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Computers in the cockpit

THE EVOLUTION CONTINUES...NOW WITH THE IPAD

By Charles P. Schneider

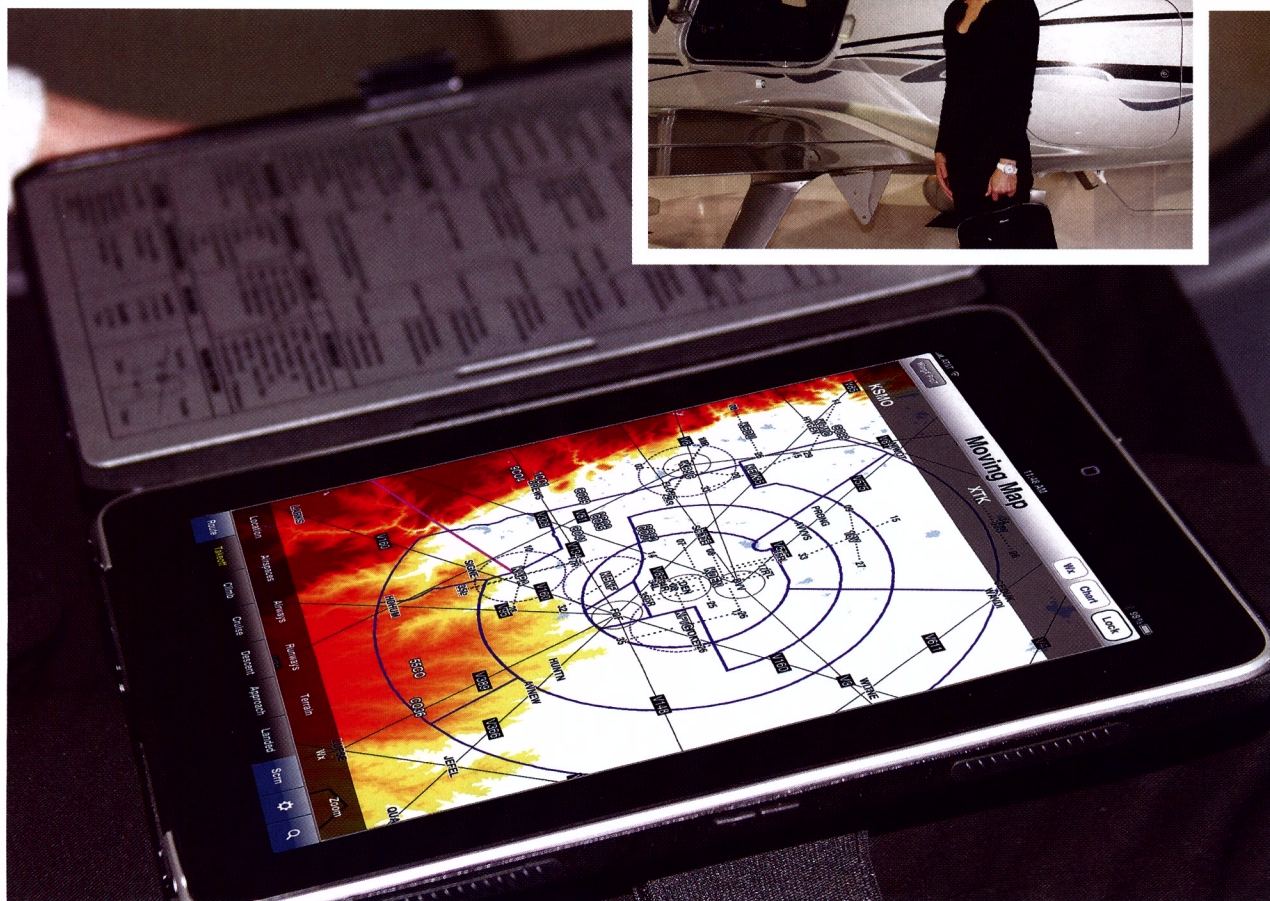
A friend introduced me to the idea that I could fly a plane and it would help my business. The business part was easy to understand – the ability to meet with more customers in a day and better leverage of our people. It made sense.

The flying part was another story. Having been an avid sailor, I was familiar with charts, navigation and GPS. Of course, there was the added dimension of altitude and landing the airplane, but that was for my flight instructors to help me with. What I was surprised about was the wide range of capabilities aircraft had in regard to on-board navigation systems. Everything from steam gauges to advanced glass cockpits. And yet, something was still missing even in some of the most advanced aircraft I flew.

I equipped myself with a state of the art tablet-laptop computer, with a touch screen, charts and software which cost over \$4,000 and weighed 3.5 lbs. The computer allowed me to minimize the need to carry paper charts and approach plates, and rid me of the chore of filing new charts.

More importantly, the computer helped to make routing choices given the weather ahead leaving the on-board navigation systems focused on where we were now. The ability to have the right chart up and instantly know where you were on it, to have it seamlessly connected together with the next chart and to have whatever arrival procedure or approach plate you





need when you needed it, regardless if you planned to go to that area or not, was to me essential. All of this combined to improve situational awareness and reduce work load – both important when flying single pilot IFR.

Unable to find a suitable mount for the computer, it sat on my lap or on the seat next to me.

And then something happened. In a flight from northern California to Las Vegas, I was hit by a severe updraft going over the Sierra's that took the airplane up over 1,000 feet in an instant. My seatbelt was tight. My laptop launched from my lap and when it came down it changed the plane's configuration to full flaps, throttle to idle - all while traveling at 200kts!

The iPad changes everything!

The iPad, and the Android versions to come, change everything about bringing a computer into the cockpit. At under \$1,000 with software and charts, it is more affordable and therefore more available to more people. At less than 1.5 lbs. and measuring 9.5" high by 7.5" wide by .5" thin, it is more manageable and securable than the computer it replaced. Its bright, well sized color screen is one of the best for reading charts.

The iPad is NOT intended to replace primary flight instruments or compete with specialized devices like the Garmin 696, G1000 or an Avidyne. Its purpose is different.

The iPad provides the ability to access the wealth of aviation information on the Internet from anywhere at any time right up to the time of flight. The iPad provides the ability to bring a vast amount of information with you on every flight in a very easy to use, easy to read, and easy to secure device with the ability to do the same in-flight tasks as the computer it replaced.

The iPad can be secured to a yoke by using a mount from Ram Mounting Systems. Or, an iPad kneeboard can be used such as the iPad Kneeboard Pro™ from MyGoFlight.com.

In future columns, we will explore the many uses of the iPad in pre-flight, in-flight, post-flight and in education. ☺