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## [Microsoft grounds Aces Studio \(http://www.sandon.it/node/38\)](http://www.sandon.it/node/38)

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Microsoft [announced \(http://www.fsinsider.com/news/Pages/AMessageFromAces.aspx\)](http://www.fsinsider.com/news/Pages/AMessageFromAces.aspx) that Aces Studio, the publisher of Flight Simulator, has been closed. Right now, the future of the simulator is very unclear. The announcement says MS "remain committed to the Flight Simulator franchise", but also "will provide more synergy with our ongoing investments in Games for Windows - LIVE as well as other Windows entertainment technologies" - what it really means is yet to be seen, but it's not promising.

MS also said they are still looking into "flying games" - and that said a lot. FS was never a "game", meaning a "toy", it became an affordable flying simulator used by aviation enthusiasts all around the globe. Put a PC gamer in front of it, and he will find it boring and dull. He won't understand why you got a machine more powerful than his to run it ;) Or why you didn't buy an Xbox to play in the living room. Nor he will understand why you need all that hardware, he can frag his enemies with just a keyboard and a mouse. And what about all that paper charts around your desk? Hey, he doesn't need a map, he knows the dungeons by heart.

Is this the new customer MS is aiming to? The worst scenario would be a Xboxed FS tied to Windows Live and unable to work on [IVAO \(http://www.ivao.aero/\)](http://www.ivao.aero/) or [VATSIM \(http://www.vatsim.net/\)](http://www.vatsim.net/). I know the Xbox is a powerful machine. But it lacks the proper hardware to run a flight simulator. Pads are useless, and very unrealistic anyway. I have five USB devices just to fly. [Stick, throttle, pedals. \(http://www.chproducts.com/retail/index.html\)](http://www.chproducts.com/retail/index.html) [A head tracking device \(http://www.naturalpoint.com/trackir/\)](http://www.naturalpoint.com/trackir/). An USB headset to get voice separated from sounds from the audio card. I got a gaming keyboard to map the several keystrokes required to manage instruments to macros. I run it on a multimonitor setup. Because it has to be as much real as it can. Could an Xbox handle all these? Xbox was designed for simplicity, hey, push your disc in and play. It was never designed for complex simulations. It's pure entertainment.

Also, learning to fly takes time and dedication. A simulator follows real physical laws, and won't forgive. It's true you can set realism to minimal, and get a rubber plane that will bounce on kamikaze landing, will turn without skidding or slipping, and won't tear apart if overstressed, just it will get really boring and dull. But learning how to fly really means to *listen, learn and follow the rules* - it's like going to school, I guess the average Xbox player would say "what? flying school? Oh no, no more school! Rules? I break the rules!" :) Well, I really had a taste of real flying only when I got (and read several times) [MS FSX for Pilots - Real World training \(http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0764588222.html\)](http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0764588222.html), and was taught by a real ATC controller how to fly my airplane in a real environment.

Is Microsoft throwing away one of its more educative and long living titles? Will turn it into a toy for heedless players? Give us a flying "game", made easier for Xbox kids to play on Windows "Live" just to sell more stuff on its marketplace, maybe having to download airplanes and scenarios each time I fly, and well, I will surely look for something else.

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