast *and* raining or snowing then the minimum of the two relevant values set for these conditions is applied.

IMPORTANT NOTES

In FS2000 and FS2002, the reason there's a separate maximum for 'clear' conditions is to enable you to see blue skies by day and stars by night. Because of the way FS2000 implements the restricted visibility graphics, if the default maximum visibility of 20 miles is used at all times on the surface then you only ever see white skies (by day) or black ones (by night). Folks thought this to be a bug, hence this distinction. But you pay a price. You'll find that your frame rates are a lot less in clear conditions than when it is cloudy unless you change the maximum visibility value for 'clear' conditions to 2000. The choice is yours. By using these options, you can boost frame rates by having a lower surface visibility (for landings and takeoffs), without ruining the splendid views from aloft. Even on my 1Gb Athlon I can double the FS2000 frame rates by reducing the visibility. Think about it.

Note that the overall maximum visibility set in FSUIPC can actually be set higher than the limit allowed in the Display Quality settings in the FS Options, and it then seems that the visual extension beyond that FS limit does actually operate! This is an unexpected result—but it may not apply to FS2004.

WARNING: FS2002's visibility effects are, in this author's opinion, really ugly compared to those in FS2000. If the visibility is more than about 4 miles but less than 'infinite' (not just 'unlimited', which is limited by your Display settings) there is always a band of blue sky along the horizon. It seems that FS2002 only draws the clouds, whether overcast or sparse, to the visibility limit. The lower the visibility, the nearer the clouds stop! They stop in straight lines, looking most unrealistic, and even making a line in the sky. The so-called limited visibility below this line shows the blue sky, not a white or gray mist as it should—*until* the visibility is reduced to around 4 miles or less. However, by the time it is reduced that far, the textured clouds become just a plain white or gray. All in all, this is a giant backward step from FS2000 and I am really glad it is fixed in FS2004. In fact FS2004's visibility system is really good compared to both FS2000 and FS2002.

Smooth visibility changes works for *all* weather in FS2004, but only for *global* weather supplied by outside programs in FS2000 and FS2002. It introduces visibility changes gradually when selected. You can adjust the speed at which the visibility is allowed to change. (*This of course does not affect sudden visibility changes caused by clouds*). This option is defaulted off, and does not occur at all for FS2000/FS2002's local weather (including downloaded 'real weather').

On FS2004, the **upper altitude of restricted visibility** can be set by FSUIPC, for global and local weather injected by external programs. This allows you to limit the thickness of the fog or mist layer so that when you climb out of it you get blue skies (or fancy clouds) above and around you, but still see the mist below. It's a really nice feature of FS2004.

The other options in this section are best left defaulted.

Random extend METAR maxima is provided to deal with the fact that most of the weather reports ("METARs") used by weather programs use a notation, when specifying visibility, which just gives "10SM" (10 Statute Miles) or "9999" (9,999 metres) for the visibility, whenever it is *at least* that good. The only exceptions, which are few and far between, are those weather stations which are attended and have the reports compiled manually rather than automatically.

With the option enabled, FSUIPC checks the visibility being set and adjusts it in three specific circumstances, as follows:

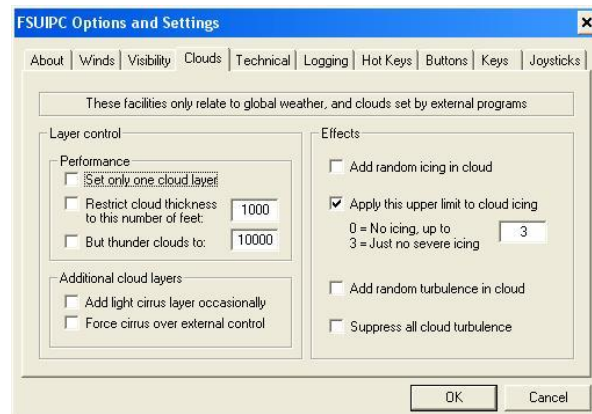
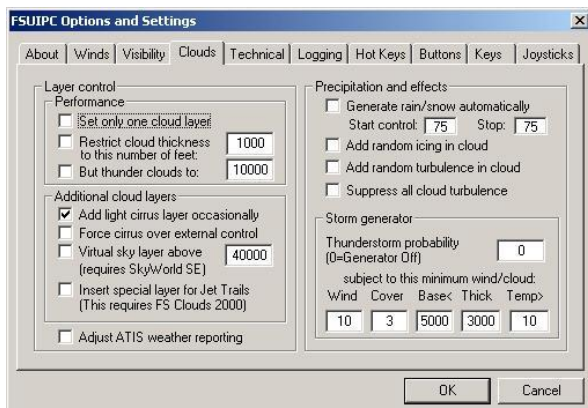
1. If the external program sets it to a value between 99.95 and 100.04 miles, it is reset to 6.20 miles. This is in order to rectify the results from any programs that take the 9999 metre maximum METAR visibility and transmit it literally as a number of 1/100ths of statute miles.
2. If the value is then in the range 6.15 to 6.24 miles (i.e. close to the 9999 metres maximum of a metric METAR), it is adjusted to a random value between 6.20 miles and the current maximum value.
3. If the value is between 9.95 and 10.05 miles (i.e. close to the 10 statute mile maximum of a U.S. METAR), then it is adjusted to a random value from 10 miles to the current maximum.

Note that the random extension is computed only once every five minutes or so, to avoid constant changes in visibility should the weather control program re-write the value from time to time.

This option can be controlled by the external weather program. In that case it is disabled in this Settings page.

Clouds (and Precipitation)

This is the Clouds page (on FS2002, left, FS2004, right) with default settings:



You will see that there are more options for FS2002 (and FS2000) than FS2004. Many have not been carried over into FS2004 simply because the cloud implementation there is so much better, it really doesn't need so many tweaks. However, the options for FS2004 weather apply to all externally provided weather, not only the global weather. Please see notes on FS2004 cloud problems and possible solutions to try later in this document ("**Important notes for FS2004**").

Anyway, to the details. FSUIPC can provide the following optional extra frills to the weather, when it is supplied by an external weather control program:

- [Not FS2004]: It can generate rain and snow showers on a semi-random basis. This option is influenced by the cloud cover (3 oktas or more needed unless the cloud is a thundercloud) and the cloud base (3000' AGL or less). There is then a random chance of rain or snow starting or stopping every minute or so. You can make this more or less likely by changing the numbers (range 0–100) for starting and stopping. Values of 100 in both places will force precipitation to one minute

and stop the next, for as long as the clouds are adequate. Values of 0 will make precipitation possible but very unlikely. The defaults of 75 make the rain operate as it has done in most previous versions of FSUIPC.

- It can add a wispy cirrus layer, to make the sky more attractive. Each time there's a change in the altitudes of clouds below, there's a 20% chance that the cirrus layer will be omitted even if the option is enabled.
- [Not FS2004, yet]: It can insert a special layer for FS2000 to show as Jet Trails. To use this you should have FS2000 installed and its Jet Trails enabled. Otherwise you'll just get a silly looking 1/8th cover layer of cumulus, rather high up. These trails aren't always generated: each time there's a change in the altitudes of clouds below, there's a 20% chance that the jet trails layer will be omitted. (Note that if a jet trail layer is produced there is more chance of the cirrus layer being added, if that option is also selected). This feature cannot be used at the same time as the next:
- [Not FS2004]: In FS2002 it can insert a special layer for FS Sky World SE to show as its "Virtual Sky". This is an overcast cirrus layer above all other layers, which is replaced by FSSW to show different coloured skies. To use this you should have FS Sky World SE installed and its V-Sky enabled. You can change the lowest altitude at which this "false sky" is drawn—40,000 feet being the default—but it will always be drawn at least 1000 feet above the next highest layer. If the optional cirrus layer is selected then it is *always* drawn, not omitted 20% of the time. Note that this feature is an *alternative* to the FS2000 Jet Trail option, above. You cannot have both enabled together.
- In FS2002 (only) you can select the option to **adjust ATIS weather reporting**. This is primarily intended for FSMeteo users. When this is enabled and you are using global weather (i.e. not downloaded or manually set local weather), FSUIPC substitutes corrected values for ATC and ATIS use. For cloud bases it provides AGL values, and for clouds, pressure (QNH) and visibility, it provides *destination* values. These are set separately by programs such as FSMeteo. The AGL values provided depend on FSMeteo setting the METAR station altitude. If you aren't using FSMeteo or a similar program, then FSUIPC uses the current ground altitude, which may give odd results at times. [Not needed in FS2004]
- On FS2004, where icing can have more effect, there is a facility to limit the maximum icing level that can be set. The number here is the maximum you wish to see—from 0 (no icing) to 4 (no limit: severe icing is accepted). Note that this can only really affect cloud icing set by third party weather programs. It can affect FS's own global weather, but only if the option (in the Technical page) is enabled to allow FSUIPC to interfere with FS weather—and even then, FS's global weather doesn't stay 'global' for long. This parameter is defaulted on, with a maximum of 3, so preventing third party weather programs (or FSUIPC's own random facility) generating severe icing levels.
- It can generate random turbulence and icing in cloud layers, which will change over a period of time. I find cloud turbulence quite reasonable (you *do* get some turbulence in most clouds). Icing doesn't seem to do so much in FS2000, and I'm not sure if it does much in later versions, but switch on the anti-ice devices anyway (and *always* use pitot heat unless you want an ASI failure)! Please also note that, due to the way FS2000 re-draws its clouds, even for such invisible changes, each time the turbulence or icing is changed (around every 4 minutes) you might notice some bursts of cloud "flicker". (The same phenomenon occurs whenever clouds are changed by anything, but this is not noticeable in all cloud configurations).
- Conversely, it can **suppress all cloud turbulence**. This is primarily intended for use in FS2002 when the A.I. traffic density has been set high. It seems that FS2002 fails to optimise its weather handling when there is any turbulence and, with high numbers of AI aircraft flying, the frame rates can become intolerably low. You will also want to consider suppressing wind turbulence (see the Winds section).
- [Not FS2004]: It can generate thunderstorms for you under certain conditions. You set the probability (0–100%) which is then checked every two minutes. For these generated storms to occur there has to be adequate wind, cloud and temperature—you can see the default requirements: 10 knots surface wind, 3/8ths or more cloud within 5000 feet AGL, and 3000 feet thick or more, and a surface temperature of 10 degrees Celsius or more.

The storms may last for many minutes, or be quite short. I'd recommend fairly low probability settings for most parts of the world, but since this is a menu setting option you can change it as you see fit.

Several of these settings can be controlled by the external weather program—and you can override that program: in the case of the cirrus clouds by the option here, or completely, for all options, by the separate checkbox on the Technical page. When the external weather program is controlling a facility, the option is disabled in the relevant Settings page.

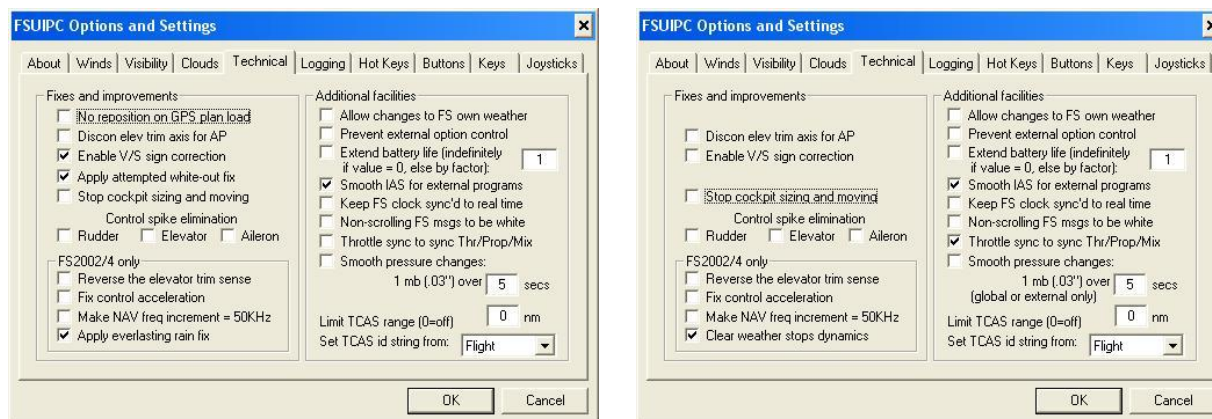
Several of the options in this section (**Set only one cloud layer** and the two **Restrict cloud thickness** options) are really simple performance aids for those with slower machines. I find using these makes no noticeable difference to performance on my (fast) machine, but you may find that FS2000/2002/2004 slows down considerably when you have more than one cloud layer set, or when any very thick cloud layer is set. Experiment with these to get the most satisfactory results on your system.

You may, of course, be using a weather program which sets unrealistically thick cloud layers in any case, in which the facility to split clouds into thinner types (say up to 7000 feet) and the very thick thunder clouds (cumulonimbus) separately will prove useful.

Note that, on FS2000 and FS2002 (but *not* FS2004), restricting the clouds to one layer will prevent the wispy cirrus layer being generated no matter how that option is set.

Technical

This is called “Technical” rather than “Miscellaneous” because at present it contains several options that don’t fit anywhere else. This is what the page looks like with default settings (FS2002 left, FS2004 right):



Let’s look at the “Fixes and Improvements” first:

- **Disconnect elevator trim axis for A/P:** This option is aimed at those who are using an analogue trim axis instead of the more usual trim up/down buttons, wheels or levers. When the FS autopilot has control vertically (such as in altitude hold or glideslope acquired modes), it disconnects the elevator axis so that joystick inputs don’t upset things, but doesn’t do the same with the trim axis. This FSUIPC option fixes that. If it is enabled it also disconnects the trim axis if an add-on or external autopilot disconnects the elevator axis via the special facilities in the FSUIPC interface (ref: offset 310A for programmers among you).
- **Enable A/P altitude fix (FS2000) or Enable V/S sign correction (FS2002/4):** This is actually rather technical. On FS2000 it does two things. First, it patches the autopilot in so that it calculates the aircraft’s pressure altitude in the same way as the altimeter display is calculated. Otherwise, when the atmospheric pressure (QNH) is different from the Altimeter setting (e.g. 29.92” or 1013mb, when flying at ‘Flight Levels’) the autopilot’s altitude hold will hold the aircraft at a different altitude than expected, and the difference is greater by the degree of difference in pressures.

Second, it corrects the Vertical Speed setting in the autopilot if it is set to descend when the target altitude is above the aircraft, or vice versa, to ascend when the target is below. (This latter correction is not performed if the target altitude is zero, or higher than 65,000 feet).

In FS2002 and FS2004, the first fix isn’t needed, but the second one is applied if selected.

There’s a possibility that you may find an aircraft panel that is programmed to drive the AutoPilot in a different way, using the V/S value to control climbs and descents irrespective of the altitude setting. If the latter is *not* set to zero or a value above 65000 feet, then this FSUIPC option could cause problems. In that case, turn it off. You can identify quite accurately whether the option is a source of such problems by turning on logging of “Extras”. Part of the extra data this logs is when the V/S sign is corrected: look for lines beginning “*** Vertical speed ...”.

The V/S sign correction should be disabled if you are using a panel or external autopilot which emulates a real airliner’s V/S modes correctly, as these can be set to fly *away* from the currently set altitude. The only restriction that the altitude value imposes in many airliners is that you cannot (under autopilot control) fly *through* that altitude—if approached the aircraft will level off.

- **No reposition on GPS plan load** patches FS2000/2002 so that, when you load a plan into the FS2000/2002 GPS, it doesn’t move the aircraft to the departure airport’s runway threshold. This isn’t needed on FS2004 as an option is provided for this.
- **Apply attempted white-out fix** is defaulted ‘on’ and refers to an attempt made in FSUIPC to prevent an FS2000 bug from fixing your visibility at a very low value after passing through clouds. This appears to be due to a bug in the weather module (WEATHER.DLL) and occasionally results in a really low visibility being imposed that sticks and cannot be

removed except by closing down FS2000 and restarting it. It has been conclusively demonstrated that this can happen with weather sourced from anywhere, including manually set and FS2000 downloaded 'real weather', and in a virgin installation of FS2000 (i.e. one unmolested by add-in modules such as FSUIPC). The low visibility actually comes from the temporary low visibility implemented when passing through clouds, and can stick when emerging from them, whether above or below. Details of the bug have been sent to Microsoft, but meanwhile I have devised a work-around and implemented it in FSUIPC. It detects when the visibility is lower than it should be, with the aircraft out of clouds, and tries to restore the correct visibility in a progressive manner. It isn't foolproof, but it is better than getting stuck in thick soup!

This bug may well be fixed in FS2002, or possibly changed so that this fix doesn't work. It is an unknown at the time of writing. It is definitely fixed in FS2004.

- **Stop cockpit sizing and moving** prevents you from re-sizing or moving any part of the panel or the docked scenery views. This option is for those of you who get annoyed by the accidental movement or resizing of parts of your cockpit when you are using the mouse merely to click a switch or adjust a control. Just remember, if you set this option, that you will need to temporarily un-set it if you want to re-arrange anything. This includes moving switchable parts of a cockpit, such as the radio stack, GPS, or throttle quadrant.

[NOTE: This option does *not* work if you have your Windows' Display Properties set to "show window contents while dragging", in the list of options in the Effects tab. FSUIPC then has no chance to prevent the re-draw]

- **Control Spike Elimination** provides controls to ignore signals specifying maximum possible deflection on rudder, aileron or elevator. These are mainly useful in conjunction with Wilco's 767PIC on FS2002, which seems to cause spurious rudder 'spikes' when flown with the yaw damper switched off, and also occasional spikes on the elevator (especially with the 1.3 version update).

Please note that if you fly with any of these options set you should also consider calibrating your controls in FSUIPC (see the Joysticks section, later), setting a "dead zone" at either extremes of the travel. If you don't do this you may find it impossible to obtain maximum deflection. Calibrate first, with the "spike removal" option off, then test it with the option back on.

- **Apply everlasting rain fix:** In FS2002 only, FSUIPC can (and does by default) fix the problem which causes the rain or snow to stick, no matter what weather changes are made. This seems to be fixed in FS2004.
- **Clear weather stops dynamics:** [FS2004 only] FSUIPC provides a "clear weather" hotkey facility, and a button on the About page, and also clears weather when requested by AWI (Advanced Weather Interface) weather programs, or automatically for external programs using the FS98-style weather interface. This action is normally needed before external programs try to impose any weather on FS, otherwise things get into a tangle and you don't get the right results. However, in FS2004 there's also a facility for having the weather dynamically changing of its own accord. This can be quite nice, but again it means you don't get what you expect. This option, when enabled (as it is by default) makes the mentioned "clear weather" actions also reset the weather dynamics to "no change". This is not a permanent change—next time you load up FS the slider will be back where you previously had it set.
- **Fix control acceleration** is provided, in FS2002/4 only, to try to fix the occasional stuck control acceleration—i.e. the problem with some panels where the increments/decrements to values like heading, course, and so on, get stuck at 10 (for instance—sometimes, for timing reasons, you get rather more unpredictability). These "accelerations" are actually legitimate when a key or mouse is held down long enough, but it seems some things can make them 'stick'. What happens is that inside FS there's a timing check: closely arriving controls trigger the acceleration. The problem appears to be that FS does not care whether these controls are all the same or all different. The assumption seems to be that, if they are arriving that close then they **MUST** be the same—the user couldn't move the mouse to another spot, or select another key on the keyboard, so quickly. However, some gauges or other driver programs can be sending controls very fast indeed, hence the problem. Whether this explains all the cases reported I don't know, but it seems likely.

The "fix" for this intercepts all controls, and changes the elapsed time check in FS before forwarding every different control, so that the time elapsed looks large enough. If it sees successive identical controls then it leaves them, so they can be accelerated as normal.

The end effect of this is likely to be the reverse of the original problem. For normal use of mouse and keyboard there is normally no difference, but if some gauge or driver starts sending controls very fast (i.e. at less than 400 mSec intervals) then the controls may not accelerate even when you expect them to. I tend to think this is better though.

Note that this fix is (now) defaulted off. This is because, for those exact same panels it is designed to help, the continuous arrival of those controls causes keyboard use to never accelerate. Numeric keypad users for throttle, elevator, rudder, aileron and trim, in particular, will find these controls very unresponsive as a result. If you use a joystick then I recommend enabling this facility, but otherwise make sure it is off.

- **Make NAV freq increment = 50KHz:** It seems that, in FS2002 for the first time, the NAV radios are tunable to 25KHz frequencies, like the COM radios. Thus the increment/decrement is 25KHz instead of 50KHz. This can cause some difficulty with cockpit designs suited to the current actual 50KHz spacing, so FSUIPC provides this option to force NAV radio frequencies to abide by 50KHz spacing (.00 .05 .10 .1595).
- **Keep FS clock synchronised to real time:** This facility, kindly donated by José Oliveira, compensates for the odd phenomenon of FS2002 losing time. It just synchronises the seconds values with that of your PC's system clock. Provided you always keep to the normal 1x simulation speed this should stop FS time running slower and slower compared to real time (or, rather, PC time, which may not be quite the same as real time either). At other than 1x simulation speeds the facility is temporarily disabled to avoid odd things happening on the FS clock.
- **Smooth IAS for external programs:** This is for FS2002 and FS2004. It is aimed at cockpit builders or users of Project Magenta who have large or sensitive displays for the Indicated Air Speed (IAS), and who want to eliminate the regular 'ratcheting' effect seen on the ASI during steep ascents or descents. This appears to be a problem in FS2002 itself. With the option enabled, FSUIPC provides a moving average for IAS values over about the last 1.3 seconds. *[with effect from version 3.04 this option is enabled by default].*

Additional facilities provided by FSUIPC and selected here are:

- **Allow changes to FS own weather** applies to FS2004 only, and if selected allows the global weather filtering actions to be applied, where possible, to FS2004's own global weather (that is, weather set specifically and globally by the user through the weather dialogues). Normally it is best to leave this option unselected, as otherwise, with any weather options set, you won't be able to keep any of FS's own "weather themes" selected—FS will keep reverting to "User Defined Weather".

Note that the three main visibility options (maxima, smoothing and graduation) are not affected by this option. These apply direct to the graphics settings rather than the weather structures, so they are not seen as "interference" with the weather by FS2004's engine.

- **Prevent external option control** does just that. There are about half a dozen options in these pages that can be set and held by an external weather program—when this is the case they will be disabled in these options (as indicated by graying). If you don't want this to occur, check here.
- **Extend battery life** keeps the voltage on the battery above failure point for longer. If it is enabled then the battery discharge can be prevented from reducing the voltage too low for a specified multiple of the normal FS run-down time. The default is '0' which is merely used to indicate infinity—the battery voltage will be kept up indefinitely. The factor can be 1–999. As an example, if the battery normally fails after 90 seconds, then a factor of 40 will keep it going for one hour. A factor of 1 is the same as disabling the facility.

This is a work-around for the rather fast battery discharge time on FS2000's (and FS2002's) airliners, whereby you can often lose your instruments and other electrically powered facilities whilst preparing for push-back, before starting the engines.

Note that, in FS2002, once the battery has discharged FS records an electrical failure in any case. FS2000 wasn't the same. FSUIPC cannot re-charge a battery once the voltage has been allowed to drop whether this is in FS2000 or FS2002.

FS2002 may not let you clear the electrical fault in its menu—you must recover power by either reloading the aircraft or, better, getting an engine started to re-charge the battery.

Incidentally, this facility seems also to be of use in FS2004.

- **Non-scrolling FS messages to be white:** This option merely allows application messages displayed in FS's own message bar (normally near the top of the outside view) to be coloured white on green, rather than the usual red on green, which can be rather difficult for some users to see clearly. Unfortunately at present this only applies to non-scrolling messages.

For this to work when you also have AdvDisplay.DLL installed, you need version 2.11 or later of that DLL.

- **Throttle sync to sync Thr/Prop/Mix:** When selected, this makes the Throttle Sync Hot Key (see the Hot Keys section) synchronise the Prop pitch and Mixture settings to the Engine 1 values, as well as the throttles.
- **Smooth pressure changes** will limit the changes in the barometric pressure supplied by an external weather program, to 1 milliBar (or hectoPascal, or about 00.03 inches Hg) per so many seconds—the range being selectable from 1 to 30. This smoothing does not occur whilst the aircraft is on the ground, and no changes will occur whilst the simulator is paused. If you use FSMeteo, which also provides pressure smoothing, this option is disabled unless the "Prevent external option control" option above is selected.

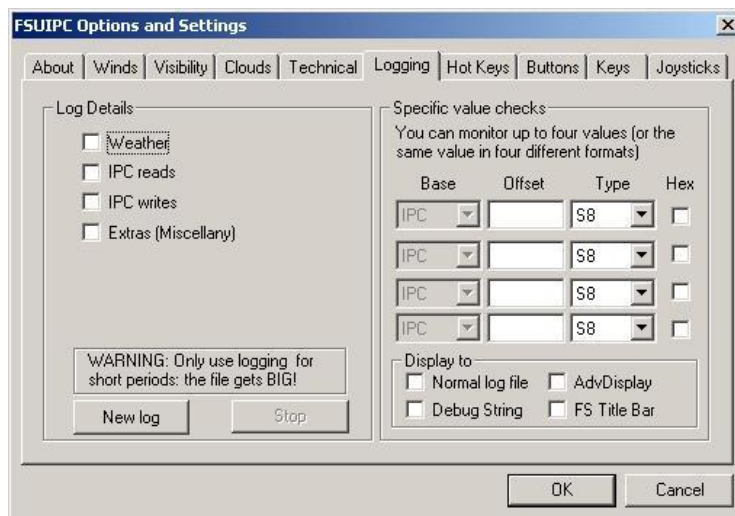
- **Limit TCAS range** is for FS2002/4 and applies to *airborne* AI traffic. If this is set to 0 no limit is applied, but there is then a danger that busy areas will have more aircraft than can be accommodated in FSUIPC's tables (currently these can cope with 96). The default is 40 nm, which should be ample. There is little point in setting it much greater than 80nm as that seems to be the range in which FS generates flights in any case. When the tables are full, those aircraft which are furthest away won't be listed, so your nearby TCAS warnings should still be good. Ground traffic, which has its own table (also currently up to 96 aircraft) are subject to a built-in range, fixed at 3 nm when your own aircraft is on the ground, or 6 nm when you are airborne.
- **Set TCAS id string from ...** allows you to determine how FSUIPC provides A.I. aircraft identification to any program using the TCAS data. Probably not many strict TCAS displays show aircraft ID or type, but the information is available. You can choose from the following ways of distinguishing the aircraft:

Flight for airline plus flight number, or tail number, as available (this is the default and recommended)
Tail for tail numbers only
Type for the ATC aircraft type, generally only the Make, at least for default aircraft
Title from the aircraft title (in the .CFG file), truncated to 17 characters
Type+ for the type as above, truncated if necessary, plus the last 3 characters of the tail number

The utility "TrafficLook" is supplied—you can see the difference in these selections in its display. In the File menu of Trafficlook you can select Airborne or Ground traffic. If you want to see both, run two copies.

Note that by default FSUIPC scans AI traffic changes gradually, covering about 10% for each Flight Simulator 'frame'. Thus, all traffic data is updated every 10 frames. This is to avoid too much impact on FS performance. However, if you have a program that displays movement of AI aircraft and you wish to try to make it look smoother, you can increase the scan rate. You can only do this by editing the FSUIPC.INI file before running FS—look for the TrafficScanPerFrame parameter, which gives the percentage per frame (up to 100%).

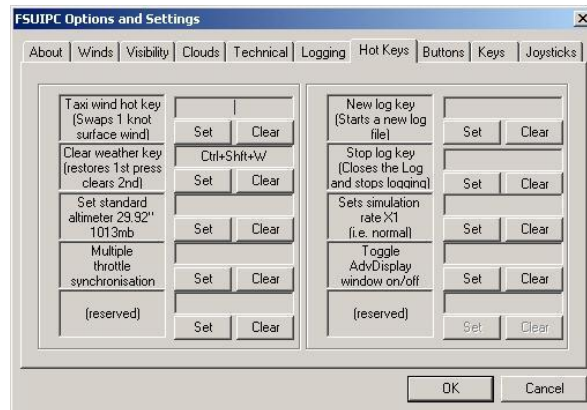
Logging



FSUIPC contains considerable weather and application program debugging aids, through its logging facilities. You shouldn't need to use these unless you run into problems with an application and want to help the author sort it out. The files produced by the logging facility may be interesting to you—try enabling the Weather logging and looking for FSUIPC.LOG (or FSUIPC.n.LOG files where 'n' is a sequence number) in the Modules folder. They are simple text files, and when weather logging is operating they will contain a complete history of the weather changes which occur.

As you can see from the illustration above, there are also some technical developer-oriented facilities provided in this page. They are described in the Advanced User's document, but you should note that this is really intended only for programmers and other users of the FSUIPC SDK.

Hot Keys



At present several functions in FSUIPC can be controlled by assigned keypresses. These are:

- **Taxi wind:** a single hot key combination to swap the current surface wind with a 1 knot one, or vice versa. See the details on the Winds page. The recommended Hot Key setting is **Control+Shift+T**. Note that this hot key is inoperative if the Taxi Wind facility is set to “Automatic”.
- **Clear weather:** a single hot key combination with a dual function. The first time this is used it *restores* the last set external weather, if any. The second time, with no intervening weather changes, it clears the weather entirely, setting the FS default clear weather. (Note that this operation is the same as using the “Clear all weather” button in the FS2000/2002 Weather dialogue, or the Clear Theme in FS2004). The recommended Hot Key setting is **Control+Shift+W**. On FS2004 this action also resets the Weather Dynamics to “no change” *unless* this option has been disabled in the Technical page.
- **Set standard Barometer** on the altimeter. This is used to set the altimeter to 29.92” (1013.2mb) for flying flight levels.
- **Throttle Sync:** This operates a facility to make all throttle inputs, for any engine, affect the throttle inputs to all engines. It’s a toggle function—if it is on then using it again turns it off. For best use of this facility you will want to also calibrate the separate throttles in FSUIPC’s Joysticks pages.

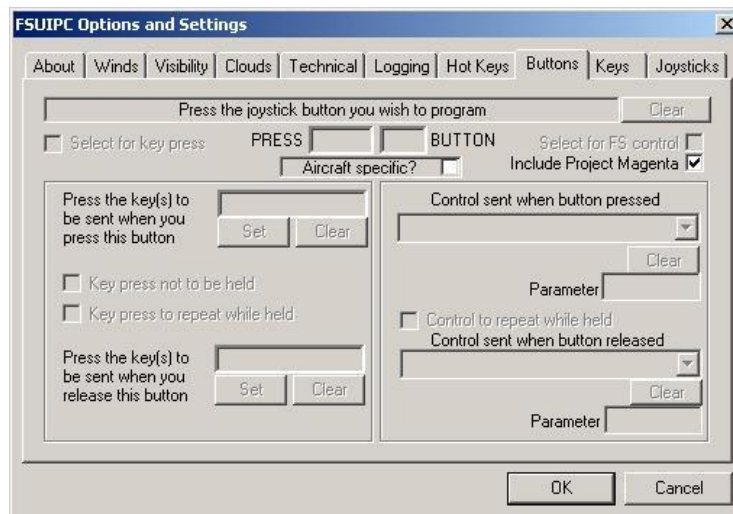
If you are only using a single throttle then this won’t make a lot of difference except that *every* time you use it FSUIPC will make the throttle selection (i.e. the keypress E+1 ... etc) apply to all engines. However, it works a lot better even then if you’ve calibrated the throttle axis in FSUIPC’s **Joysticks** pages.

If you also select the option to synchronise propeller pitch and mixture settings (see the **Technical** page), then the same Hot Key operates all three together. There again, if you are using joystick axes for propeller pitch and/or mixture you should calibrate them in FSUIPC’s **Joysticks** pages.

- **Resume all-engine control:** This merely does the same as the keyboard sequence E 1 2 3 4 (or less for fewer engines)—or at least what it should do if it worked consistently. Apparently, once one engine only is selected, in some cases the proper way to re-select all engines won’t work. This is reported to be the case specifically on 3-engined aircraft, on all supported versions of FS. This hotkey writes the correct engine-selection pattern directly into the FS location where it matters.
- **New log:** starts a new log file (see Logging, above). The current (latest) log file is always called “FSUIPC.LOG”, previous ones being renamed “FSUIPC.n.LOG” where ‘n’ is a sequence number.
- **Stop log:** does as it says, stops logging, closing the current log file and starting a new one with only default logging, no detail. The file just closed will have the latest serial number, filename format FSUIPC.n.LOG.
- **Set simulation rate back to normal (x1):** This is really only useful to those who fly at fast simulation rates like x16 and want to get back to normal in one keypress to avoid some of FS’s texture reloads.
- **Toggle AdvDisplay On/Off:** This only works with AdvDisplay version 2 or later. It allows you to use AdvDisplay with an undocked window showing in a fixed position (locked) and hide it or re-display it via a keypress.
- **Restart PFC Driver:** This is only available (on the bottom right selector) if you are also running my PFC driver (PFC.DLL), and even then it only does anything if that DLL is version 1.63 or later. If both conditions are true, then this Hot Key simply restarts all threads and serial port operations in the PFC driver.

Note that these Hot Keys can be assigned to joystick buttons, by programming the button to produce your assigned keypress combination, This is described in the next section.

Buttons



This page provides facilities for programming joystick buttons. Whilst this is particularly suited to EPIC users, it is by no means EPIC-specific, and so can be useful for any joystick system with ‘spare’ buttons, provided only that these are visible through the Windows joystick interface (e.g. Game Controllers applet in the Control Panel), using the standard Windows facilities. (*FSUIPC does **not** use DirectX, so it may not see newer 64-button ranges*). There are also a number of other sources of button inputs which FSUIPC can use—notes on specific types of “button” connections are provided below.

You might well ask why this facility is provided here at all when FS offers something similar. Well, these are the additional features available in FSUIPC:

- The actions can be programmed differently for different aircraft. Just check the box “aircraft specific” and then everything you program will operate for the currently loaded aircraft only. Anything programmed without that checkbox selected will also be available, unless overridden by an aircraft-specific assignment.
- Buttons can be made to cause key presses. This is useful for accessing those FS add-ons which do not provide “controls” as such, but do react to keystrokes—for example, panels such as 767PIC, Adventure programs such as ProFlight and Radar Contact, and utilities such as Lago’s FSAssist. [*Note that this facility does not work in Windows 95—you need at least Windows 98*].
- The range of FS controls assignable here exceeds those which can be assigned in the FS Assignments dialogue (and the CFG file), at least in FS2002 and FS2004, and fixed parameter values can also be supplied with them so they can be used to set (fixed) values as well as operate switches.
- Controls aimed at other programs can be included. Currently these include Roger Wilco and Advanced Voice Client (both for push to talk functions), Project Magenta and generally any WideFS client programs via the WideClient “KeySend” facility.
- Sequences of actions, whether key presses, or FS controls, or a mixture, can be programmed. However, this facility can only be accessed by editing the **FSUIPC.INI** file, as it would have made the FSUIPC options page too complex for most users. Full details for editing the Button programming in the INI file are provided in the Advanced User’s Guide.

Compound (or conditional) key press actions can be programmed—with the action of one or more buttons being determined by the state of one or more other buttons or switches. This can be used, for example, to program a bank of buttons for different things depending on a toggle or multiple position switch, hence multiplying the effective number of buttons available. The same facility can also be used to cope with those types of rotary switches that indicate which direction the spindle is being turned by the phase relationship between two button lines. Again, this more complex facility can only be accessed by editing the **FSUIPC.INI** file, and is described in the Advanced User’s Guide.

GoFlight equipment

GoFlight buttons and rotary dials can also be programmed here—but take care that you don’t have both GoFlight and FSUIPC acting on the same buttons as FSUIPC is not able to override the original programming. For GoFlight buttons to be recognised you must have the GoFlight module (GFDev.dll) installed in the GoFlight program folder (where the Gfconfig program is

installed). If you install the latest version of the GoFlight software the correct DLL is installed automatically for you. GoFlight buttons will all have high "joystick" numbers in FSUIPC.

PFC equipment controlled by PFC.DLL

If you are using PFC equipment driven by my PFC.DLL driver for FS, and you are using PFC driver version 1.46 or later, then all the buttons, switches and digital rotary knobs on that equipment will also be visible and programmable here, just as if they were on joystick inputs. These will have Joystick numbers of 16 or higher, above the 0–15 range allowed for normal Game Port or USB joysticks in the Windows joystick interface. If you do program any PFC buttons here, the normal function in PFC.DLL will not be applied. Normal PFC functions will be automatically resumed, however, when you delete the programming in FSUIPC (either by using the Clear button here, or deleting the entries in FSUIPC.INI).

Remote buttons through WideFS

If you are a WideFS user, then with versions 6.22 or later of WideFS, FSUIPC will also recognise any Windows, EPIC or GoFlight buttons on any of the currently connected WideClient PCs. Each Client PC will add 1000 to the "joystick number", so each will still be unique. More details about this feature are provided in the WideFS documentation.

Before attempting to use these facilities, please make sure that the buttons you wish to program are *not* already programmed to provide FS facilities in FS's own assignments (see the menu entry Options–Controls–Assignments), or for GoFlight, in the GFconfig program. If you want to program them here rather than there you must delete the assignments there, otherwise you will get both actions when you press the buttons.

Buttons connected via Aerosoft's 747 MCP

FSUIPC makes special provisions for third party button inputs, ones not seen through Windows joystick drivers, or the GoFlight drivers, or my own PFC driver. This is by a set of reserved "offsets" in FSUIPC's interface—0x3340 to 0x3363, to be exact (these are hexadecimal values, they would be 13120 to 13155 in decimal). This area allows up to 288 different switches or buttons to be recognised and programmed. All it takes is an application program to actually operate the bits in this area. I call these 288 button bits "virtual buttons", because they may not even relate to real ones—it is all up to the program driving them.

Not coincidentally, the Aerosoft MCP747 hardware allows the attachment and programming of up to 288 user buttons or switches. The Aerosoft driver is capable of being programmed to write to FSUIPC offsets, so these buttons can, if required, be further programmed in FSUIPC.

I am not about to reproduce Aerosoft's documentation here, but will just give a few pointers for clarification, as some confusion has arisen. For this, I will take just one example—operating FSUIPC's first virtual button. This is the first bit in the first byte and will be seen in FSUIPC as "joystick 64, button 0".

Right. Hexadecimal 3340 is decimal 13120. The "mask" (value) for the first bit is 1. You want that bit to turn on when you press the button, off when you release it. So, following the Aerosoft documentation you get an entry in its file like this:

13120,1,1,0,1,0,0,Virtual	Button	1
---------------------------	--------	---

According to the list of fields in the Aerosoft document:

- Decimal address of variable in FS2002 (here it means in FSUIPC!) = 13120
- Number of bytes in address = 1 (you only need 1 bit in fact)
- ON value = 1 (to set the bit)
- OFF value = 0 (to clear the bit)
- 16-bit mask = 1 (to avoid changing any other bits, I hope)
- Special function code = 0, no repeat wanted
- Special function value = 0, no special function
- Description = whatever you like.

However, there is one other thing that it is very important to deal with. The Aerosoft driver allows any connected button to be treated, in its resulting actions, as one of the following (thanks go to Andrew McLean and Nico Kaan for this explanation):

Momentary: When the physical button is pushed, or the switch goes from off to on, the "momentary" function sends a "1" to the FSUIPC offset. When the button is released nothing is sent to FSUIPC. That is, there is no "0" command sent at all. This mode may be useful for some things, but not really for FSUIPC's virtual buttons. FSUIPC recognises buttons by the *change* in the bit from 0 to 1, but if it gets stuck at 1, that's it ... no more actions!

Toggle: When the physical button is pressed or switched turned on, a "1" is sent to FSUIPC, and when it is released or switched off, a "0" is sent. This is *exactly* what would happen with a normal Joystick button, and it the one you should generally use with FSUIPC's virtual button facilities.

Flip flop: This inverts the state of the bit when the button is pushed. In other words, if it is on, it will turn it off, if it is off, it will turn it on. You can use this in FSUIPC button programming if you need a button state which latches—i.e. you are using a button but really should have used a toggle switch. (FSUIPC can latch buttons for you, but only using button ‘Flags’ and editing the FSUIPC.INI file for them—a subject covered in the Advanced User’s documentation).

Programming the buttons

Okay, assuming now that you have a ‘spare’ button to program, and this is definitely not already assigned in the FS assignments or in GoFlight, you can proceed as follows:

1. First, please make sure that your device, the one with the buttons, is plugged in and working BEFORE running Flight Simulator. The Windows joystick interface used by FSUIPC to scan the buttons will not recognise any devices that are plugged in after Flight Sim has started. I know USB is supposed to be “hot pluggable”, but this doesn’t seem to be the case with respect to running programs.
2. With the FSUIPC “Buttons” page showing, as above, check or uncheck the “Aircraft Specific” option, according to whether you want to edit buttons for this aircraft only, or for global use. If you do select “aircraft specific” you will see the name of the current aircraft showing in the title bar of the options. (Note: *if you are using the abbreviated aircraft names option, this may be the abbreviated name that will be used. This option requires editing the FSUIPC.INI file after programming, and is described only in the **Advanced User’s** document*).
3. Now press the button you want to program. If it is visible to FSUIPC then it will be identified on the screen by Joystick Number (0–255 for local buttons) and Button Number (0–39). This numbering is the same as FS98 and FS2000 uses, starting at 0. Windows “Game Controllers” actually numbers from 1. For buttons being pressed on a WideFS client PC there will be a much larger joystick number: plus 1000 for Client 1, 2000 for Client 2, and so on.

Note that FSUIPC uses the original FS convention of using button numbers 32–39 for the possible 8 directions on a “Point Of View” (POV) Hat. The directions are 32 (forward), then 45 degree increments clockwise to 39 = forward left.

If the “button” is in fact a toggle or rotary then you may need to toggle it or turn it twice. This is because, when programming (only) FSUIPC is only looking for changes from “off” to “on”, so it won’t see a change from “on” to “off”. This is necessary because of the way some multi-way switches work.

With the GoFlight rotaries there will be four different button numbers available—in sequence, fast left, slow left, slow right, fast right (i.e. like video recorder controls:

<< < > >>

To get the “fast” values you will have to turn the rotaries quite fast. Sometimes, though, turning them too fast seems to cause nothing to be seen! You need to experiment before committing any assignments.

Please note that rotary input is implemented by alternately setting a switch on then off. Each change will usually be one ‘click’ of the knob. If you want action on each and every click you will have to program the same thing on both the “press” and “release”. ***Do not set the repeat option with the rotary switches.***

4. If you had already programmed this button in FSUIPC for this aircraft (or globally if the “aircraft specific option isn’t checked), then the current programming details will be shown. If you had programmed sequences or mixed actions in the INI file, only the first action will show here and will not be editable—you can only do that in the INI file. Otherwise you can ‘clear’ all the programming or edit it as desired here.

For an un-programmed button, select first whether you want to make it produce a keystroke, or an FS control. The actions then are different:

5. **Key press programming** is done by pressing the ‘Set’ button, for button press or release (or both, if you want) then entering the key press or combination you want. The value won’t appear until the key press is complete, but you can use combinations of **Ctrl, Shift, Tab, Alt** and one normal ‘graphic’ key.

Take care if you elect to use **Alt**, as this is always the Menu access key. If you want to use it to pull down a menu, then fair enough, but if you want to also select a menu entry you need a key sequence, programmable only in the FSUIPC.INI file. (An example of this is actually given in the Advanced User’s Guide). Also FSUIPC cannot send keystrokes to FS dialogues—they are ‘modal’, which means nothing else in FS is actually running whilst they are shown, including FSUIPC.

For a key press occurring when you press the button, you can program it to operate transiently—i.e. the key(s) are pressed and released almost immediately—otherwise the keys will be kept pressed until you release the button. **[Do NOT do this with ALT combinations]**.

If you have the keys kept pressed whilst the button is pressed, you can opt for the keys to be repeated, just as on the real keyboard. However, the repeat rate is fixed at around 6 per second.

If you set a key press to occur when the button is released, this is always a transient key press, with no repeats. The key press for button release does not have to be the same as the one on button press, and can be used on its own.

Note that key presses produced by FSUIPC using this facility are detectable as Hot Keys both by FSUIPC (see the Hot Key facility) and by any external program using the FSUIPC/WideFS Hot Keys facility (see the FSUIPC SDK).

Also note that Roger Wilco or AVC users do not need to allocate the correct keypress as assigned in their voice program. Some versions of RW do not obtain keys in a way that FSUIPC's key press facilities can get to in any case. Instead, use the FS control programming part instead—special PTT commands have been added to the FS controls list specifically for this purpose (see below).

6. **FS Control programming** involves simply selecting the FS Control you want to occur from the drop-down list. Note that this list is very long, and is rather cryptic—the names here are mainly the names actually used in FS and are obtained from FS dynamically, so a different list will appear in FS98, FS2000 and FS2002. The only exceptions to this are a number of FS2002 and FS2004 controls that are usable but have not been assigned names in FS's controls table, plus some special commands to deal with other programs. The latter include:

- Two controls to operate the Roger Wilco (RW) and Advanced Voice Client (AVC) “push to talk” facilities (more below).
- Three controls to handle FSUIPC's “button flags”, used in conditional button programming. *Button flag clear, set and toggle* are programmable both here and in the **Keys** programming page, but they can only be used in complex button programs by editing the FSUIPC.INI file. This is described fully in the Advanced User's Guide.
- A control for sending **KeySend** messages to WideFS clients running on other PCs. The specific KeySend number is set as a parameter (1–255) and is equated to a key press directed to a client program in the relevant WideClient.ini file. Just be sure to set the parameter for the KeySend control to the same number (“N” in KeySendN=...) used in the WideClient.ini file, as it is this which related the two. (Please see the WideFS documentation for more details of its KeySend facilities).
- Optionally many extra controls for Project Magenta modules. To see the PM controls in the drop-down lists check the option box on the page. All the Project Magenta entries start with “Pm” and the Airbus-specific ones “Pm Ab”. A list of those supported is provided in the FSUIPC Advanced Users Guide.
- An **Autobrake Set** control, to directly set the autobrake (0=RTO, 1=off, 2–5=settings to Max).
- A set of “fast” FS autopilot value increment/decrement controls. These add to the default FS “inc” and “dec” controls with ten times the increment. Values handled are Altitude, Speed, Mach, V/S, Heading, and both OBIs (Courses).
- [FS2004] A **Traffic density set** control, which sets the FS AI traffic density to any value from 0 to 100% according to the parameter value provided.
- [FS2004] A **traffic density toggle** control, which turns the AI traffic off (density = 0) if it is on, but if it is already off it turns it on, using the density value provided in the parameter *or* 100% if that is omitted or set zero.
- [FS2004] Controls to switch AI Traffic labels on or off, or to change the label contents. For the latter you need to provide a parameter with the value specifying which items of data the labels should include. Calculate the parameter by adding together the values from this list:

1	Manufacturer	32	Heading
2	Model	64	Airline
4	Tail number	128	Airline + Flight number
8	Altitude	256	Route
16	Airspeed	512	Reference number
		1024	Multiplayer name (?)

- **Spoiler inc** and **Spoiler dec** controls, which raise or lower the spoilers (speed brakes) by a small amount on each use. The increment is set, by default, to give 32 steps in the whole range, but you can change that in the FSUIPC.INI file—see the Advanced User's document.
- **Offset** controls, which allow values to be written to FSUIPC's offsets, for all sorts of actions and effects. There are controls for byte (8 bit), word (16-bit) and double word (32-bit) values, and facilities for bit setting, clearing, toggling, incrementing and decrementing (the latter two only for byte and word values). When using these, another input field appears on screen for the entry of the specific offset, which is best entered in hexadecimal (precede the value with the letter ‘x’). The value is provided as a parameter and this too can be entered in hexadecimal, preceded by ‘x’. For full information on these please refer to the Advanced User's documentation.

Offset Increment/Decrement Controls

The increment/decrement controls operate on signed (Sbyte, Sword) or unsigned values (Ubyte, Uword), and have a more complex parameter that specifies both the increment/decrement (always positive) and a limit, thus:

<increment value> / <limit>

This allows things like Trim adjustments to be programmed to be whatever speed you like, or even multiple speed if you have enough buttons or levers to spare. Taking Trim as the example:

The elevator trim is a signed WORD at offset x0BC0. For this sort of information you'd need the Programmer's Guide in the FSUIPC SDK. Its range is -16383 (full trim down) to 16383 (full trim up). So, when programming your button/levers:

1. Select the "Offset SWord Increment" control to program the nose up trim.
2. Enter x0BC0, or just xBC0 into the offset edit box.
3. Enter 256/16383 in the parameter box. The 256 is the increment and 16383 is the limit. This will give 128 steps between -16383 and +16383 inclusive ($32768 / 256 = 128$). If you want a faster, coarser trim adjustment specify a larger increment, and of course vice versa for a slower, finer adjustment.
4. You'll probably want it repeating whilst held, so check that too (*but never set repeat for rotary switches which can be left in an 'on' position, nor latching switches*).
5. Do the same for the decrement, with a parameter of 256/-16383 (-16383 being the lower limit). Note that the decrement is still positive—you can only provide positive numbers for this part. It is the definition of increment or decrement which controls the addition or subtraction.
6. When reviewing such assignments you may see the parameters showing in hexadecimal (preceded by 'x'). This is an optional way of inputting these in the first place, just as with the offsets.

For some help in untangling the real Flight Sim controls you can refer to my "FSxxxx Controls" documents, though these are far from a complete documentation for each one. The best way to work them out, really, is to try them—pick one that seems to indicate that it may do what you want, and see if it does. I know for sure that some of them do not work, or at least do not work the way you might hope or expect. And some appear to be a bit mixed up: for instance the "Zoom In" and "Zoom Out" controls appear to be the wrong way round, even though their "Fine" variants are okay.

Most if not all of those with the word "set" in their name are controls which take a parameter. Axis controls are like this of course, but so are, for example, the controls "MAGNETO SET" and the equivalents for each of four separate engines. In this particular example, for FS2002, there are two versions—I've added the ones with 'NEW' at the end. It seems that the new ones actually work, but the old ones, the ones still actually listed in FS's Controls module, do not! The 'new' ones take a parameter (0-4) to select the position of the Magneto switch (or 0-2 for the Jet starter in jets).

Naturally, there is no way FSUIPC can dynamically provide different parameters for a single button. You can have a single button send a control with a fixed parameter—you specify this in the parameter field. A good example is a button to set the "standard barometer" setting (1013.2 hPa or 29.92"), for flying Flight Levels. For this, select:

Kohlsman Set	as the control, and
16211	for the parameter (1013.2 mb x 16 = 16211)

Another useful example is a button to exactly centre the elevator trim:

Elevator Trim Set	is the control, and
0	is the parameter

Again, as with key presses, you can have a separate control sent when you release the button, and you can also specify that the earlier control should be sent repeatedly whilst the button is held. A typical use of different controls on button press and release is for Views, from a Hat. For example:

Button 33 (forward right) might be programmed with

View Forward Right	on press
View Forward	on release

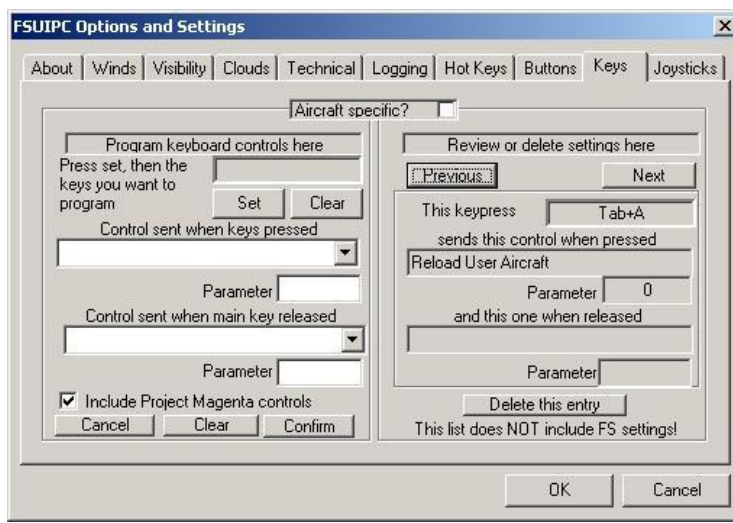
If you want to mix key presses and FS controls, or send a sequence, you need to edit the FSUIPC.INI file. This is described in the Advanced User's Guide.

For Roger Wilco or Advanced Voice Client (AVC) users, at least those running the voice program on the same PC as FS, you do not need to try to allocate the correct keypress as assigned in that program. Some versions of RW do not obtain keys in a way that FSUIPC's key press facilities can get to in any case. Instead, just scroll down the FS controls list for the

pair “Ptt Transmit Off” and “Ptt Transmit On”. Set the press of your button to operate the “On” and the release to operate the “Off”. This is known to work with all currently available versions of Roger Wilco and with recent versions of Advanced Voice Client.

Finally, if you want to clear ALL the FSUIPC button programming, without pressing each button and pressing “Clear” in turn, just delete the complete [Buttons] section (for global buttons) and [Buttons.<aircraft name>] sections (for aircraft-specific buttons) in FSUIPC.INI. Do this when FS is not running. Changes to the INI file are only noticed by FSUIPC when FS is started.

Keys



Normally you will assign keys to Flight Sim operations in the Options–Controls–Assignments dialogue in FS itself, or possibly by directly editing the FS CFG file. However, there are many more controls in Flight Sim than are assignable in that way, especially in FS2002 and later, where Microsoft seems to have restricted the accessible ones to those they thought to be of most use.

FSUIPC therefore offers its own way of assigning keystrokes. In this page you can assign simply single keys or combinations of those with Shift, Control and Tab. The Alt key is also available for such combinations, but its use is not advisable unless you always have the FS menu showing—otherwise any use of ALT will bring up the menu bar even if the combination you are using does not invoke a menu item.

If you assign keystrokes to FS controls here, those keystrokes will not be seen by FS’s own keystroke assignment programming, so you can either use FSUIPC to supplement the normal assignments (recommended), or to replace them altogether (take care).

Hot Keys assigned elsewhere, in FSUIPC’s Hot Key page or by external programs, take precedence over these assignments just as they do over FS assignments.

Okay, on with the show. Looking at the Keys option page, above (or on your screen), you’ll see that it is divided into two parts. The left side is where you will add assignments or modify existing ones. The right side is only used to review or delete existing assignments (in FSUIPC only).

You can assign keys to operate globally, with all aircraft, or to operate only when the current aircraft is loaded. This selection is by unchecking or checking the “Aircraft Specific” selection. Do this first, before starting to program or review key settings. If you program a key both for global and specific use, the latter prevails whenever the aircraft is loaded—you don’t get both actions simultaneously. If you do select “aircraft specific” you will see the name of the current aircraft showing in the title bar of the options. (Note: *if you are using the abbreviated aircraft names option, this may be the abbreviated name that will be used. This option requires editing the FSUIPC.INI file after programming, and is described only in the **Advanced User’s** document*).

To assign an action to a keypress, press the **Set** button in the left hand panel. The edit box above displays “PRESS KEY”. Press your key combination, for example TAB+Q, and you will see it displayed. Nothing is displayed until you have completed the combination with a graphic, cursor or function key. Shift-type keys (and Tab) cannot be used alone.

You can now assign an action to that key press. You can also assign an action to be carried out upon the key release—but this is not implemented *unless* you have an action for the press. In other words, you can have a single action, which occurs when the

key is pressed, or a dual action, one when it is pressed and another, probably different, when released. The dual facility tends to be only useful for holding temporary situations, like views or additional windows.

Use the drop-down control list to find the control you want to assign. Note that this list is very long, and is rather cryptic—the names here are mainly the names actually used in FS and are obtained from FS dynamically, so a different list will appear in FS98, FS2000, FS2002 and FS2004. The only exceptions to this are a number of FS controls that are usable but have not been assigned names in FS’s controls table, plus some special commands to deal with other programs. The latter include:

- Two controls to operate the Roger Wilco (RW) and Advanced Voice Client (AVC) “push to talk” facilities (see earlier).
- Three controls to handle FSUIPC’s “button flags”, used in conditional button programming. *Button flag clear, set and toggle* are programmable both here and in the **Keys** programming page, but they can only be used in complex button programs by editing the FSUIPC.INI file. This is described fully in the Advanced User’s Guide.
- A control for sending **KeySend** messages to WideFS clients running on other PCs. The specific KeySend number is set as a parameter (1–255) and is equated to a key press directed to a client program in the relevant WideClient.ini file. Just be sure to set the parameter for the KeySend control to the same number (“N” in KeySendN=...) used in the WideClient.ini file, as it is this which related the two. (Please see the WideFS documentation for more details of its KeySend facilities).
- Optionally many extra controls for Project Magenta modules. To see the PM controls in the drop-down lists check the option box on the page. All the Project Magenta entries start with “Pm” and the Airbus-specific ones “Pm Ab”. A list of those supported is provided in the FSUIPC Advanced Users Guide.
- An **Autobrake Set** control, to directly set the autobrake (0=RTO, 1=off, 2–5=settings to Max).
- [FS2004] A **Traffic density set** control, which sets the FS AI traffic density to any value from 0 to 100% according to the parameter value provided.
- [FS2004] A **traffic density toggle** control, which turns the AI traffic off (density = 0) if it is on, but if it is already off it turns it on, using the density value provided in the parameter *or* 100% if that is omitted or set zero.
- [FS2004] Controls to switch AI Traffic labels on or off, or to change the label contents. For the latter you need to provide a parameter with the value specifying which items of data the labels should include. Calculate the parameter by adding together the values from this list:

1	Manufacturer
2	Model
4	Tail number
8	Altitude
16	Airspeed
32	Heading
64	Airline
128	Airline + Flight number
256	Route
512	Reference number
1024	Multiplayer name (?)

- **Spoiler inc** and **Spoiler dec** controls, which raise or lower the spoilers (speed brakes) by a small amount on each use. The increment is set, by default, to give 32 steps in the whole range, but you can change that in the FSUIPC.INI file—see the Advanced User’s document.
- **Offset** controls, which allow values to be written to FSUIPC’s offsets, for all sorts of actions and effects. There are controls for byte (8 bit), word (16-bit) and double word (32-bit) values, and facilities for bit setting, clearing, toggling, incrementing and decrementing (the latter two only for byte and word values). When using these, another input field appears on screen for the entry of the specific offset, which is best entered in hexadecimal (precede the value with the letter ‘x’). The value is provided as a parameter and this too can be entered in hexadecimal, preceded by ‘x’.

For more details of the **Offset Increment/Decrement** controls, please see the Boxed section under **Buttons**, earlier.

For some help in untangling the real Flight Sim controls you can refer to my “FSxxxx Controls” documents, though these are far from a complete documentation for each one. The best way to work them out, really, is to try them—pick one that seems to indicate that it may do what you want, and see if it does. I know for sure that some of them do not work, or at least do not work the way you might hope or expect. And some appear to be a bit mixed up: for instance the “Zoom In” and “Zoom Out” controls appear to be the wrong way round, even though their “Fine” variants are okay.

Most if not all of those with the word “set” in their name are controls which take a parameter. Axis controls are like this of course, but so are, for example, the controls “MAGNETO SET” and the equivalents for each of four separate engines. In this

particular example, for FS2002, there are two versions—I've added the ones with 'NEW' at the end. It seems that the new ones actually work, but the old ones, the ones still actually listed in FS's Controls module, do not! The 'new' ones take a parameter (0–4) to select the position of the Magneto switch (or 0–2 for the Jet starter in jets).

Naturally, there is no way FSUIPC can dynamically provide different parameters for a single button. You can have a single keypress combination programmed to send a control with a fixed parameter—you specify this in the parameter field. A good example is a key to set the "standard barometer" setting (1013.2 hPa or 29.92"), for flying Flight Levels. For this, select:

Kohlsman Set	as the control, and
16211	for the parameter (1013.2 mb x 16 = 16211)

Another useful example is a key to exactly centre the elevator trim:

Elevator Trim Set	is the control, and
0	is the parameter

If you want, you can make FSUIPC send a sequence of FS controls when you use a key press, but for this you will need to edit the FSUIPC.INI file. This is described in the Advanced User's Guide. You can only edit or program the first such control in the dialogue.

The review and deletion facility forms the right-hand part of the options page. Here you can simply scan through all your FSUIPC assignments (*not* those made in FS's dialogue or CFG file). The list is shown in the order they appear in your FSUIPC.INI file, and cycles back to the beginning at the end and vice versa. You can delete any assignment here by using the **Delete this entry** button.

Finally, if you want to clear ALL the FSUIPC key press assignments, without pressing "Delete this entry" for every one, just delete the complete [Keys] section (for global keys) and [Keys.<aircraft name>] sections (for aircraft-specific keys) in FSUIPC.INI. Do this when FS is not running. Changes to the INI file are only noticed by FSUIPC when FS is started.

Joysticks [FS2000, FS2002 and FS2004]

The calibration of joysticks has always been a difficulty with Flight Simulator. There are calibrations you can perform in the Control Panel (in the "Game Controllers" applet, as it is known in Windows 98—I believe it has a new name and form in Windows Me), and in Flight Simulator itself you can set sensitivities and "null" or "dead" zones. These are all very well, but the results have always seemed to me less than precise. And getting and keeping accurate centring on the axes that need it is often a pain.

On top of this, there are more and more ways these days of attaching additional joysticks or axes for use with multiple throttles and other controls, and even analogue toe brakes (e.g. on the USB version of the CH Pro Pedals). Some of these can be configured in FS with some difficulty. Proportional analogue toe brakes cannot, which is a shame as the simulator *does* provide analogue braking internally, just no external control ... until now, with these facilities in FSUIPC.

NOTE that FS2002 and FS2004 do both provide analogue brake controls, so this part of the FSUIPC facilities are really for FS2000 users.

AXIS DEFINITION IN FS CFG FILES

Before looking at the facilities FSUIPC offers, you need to be clear on which control axes you are using for what, and have these already assigned. I find the FS menu assignment system very awkward for this, and it can often make a mess of the parameters in your FS CFG file, so I always advocate using an ordinary text editor such as NotePad and setting the parameters correctly yourself, in FS2000.CFG, FS2002.CFG or FS9.CFG. For FS2000 you'll find them in sections headed [JOYSTICK_nn] where the joysticks are numbered from 00 to 15. In FS2002 and later it's a little more complicated. The sections have headings like this:

```
[JOYSTICK_MAIN {6F1D2B70-D5A0-11CF-BFC7-444553540000}]
```

The identification of the Joystick number (00–15) is more difficult here. If all the joystick entries are provided by the same driver (as, for instance, in the case of EPIC), then the key seems to always be the last digit of the first group inside the parentheses { }, i.e. in this case the 0 at the end of 6F1D2B70. This digit ranges from 0 to 9 (for 00–09), then A to F (for 10–15). For combinations of different drivers it is more difficult, there's no general way I know to forecast the values.

In this document I'll only point out some particularly useful things you can do in this file. For much more detail, and especially advanced stuff like using multiple throttles, pitch and mixture controls, please refer to my FS2000Ctls document, available separately (e.g. at <http://www.schiratti.com/dowson>), and also the Document "FSUIPC for Advanced Users".

First, once you start editing Joystick details directly in the CFG file you should add a “LOCKED=1” parameter to each [JOYSTICK...] section. In fact there’ll probably already be a “LOCKED=0” parameter, so just change the ‘0’ to a ‘1’. This prevents FS2000 changing the values you are going to set. Whether that works in FS2002 and FS2004 as well is another matter.

Each axis that you can assign and calibrate is known to FS by a control name. Here are the names and brief descriptions of those that can currently be handled by FSUIPC:

Axis name in FS cfg file	Function	Notes
AXIS_AILERONS_SET	Joystick/yoke ailerons, also known as ‘X’ axis	Values used in FS2000 run from –16384 (extreme right) to +16384 (extreme left), with 0 as centre
AXIS_ELEV_TRIM_SET	Elevator trim adjustment	–16384 to +16384, with 0 neutral trim
AXIS_ELEVATOR_SET	Joystick/yoke elevator, also known as ‘Y’ axis	–16384 (pull back/nose up) to +16384 (push forward/nose down), with 0 as centre
AXIS_MIXTURE_SET	Fuel mixture control	–16384 (lean) to +16384 (rich), but see also MIXTURE_SET below
AXIS_PROPELLER_SET	Propeller pitch control	–16384 (feathered) to +16384 (full), with no reverse. See also PROP_PITCH_SET below. FSUIPC allows you to map this onto the 4 separate propeller pitch controls (PROP_PITCHn_SET) if you need reverse pitch control on the same lever.
AXIS_RUDDER_SET	Rudder input, normally from pedals but also from twist function on some joysticks. Also known as the ‘R’ axis	–16384 (extreme right) to +16384 (extreme left), with 0 as centre. Note that if you fly with the rudder “spike” eliminator enabled (see the Technical section, earlier), then you will probably need to first calibrate your rudder, making sure you have adequate ‘dead’ zones at either extreme. If you don’t do this then attaining maximum deflection may not be possible
AXIS_SPOILER_SET	Spoiler input, allowing precise spoiler positioning for excellent descent control.	–16384 (retracted) to +16384 (fully deployed). If enabled, FSUIPC maps this control to SPOILERS_SET, so it really matters little which you choose.
AXIS_THROTTLE_SET	Throttle input, whether from a throttle level, push/pull rod, or wheel. Also known as the ‘Z’ axis	Running from –16384 to +16384 for idle up to full thrust, this is a single throttle which operates all selected engines (the selection being by E on the keyboard followed by 1, 2, 3 and/or 4). No reverse is normally available on this control, but FSUIPC allows you to map this onto the 4 separate propeller pitch controls (AXIS_THROTTLEn_SET) if you want reverse thrust control on the same lever.
BRAKES (Not usable as an Axis in FS2002)	Single brake control operating both left and right brakes simultaneously.	Not really an ‘axis’ in FS2000, this button type control can nevertheless be handled as an analogue input by FSUIPC. This runs from 0 (off) to 16384 (full braking).
BRAKES_LEFT BRAKES_RIGHT or (FS2002 or later only) AXIS_LEFT_BRAKE_SET AXIS_RIGHT_BRAKE_SET	Separate brakes normally operated by toe pressing actions on the rudders.	Not really ‘axes’, but if you have analogue toe brakes or levers to assign, then FSUIPC can make the separate brakes operate proportionally. They both run from 0 (off) to 16384 (maximum braking). In FS2002 and FS2004 you can use the Axis versions directly. These are AXIS_LEFT_BRAKE_SET and AXIS_RIGHT_BRAKE_SET respectively. These are also processed by FSUIPC if you elect to calibrate them here.
FLAPS_SET (Not usable in FS2002. Please see FLAPS_SET section in the FSUIPC Advanced Users Guide for special provisions). And on FS2004:	Selection of flap setting by relative position	Flaps are set in ‘notches’ or ‘détentes’, not continuously. FSUIPC interprets the incoming axis value and sets the resulting output to the nearest exact notch position for the currently loaded aircraft. The range (except on FS2004) is 0 (flaps up) to +16384 (full flaps). On FS2004 the range is –16384

AXIS_FLAPS_SET ... which you can assign in the FS joystick axis assignments dialogue.		(flaps up) to +16384 (full flaps)
MIXTURE_SET AXIS_MIXTURE_SET (FS2002/4)	Fuel mixture control	0 (lean) to +16384 (rich). If enabled, FSUIPC maps this control to AXIS_MIXTURE_SET, so it really matters little which you choose.
MIXTURE1_SET MIXTURE2_SET MIXTURE3_SET MIXTURE4_SET AXIS_MIXTURE1_SET (FS2002/4) AXIS_MIXTURE2_SET AXIS_MIXTURE3_SET AXIS_MIXTURE4_SET	Separate fuel mixture controls for each of up to 4 engines	0 (lean or cut-off) via 8192 (idle) to +16384 (rich) Centering is provided for the 8192 value so that turbo controls with détentes on the mixture levers can be calibrated with a usable 'dead' zone. By default, however, this dead zone is eliminated by having both upper and lower input values for it set the same.
PROP_PITCH_SET AXIS_PROPELLER_SET (FS2002/4)	Propeller pitch control	-4096 (reverse) via 0 (feathered) to +16384 (full). But if enabled, FSUIPC maps this control to AXIS_PROPELLER_SET, so it really matters little which you choose.
PROP_PITCH1_SET PROP_PITCH2_SET PROP_PITCH3_SET PROP_PITCH4_SET AXIS_PROPELLER1_SET (FS2002/4) AXIS_PROPELLER2_SET AXIS_PROPELLER3_SET AXIS_PROPELLER4_SET	Separate fuel mixture controls for each of up to 4 engines	-4096 (reverse) via 0 (feathered) to +16384 (full). All four are operated together if you map a single axis assigned to AXIS_PROPELLER_SET or PROP_PITCH_SET to these. Since FS2002 these are replaced by controls named AXIS_PROPELLER1_SET and so on. FSUIPC handles these identically.
SPOILERS_SET AXIS_SPOILER_SET (FS2002/4)	Spoiler input, allowing precise spoiler positioning for excellent descent control.	0 (retracted) to +16384 (fully deployed). See also AXIS_SPOILER_SET.
THROTTLE1_SET THROTTLE2_SET THROTTLE3_SET THROTTLE4_SET AXIS_THROTTLE1_SET (FS2002/4) AXIS_THROTTLE2_SET AXIS_THROTTLE3_SET AXIS_THROTTLE4_SET	Separate throttle controls for each of up to 4 engines, with reverse thrust capability	-4096 (full reverse*) via 0 (idle) to +16384 (full forward). All four are operated together if you map a single axis assigned to AXIS_THROTTLE_SET to these. Since FS2002 these are replaced by those with the AXIS_ prefix. FSUIPC handles both identically. * The actual negative value for "full reverse" is defined in the aircraft parameters (the .AIR file). Since version 2.975 FSUIPC has calibrated reverse to match the aircraft, so you will see different values here, not just the nominal '-4096'.

EXAMPLE

As an example of a typical recent set of assignments, consider the CH USB yoke and Pro pedals, with FS2000. Of all the reasonably priced and easily available sets of controls these seem to provide the most flexibility. BUT, before we begin, please note that USB assignments are slightly precarious. In this example I am going to assume that the Yoke is assigned by the Windows system (and hence FS2000) to the first Joystick (JOYSTICK_00), with the Pedals on the second (JOYSTICK_01). In your installation this might be the other way around. Only you can tell, probably via the Windows control panel test facility. Also be very careful, if ever disconnecting the USB devices, to reconnect them in the same order and USB sockets as originally—otherwise they will be reassigned differently and your FS2000 configuration will be in disarray.

This example is edited a little from a working installation and I must thank my friend Bill Cusick for supplying it. All the Button assignments are omitted here, as they are not relevant to the axis calibrations and assignments available in FSUIPC (*NOTE that this is for FS2000: The BRAKE controls are the AXIS_ types for FS2002/4*):

```
[JOYSTICK_00]
LOCKED=1
AXIS_FLAGS=31
AXIS_EVENT_00=AXIS_AILERONS_SET
```



```

AXIS_SCALE_00=64
AXIS_NULL_00=0
AXIS_EVENT_01=AXIS_ELEVATOR_SET
AXIS_SCALE_01=64
AXIS_NULL_01=0
AXIS_EVENT_02=AXIS_THROTTLE_SET
AXIS_SCALE_02=64
AXIS_NULL_02=0
AXIS_EVENT_03=AXIS_PROPELLER_SET
AXIS_SCALE_03=64
AXIS_NULL_03=0
AXIS_EVENT_04=AXIS_MIXTURE_SET
AXIS_SCALE_04=64
AXIS_NULL_04=0

[JOYSTICK_01]
LOCKED=1
AXIS_FLAGS=7
AXIS_EVENT_00=BRAKES_LEFT
AXIS_SCALE_00=-64
AXIS_NULL_00=0
AXIS_EVENT_01=BRAKES_RIGHT
AXIS_SCALE_01=-64
AXIS_NULL_01=0
AXIS_EVENT_02=AXIS_RUDDER_SET
AXIS_SCALE_02=64
AXIS_NULL_02=0

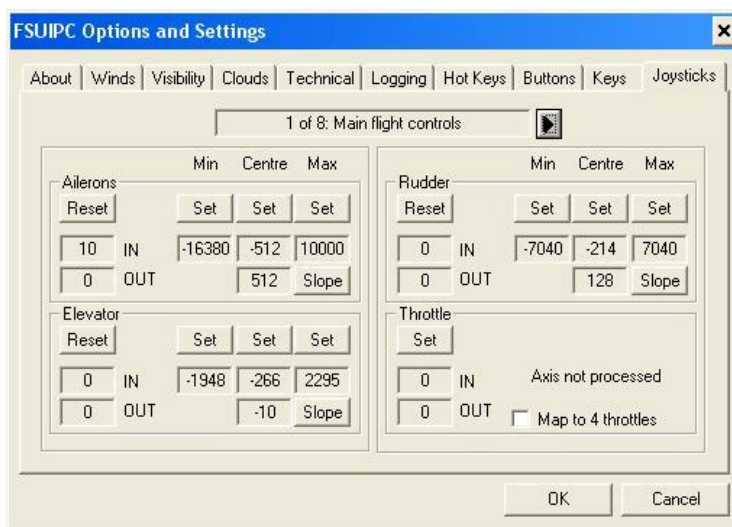
```

In general, for each axis you want to calibrate for more precision in FSUIPC, check the “AXIS_SCALE_nn=” and the “AXIS_NULL_nn=” values. These are the ones manipulated by the FS2000 sensitivity and null zone sliders. I find I get the best results by setting all the “SCALE” values to 64 (or -64 if you need to reverse the direction of the control), and all the “NULL” values to 0. FSUIPC’s facilities will stretch or compress your joystick’s range to provide the full extent of control you need, and null zones at either end *and* centre (where relevant) can be set more precisely in FSUIPC’s settings pages.

As you’ll have seen above, for separate analogue toe brakes you need to assign axes to BRAKES_LEFT and BRAKES_RIGHT. You may have already done this to get digital (on/off) toe braking, but the parameters assigned should be changed for good results in an analogue mode. Set the SCALE to -64 (at least for the CH pedals) and the NULL zone to 0. If you only have a single brake lever or pedal assign this to BRAKES but calibrate it inside FSUIPC on both left and right brake axes—this will give you proportional braking but no differential braking for steering.

BACK TO FSUIPC ...

Okay. Now re-load FS and get back into the FSUIPC settings. Selecting the “Joysticks” page you will see something similar to (but not the same as) this:



FSUIPC does not interfere with any joystick axis at all by default. You have to set an axis in one of the Joystick pages first. In this picture only the Throttle is shown not selected, so three of the four axes included on this page will be handled by FSUIPC.

The numbers for IN and OUT under the left-hand Set/Reset buttons are actual values arriving at FS’s simulation control in real time, as you move the controls. When FSUIPC is not processing an axis, the OUT value will be the same as the IN value, otherwise it will show the results of FSUIPC’s processing.

When you set an axis, two or three new “Set” buttons for the axis become available and the main one becomes the “Reset” button (to stop FSUIPC’s processing). The numbers shown under the ‘Set’ buttons are those which will be used to scale the inputs, stretching or compressing them to fit the specific needs of the control, and also to set dead or null zones. You don’t need to worry about the numbers particularly, as you will calibrate by simply moving the axis and clicking the buttons.

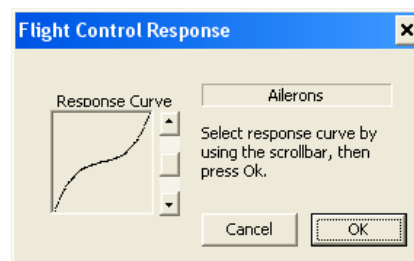
The default settings which first appear when you set an axis give full range (no scaling) appropriate to the axis type, with no limit dead zones and only a nominal (about 3%) central dead zone where this is applicable.

To calibrate any axis, just do this:

1. Move the control for this axis and verify that the values for IN and OUT are changing. If they aren’t, then you’ve either got the wrong control or your configuration is wrong (in FS’s CFG file).
2. Set the axis, to obtain the individual set buttons, if these aren’t already showing. Do this by pressing the Set button on the left, turning it into the ‘Reset’ button.
3. Move the control in either direction and verify that the value is changing up or down as you’d expect. Aileron and rudder controls increase (more positive numbers) when turned left, decrease (more negative numbers) when turned right. Elevator controls increase when pushed (nose down), decrease when pulled (nose up). All others are pretty logical—more is higher, less is lower. If your axis is changing in the wrong direction you will need to edit the FS CFG file again and change the sign of the AXIS_SCALE parameter (e.g. –64 instead of 64, or vice versa).
4. Now move the control to its lowest (right-most/rear-most) position. If you want a dead area, relax it the amount you want to stay fixed, then press the “Set” button in the “min” column (for ‘minimum’). The currently read value is recorded in the box below the button.
5. For controls which have centres (aileron, elevator, rudder, trim *and* the separate throttle and propeller pitch controls where centre is between forward and reverse), position the control in its centre, détente or default position. Pressing the centre “Set” button will enter the value in one or other of the two boxes beneath. Each time you press Set the alternate value is recorded, and the boxes show the two most recent values in order (lower above higher). If the values are the same you will have no dead zone around the centre.

If you want to be able to simply take your hands and feet off the controls and expect them to centre well automatically, you will almost certainly need a central dead zone. You can *either*:

- simply push/pull/swivel the controls in different directions and let go, so that they centre with their normal variation, and press the centre Set for the two most extreme values you get for the supposedly centred control, *or*
 - more precisely, move the control one way a little, press the centre Set, then the other way a little, and press Set again. This way you get to choose the size of the dead zone with more precision.
6. Move the control to its highest (left-most/forward-most) position. Again, if you want a dead area relax it an appropriate amount, then press the Set button in the “max” column.
 7. For the main flight controls (aileron, elevator, rudder) you can select a response curve (“**slope**”). There are 15 different slopes to choose from, ranging from linear (default) to one with a very flat centre (for reduced sensitivity—i.e more control movement needed for same effect) and steep ends to reach the maximum deflections. To select the slope desired, press the **Slope** button. You will see this window:



Just move the slider in the scroll bar down to the position for the sort of response you’d like. In the illustration above a medium flattened response is selected, and this will suit most users. Press OK when you are happy, or Cancel to leave it as it was. Note that the response curves are only applied when the axes are calibrated in FSUIPC, though the slope settings are remembered anyway, even if no calibration is set.

That’s it. Do this for each axis you feel needs it. Scroll through the 6 pages of Joystick axis settings and choose the ones you have connected. There are four special cases you may want to deal with:

- If you have a single brake lever or pedal assigned to “BRAKES” in FS’s CFG file, be sure to use that single axis to calibrate *both* the left and right brake exactly the same (right-hand side of page 2 of 6), otherwise every time you brake you will swerve to one side.
- If you have a single throttle control and you’d like to have an idle and reverse zone on this, then in the throttle part of page 1 select the “Map to 4 throttles” option. Then turn to page 3 of 6 and calibrate your throttle using the throttle 1 axis. The other three will match exactly. Choose the minimum (full reverse) and maximum (full forward) in the usual way, but then make a centre ‘idle’ zone wherever you want it on your lever’s movement—close to a détente or other stop if you have one.
- Similarly, you can use a single propeller pitch control lever to provide reverse pitch control (useful on the FS2000 KingAir, for example). In the prop pitch section on page 2 of 6 select the “Map to 4 props” option, then turn to page 5 of 6 and calibrate your propeller control using the prop pitch 1 axis. The other three will match exactly. Choose the minimum (full reverse) and maximum (full forward) in the usual way, but then make a centre ‘idle’ zone wherever you want it on your lever’s movement—close to a détente or other stop if you have one.
- If you have twin throttle levers and you’d like to control left wing engines and right wing engines separately on both 2 and 4-engined places, then make sure both throttles are operating correctly with twin planes then go to the third page of the Joystick controls in FSUIPC, the one showing 4 throttles. Calibrate throttles 1 and 2 then check the option “Map 1->12, 2->34”. This will do the job. The mapping only occurs when a 4-engined aircraft is loaded. This facility also applies to the mixture and propeller pitch levers.
- A similar facility is available for flying 3-engined aircraft with two levers. In this case the first lever controls both engines 1 and 2, and the second one controls engine 3. Follow the same calibrations as in the previous instance, but then check the option “Map 1->12, 2->3”. This mapping only occurs when a 3-engined aircraft is loaded. This facility also applies to the mixture and propeller pitch levers.

IMPORTANT: If you have more than one throttle, and calibrate them separately on Page 3 of the FSUIPC Joystick options, you need to take care with any aircraft panels equipped with an “Engine Control Unit” (ECU) or “Electronic Engine Control” (EEC). One example is the Wilco 767PIC, and I believe there is also a Dash 8 available with this. The aircraft panels equipped with these are altering the values you send from your throttles in order to keep the engine within set bounds. But they do this by sending the same controls as your real throttles, so FSUIPC applies calibration to those as well as yours. If you calibrate with the idle position well below centre (i.e. negative), which is quite likely, as you will want to use a smaller portion of the travel for reverse than for forward thrust, then the “idle” value of 0 sent by the panel will equate to some positive forward thrust.

There is no easy answer to this. You will either have to calibrate taking care to keep the idle area centred on the value 0, or disable the Engine Control Unit in the panel. This is done in the 767PIC panel using the two switches above the throttle quadrant in the relevant panel window.

ADDITIONAL AXIS CONTROLS (Reverser, Trims and Cowl Flaps)

In addition to these “official” FS axes, FSUIPC allows assignments to be made for a JET THRUST REVERSER, an AILERON TRIM axis, a RUDDER TRIM and up to four COWL FLAP axes. These are all on Pages 7 and 8 of the Joystick Options. Normally you would have to edit the FSUIPC.INI file to assign otherwise unused FS axis controls for these to be used. However, in the case of the Jet Reverser, it is so useful that FSUIPC by default assigns the AXIS_MIXTURE_SET control to this—the standard mixture lever you would use on Prop and Turbojet aircraft. There is a checkbox on Page 7 so that you can have that lever operating as a reversing lever only when a Jet aircraft is in use. Note that the reversing action is interlocked to the throttle(s). They must all be idling before reverse will engage.

Using the two trim controls on Page 7, or any of the cowl flap axes on Page 8, will need editing in the FSUIPC.INI file, and this is described in the Advanced Users Guide.

RESETTING DEFAULTS

Please note that resetting the FSUIPC defaults using the buttons on the “About” page does not change the joystick calibration system. This is deliberate, as it could be very annoying having spent a while carefully setting up the joysticks perfectly just to have them obliterated through pressing the “defaults” button once. If you want to switch any of this off, either de-select them individually (pressing the Reset button disables the FSUIPC axis processing actions and restores defaults), or, to do this for all at once, edit the FSUIPC.INI file after closing FS and delete the entire section called [JoystickCalibrations].

Note about the AutoPilot in FS2002

This isn't really anything at all to do with FSUIPC, but a lot of folks have been confused and concerned by the changes in FS's Autopilot behaviour in FS2002. This is where the wing leveller is automatically engaged when the Autopilot is turned on. This makes mixed mode operations such as having the A/P control the altitude, while you steer for heading, quite impossible, though it seems this is the more realistic operation in many aircraft.

According to my manuals, this action is actually wrong for several of the standard Bendix-King style autopilots common in light aircraft like the Cessna and implemented by similarity of appearance in the simulator's panels, though it appears that it is correct for others of similar design. Some airliner pilots do confirm, also, that it is correct for many airliners, and even some lighter aircraft, though again I believe that at least some of them do not impose this interlock.

Anyway, Microsoft did provide a way around it—but unfortunately forgot to document it. Here is how they say you can disengage this automatic function. Find the AIRCRAFT.CFG file for each aircraft for which you want to change the autopilot behaviour. These files are in the named aircraft folders within the main FS Aircraft folder. These files are plain text files and can be edited with an ordinary text editor such as NotePad. It may be best to make a back-up copy first, however.

Edit the file and find a section headed [Autopilot]. Add the following two lines to this, if they are not there already:

```
use_no_default_pitch=1
use_no_default_bank=1
```

Note for Windows NT users

By all reports received it appeared that FSUIPC does not work with either FS98 or FS2000 on Windows NT. I have never been able to determine why, there's never been sufficient information arising. There are no problems using FSUIPC on Windows 2000 or XP. There used to be some incompatibility with force feedback joysticks, particularly those by Microsoft and Logitech, but maybe others too, but hopefully this has now been properly overcome. If there are still problems there is a work-around. The force feedback difficulties only affect FS loading, so load with FF disabled, then enable it—remembering to disable it again before terminating Flight Simulator. To load FS with FF disabled you can edit the FS2000.CFG or FS2002.CFG file (in the main FS folder): find the parameter "force_master_enabled" and set this to 0 (zero). To turn FF on and off from within FS, go to the Options–Controls–Forces menu item and toggle the "Master Force Feedback" option.

Note for WidevieW users

Appropriate versions of Luciano Napolitano's WidevieW package can make good use of FSUIPC's weather processing facilities in FS2000/2002 by transferring the exact weather from the Server PC to the Clients most efficiently. However, if you have the FSUIPC options set wrongly in the Client FS installations, the similarities WidevieW is striving for may well be lost.

In order to see a virtually identical copy of the Server's weather in each Client, set ALL of the FSUIPC weather options *off* (i.e. unchecked) except for these:

- Winds: enable transitions if they are enabled in the server
- Winds: extend the top layer if it is enabled in the Server
- Winds: allow gusts (so that this is controlled in the Server)
- Winds: shear sharp as defaulted
- Visibility: disable the surface limits
- Visibility: apply white-out fix if enabled in Server

The "Minimum weather defaults" button in the About page starts you off getting the correct settings.

Note for EFIS98 users

If you are using the version of EFIS98 which has been updated for use with FS2000, please note that you should tell it that it is running with FS98 even if you are using FS2000 or FS2002. This is because FSUIPC provides an FS98 interface no matter where it is running. If you don't do this, EFIS98 will get some things wrong and, in particular, will not control your Autopilot properly.

Note for NavDash users

If you are using NavDash with FS2000 or FS2002 you will find that the FS98 version works well with FSUIPC, since FSUIPC is providing an FS98 interface. The correct version is 2.5.2. If you have tried version 2.5.4 or later, please then remove the 'ND254.DLL' module from FS's Modules folder. You may be able to obtain NavDash 2.5.2 from:

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/cranenburg/planners.htm>

Select FS2000 and FS2000 files, then PLANNERS and you will find the two files you need: NavDash v2.5 (1,097kb) and the Update to version 2.5.2 (285Kb). But note that there will be flickering display problems with FS2002 due to the different method FS now uses for screen updates.

Note for SquawkBox users

Because FSUIPC provides a compatible FS98 interface even when used within FS2000 or FS2002, you need an FS98 compatible version of SquawkBox. It is likely that versions 2.2 and 2.3 (prior to build 4) will give some problems with FSUIPC and FS2000, notably with visibility and possibly also with surface winds. I am told that build 4 (version 2.3.4) has been changed to exclusively use the FS98 interface and so should work well. You can get this (and presumably later versions, when available) from <http://www.simclients.com>.

Please also note that FSUIPC does not have anything to do with the Multiplayer interface, which is used by SquawkBox to display and transmit images of other aircraft in your vicinity. I cannot undertake to answer any questions on this aspect as I am totally ignorant in this area.

Note for ProFlight 2000 users

ProFlight2000 users, or users of other Adventure packages which (probably optionally) set their own weather, will find it best to press the "Minimum weather defaults" button, as this ensures least interference in the weather being set by the Adventures. Problems in FS2000's weather engine can cause crashes if both Adventures and other programs, or even the user, attempt to control the weather simultaneously. The same probably applies to FS2002, and possibly even to FS2004 for "ABL" adventures..

HELP: "My utility program doesn't work with FSUIPC!"

The most likely reason for any application program or add-in module or gauge not being able to access FSUIPC properly is that your FSUIPC is not registered, and the application, add-in or panel is not a version which is accredited for use with this version of FSUIPC. Look in the FSUIPC.LOG file (in the Modules folder) using any text editor. It may well confirm that this is the problem.

You have two options to choose from: either register FSUIPC so that it works with all such programs, or contact the author or supplier of the program to see if there's an update or Access Key, which he can supply to solve the problem.

If the program you are trying to use is obsolete, and no longer being maintained, sold or supplied by anyone, then you can apply to me, via the Support Forum (see front page) to see if it is possible to get a free access key for it. The same applies to active freeware, but in that case it should always be the author who arranges for the key.

If FS crashes with FSUIPC installed, but not without it

A crash on exiting FS is not unusual, although it should be *very* rare with the recent versions of FSUIPC. It seems to be due to the way FS closes down its modules. FSUIPC is multithreaded and occasionally the extra threads are left running till last, after data they wish to access has been removed from memory.

If you find this annoying, one way around it seems to be to make sure the FSUIPC is the first module loaded and unloaded. To do this, make a temporary folder somewhere, then move all of the .DLL files out of the FS Modules folder, move just FSUIPC.DLL back, and then all the others. Take care not to mislay any in doing this!

If you get a crash in FS at any other time, and either it identifies FSUIPC.DLL as the 'culprit', or you believe it must be FSUIPC because that's the only thing you've changed, then please do the following:

1. If you are using FS2002 or FS2004, you first need to edit the FS CFG file. Use an ordinary text editor, like Notepad. Find the section [MAIN] and add the line "ReportErrors=0" (without the quotes). This stops FS handling the error itself, so allowing you to collect data in other ways.
2. Before running FS again, run DrWatson.EXE (in Win2000 or WinXP it is DrWtsn32.EXE and it is in the Windows\System32 folder). To do this, simply click the Windows Start button, then Run, type 'DrWatson' (for example) and hit return. It will run and place a little icon in the system tray, which you can ignore. (On Windows 2000 and Windows XP it might come up with a set of options first. It is the *Log* you want, not the *Dump*, so note where that is going to be placed, or choose a different suitable folder for it).
3. Run FS and attempt to provoke the crash by generating the same conditions again.
4. When the crash occurs, DrWatson will collect all the information I need. Find the latest .WLG type file in the Windows\DrWatson folder (in Windows2000 or XP the filename and location will be different. The file will be a normal text file and will normally have file type .LOG), Zip it up (very important! <G>), and send it to me with a description of what you were doing when the crash occurred.

Other quite important notes and observations for all FS2000 and FS2002 users

It has come to my notice that FS2000 has some odd weather-related bugs which, it should be noted, are *not* caused by FSUIPC. Some of these may well be carried over into FS2002, as the weather engine has not been the subject of much change.

In particular, transitions between the surface wind and the first upper wind layer seem to cause very weird problems when the ground elevation, below the aircraft, is below sea level (such as over Amsterdam). Peculiar phenomena such as all engines cutting out, or all fuel tanks being emptied, have been reported. I have reproduced some of these things myself *without* FSUIPC being installed, so it is definitely nothing to do with it, but to do with the weather (and in particular, the wind) settings. You *can* fix it using FSUIPC: just enable WindTransitions so that FS has no such layer changes to 'hit'.

FS2002 using downloaded 'real' weather seems to have frequent problems of wind reversal when transitioning into the surface wind. I have found no solution to this apart from using an external weather source such as FSMeteo. The fix which used to work for this in FS2000 was to set "wind shear sharp" (defaulted in FSUIPC), but this doesn't seem to help in FS2002.

FS2000 re-draws clouds in a rather odd way that can cause flickering at times. It looks like it alternately draws the new clouds and the old ones on each frame, sometimes for a number of seconds. I *think* it is supposed to be fading one out and one in, so the change looks smooth, but it isn't working some of the time. This phenomenon can occur for any cloud changes—even, strangely, turbulence and icing changes that shouldn't affect the visual appearance at all. If the occasional flickering annoys you, you can reduce some of it by turning off the options to add random turbulence and icing (which are both off by default in any case). Note that I *think* this flickering is cured in FS2002. At least I've not seen it yet. <G>

Important notes for FS2004 users

It is gratifying to see that, even with some really impressive graphics improvements, FS2004 can still run at similar frame rates to FS2002. But (and of course there's always a 'but') those lovely clouds, in particular, can introduce some problems.

Clouds, 2D panels and stutters

First, I would strongly advise that you go to the display options (Options—Settings—Display), select the Weather tab, and move the 3D percentage slider to full right, i.e. 100% This will prevent FS from generating any of those 2D "imposter" clouds in a ring around the aircraft. Those imposters, at the best of times, are annoying, as they keep fading and redrawing all the time—you can't catch them! But when any part of the weather is changed by any external program, they do this by turning off and turning on again, introducing a horrible flicker.

If having 100% 3D clouds slows the performance down too much, try moving the two sliders above that one (the view and draw distances) to their lowest, left-most, setting. That should help a great deal. You can try simple clouds and less dense clouds too, but I didn't find I needed to compromise there.

Second, it appears that on some systems you may get stuttering and flickering in any case, irrespective of the cloud settings. The flickering may even sometimes affect the 2D panel. The cause here seems likely to be an AGP incompatibility in the video driver or the motherboard AGP minidriver (e.g. the "4-in-1" drivers on VIA motherboards). Try going to the Hardware tab in Options—Settings—Display and switching the "Render to texture" option—off if it was on, on if it was off. This, I've been told, can eliminate this cause of stutter and flicker.

Accelerated value increments

Built into FS (and FS2004 is not new for this) there are facilities for accelerated incrementing/decrementing. These allow things like the A/P speed value to go up in 10s rather than 1's, and so on. To operate this FS measures the time between successive controls arriving. If they are very close, it accelerates the change. As someone in MS confirmed, the theory is that if controls ("key events" in Gauge terms) come firing in really fast, it is most likely the same event. The caveat of this is there is some code running that is automatically sending key events fast enough, this can cause all increments to be accelerated, even wrongly.

I discovered this happening on some complex panels back a year or two ago—panels were unbelievably sending things like "A/P Engage" 10 to 20 times per second! Very wasteful and performance damaging. They should check if the control is needed first and not send it if it would have no effect.

Anyway, as a result of these problems with some panels, I added a facility in FSUIPC to "fix" control accelerations. Basically this disables the timer inside FS if the next control to arrive is different to the last one. This is an optional fix (see the **Technical** options section earlier), and it isn't available in Version 3 of FSUIPC unless you register. If you are using a panel which has this sort of problem, then really you should complain to the panel writers, as it is not good programming, and it is well within their capability to fix. If the panel is not being maintained, or you get no joy that way, then the only other answer is to pay for FSUIPC registration and use that FSUIPC facility.

Battery voltage problems

FS has for a long time simulated battery power with a limited capacity, only re-charged by the alternators when the engine(s) are running. Most folks complained back in FS2002, and probably FS2000, that the batteries run down too fast. I do think they have extended the capacity somewhat in FS2004, but not enough to conduct realistic pre-engine start procedures on most airliners.

The problem, in FS is that the normal sources of power the airliner would have in such circumstances are simply not simulated. When parked at the gate an airliner would normally be receiving external power. This is not being simulated. When out on the apron, or at a gate without power facilities, it would be using the APU (Auxiliary Power Unit—a small jet engine used as a generator and usually situated in the tail). This is not simulated either, despite there actually being an APU "whine" noise provided in some of the airliners.

To get over this, some time ago, I added a facility in FSUIPC to automatically extend the battery life. By "fiddling" the voltage levels I made the battery last anything from just a bit longer to forever. But this is an optional user facility. If you want some sophisticated panel to operate realistically without using fiddles provided by FSUIPC, ask the panel authors to simulate external power or the APU.

It isn't really FSUIPC's job to make up for either FS's or add-on panel deficiencies, but I have provided some such fixes and these have taken considerable effort to research and program in each version. They are user facilities, and they are optional.

Wind shear and other such problems

I had hoped that FS2004's excellent localised weather facilities would solve all problems of wind swings and shear which were prevalent in FS2000 and FS2002 and which resulted in my implementation of wind transitioning by using one giant wind layer. However, it seems it was not to be. When you are flying amongst a number of weather stations, each with their own weather settings, FS should be interpolating the weather at your position, and providing something which is derived from them. In FS2000 and FS2002 this was based on three METAR stations, using a fixed triangulation system. This seems to have changed considerably in FS2004, and is using many more stations, but, alas, as far as the winds are concerned it does not seem much better.

The main symptoms appear to be wild shifts in the winds, sometimes enough to tear the aircraft apart. These occur when there are several nearby weather stations with conflicting wind reports. Possibly those reports are accurate, but more likely the individual observations are really from different times of day.

I have cases of this, from downloaded FS "real" weather, saved as FLT + WX files, which demonstrate the problem every single time. In one example this happens to be on a route leading towards Chicago from the South. As the dense area of airports and weather stations is approached, the winds shift violently every time, and it is quite predictable. And this is true with or without FSUIPC or any other add-on.

I doubt if there's any correction for this possible. I did waste several days following a lead I thought might pay off, but no dice. I just cannot intercept the weather simulation part at the right places.

There might be a solution for external programs like FSMeteo and ActiveSky. They would need to "fiddle" the winds at closely spaced METAR stations to make them more compatible with each other, possibly then changing them slowly. One of the most beneficial might be to assign a decent direction for "calm" winds, which are currently set to 0/0. I know it shouldn't, but it looks like FS2004 accepts the 0 direction as a valid one to try to "interpolate" with, despite the fact that all the surrounding winds might be 180.

Black screens and hangs when switching video modes

This seems to be quite a well known problem with DX9 and video drivers. It is not caused by FSUIPC or any other add-in, but it does seem to be exacerbated by other processes running in the background, particularly Windows add-ons such as RoboForm and WindowBlinds. Certainly try closing down all non-essential processes before running FS. You may find you need to experiment with different video drivers.

Recently I did manage to reproduce, consistently, such a problem. This was after upgrading from a 2.4GHz Pentium to a 3.2GHz one—just a motherboard and processor change, same video card and driver. This occurred when switching from windowed to full-screen mode, but *only* if I went to another program first—i.e. made FS lose focus. I should say that the problem I could reproduce may not be the one that some are reporting, though it no doubt related. In my case, FS2004 wasn't actually hung. It presented a black screen instead of scenery or whatever, but pressing ALT brought up the Menu, and using that to change something in the Display settings actually recovered the situation completely.

Experimenting here proved that there's some timing issues. I had to remove several add-in modules (not *just* FSUIPC) to get to a point where it didn't occur. Further experimenting in FSUIPC showed that, even if it did nothing, having FSUIPC loading caused the problem to recur. In the end the only change that made any difference was setting "InitDelay=0" in FSUIPC.INI. This makes FSUIPC subclass the main FS window directly it is loaded, instead of delaying it. With that change it was well nigh impossible for me to cause the black screen problem.

As a consequence of this I now default this parameter (since version 3.07), and I also changed AdvDisplay.DLL and PFC.DLL to subclass early too. Some other DLLs with similar problems are not mine to change. However, my conclusion after all this is that there's some serious bug in DX9—not video drivers as first suspected, because the problems can occur with Matrox, nVidia and ATI video cards. I've also learned that similar problems have been reported in other DX9 programs (games).

FS2004 global weather control is problematic

Following lengthy investigations I have come to the conclusion that, with my current state of knowledge of FS2004's weather system, there is no way to make a workable weather system using GLOBAL weather only. In other words, any external weather program which uses only global weather, and does not also set local stations, is pretty well doomed from the start.

The reason is this: I cannot find any method of setting global weather that does not eventually get 'localised' and modified in FS2004. It seems to take anything from about 20 minutes to 50+ minutes here—maybe it is also dependent on distance flown or something—but eventually the weather becomes localised and thereafter no amount of Global fiddling will change it. The only way to 'de-localise' it and get global weather back again is to clear the weather and start again.

This is true with dynamic weather setting turned off, so it is not that. I've proven that FS's weather system is always 'live and changing' by doing this:

1. Remove FSUIPC so there is no possibility of it interfering.
2. Load FS2004 and go to the Weather menu (ALT W W).
3. Set dynamics off, select user defined weather, and 'customised'.
4. Select 'all weather stations' (to make your settings 'Global').
5. Set up some weather that you can remember—some clouds, rain maybe, winds, and so on.
6. Now take off or slew and start moving.
7. Check that the weather looks more or less right.
8. Switch on the A/P or something, go away for 30–50 minutes.
9. Come back and see what's changed.

In my case the winds seem to stay as set, as does the visibility, temperature and pressure. But the clouds disappear or change and the rain stops. Checking the weather at various places in the FS dialogues I find that some places still have that 'global' weather I set originally, and others don't. The chances are all the very distance ones are still the same -- FS transforms and localises the weather around you, not on the far side of the world.

All this is despite weather dynamics being set to "Rate of Change = None", which evidently doesn't quite mean what it says, after all.

The problem is that, once the aircraft is flying through a cluster of WX stations all equipped with their own local weather, no amount of changing of the GLOBAL weather by an external program will accomplish anything ... Actually, that isn't quite true. It does seem to accomplish something -- it makes the local weather change too, but not in any way which seems predictable. The changing of all those distance non-localised stations seems merely to accelerate the local changes along their own indeterminate course.

I'll add any more FS2004 hints and advice I come across here in future releases.
