

AVSIM Commercial Aircraft Review

Coolsky Super 80 Professional



Product Information		
Publisher: Flight 1		
Description: Modernized MD-80 for FSX		
Download Size: 94mb	Format: Download	Simulation Type: FSX
Reviewed by: - Peter Clemenko III – Avsim Staff Reviewer October 2008		

Introduction:

The Super 80 Professional by Coolsky is a rendition of a modernized MD-80 with a glass cockpit. The MD-80 is a spinoff of the DC-9, and the program for developing the MD-80 was launched in 1977. The MD-80 has had a total production run of 1191 aircraft built. The Super 80 Pro is designed to stay true to the avionics and the complexity of the real aircraft, and while it has its pitfalls, it is in general a good rendition of the MD-80. This add-on includes features such as a training program for learning how to fly the aircraft, detailed avionics, a dispatch menu for determining the payload and fuel load of the aircraft, and has options in the main center window for setting up an aircraft starting state, for instance cold and dark, or cleared for takeoff. Now that we have that out of the way, let's look at the good stuff.

Installation and Documentation:

The install is simple enough, just follow the instructions on screen and it should work. The aircraft procedure manual is 333 pages and very well detailed. It has most of the info needed to get off the ground, but one thing that seems to be lacking from the aircraft manual and all the checklists is that you have to turn on the external power before starting anything else or the gauges won't turn on! This took me about 2 hours to figure out on my own. I would have figured it out sooner, but I was sure for the time being that the checklist was complete, which it wasn't. Speaking of checklists, Coolsky included a nice touch with adding a checklist gauge to the aircraft that has most of the procedures on the list which you can access through the instrument panel section in the views menu. You just have to click the button to go to the next item to check an item off; it's as simple as that. The main user manual is a relatively good, but they leave out a few key things. The main problem with the manual is that the manual doesn't give any info as to how to manually access the configuration center. It took me 3 hours to figure that one out on my own. I eventually found that it was in the instrument panel section of views. Personally though I would have preferred if it had been in the add-ons tab, as that would have made more sense to me.

Flight Dynamics:

While I can't claim to know how a real MD-80 will handle, I can say this; the flight model seems to perform the way you would think it would. I would like to say it's spot on, but I can't considering I don't know what spot on is in this aircraft. I can say however that it does feel like it is fly-by-wire. The aircraft does feel pretty stiff and handles quite well in my view. The only problem I had was I was always ether stalling or over speeding, but I guess that's because I still am getting used to controlling that aircraft. The aircraft does feel like it does have a bit of kick to it though.

Sounds:

The sounds are well done for the most part. There were three key flaws I noticed though. The big and annoying one was that the First Officer that is included with the aircraft has a tendency to go in to a loop of saying V1, V2, and rotate while landing. This wouldn't be so bad if he said it once, but he says it in a loop that almost gave me a headache! It annoyed the heck out of me. The other key flaw I noticed was that one of the audio warnings doesn't play properly, and you can't tell what it is trying to tell you because it is cutting out enough of it to not know what the heck it's saying. Finally, I noticed that sometimes, the sounds don't play in the 3d cockpit until you switch to the 2d cockpit.

External Model:

The external model is well done up to a point. The main issues I found are that when you turn on the windshield wipers they don't move in external view. Furthermore, I noticed that you can't open the windows in the cockpit. This would have added a bit more realism in my opinion. These things are not that major, but they would have added a nice touch. All in all though the external model is very well done and very nice and pleasant to look at. You can even see the reverse thrust in action when you activate it.

Liveries:

If you want variety here, you got it, as this aircraft comes out of the box with 23 liveries. Some liveries look like a fresh coat of paint and others look weathered and worn down. While I prefer the weathered and worn down approach, I wish that they were all like that, rather than just some of them. The weathered liveries are done by McPhat Studios, and I have to commend them on these liveries, as the weathering is the one thing that is missing from 90% of repaints for all aircraft for flight sim. The one thing I love with the add-on liveries is that you can install new ones using the Flight1 Manager. This is a very nice thing for convenience so

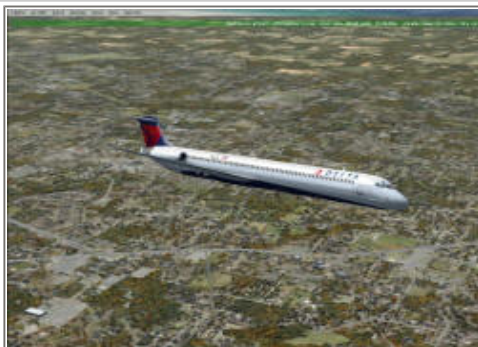
you don't have to dive in to code to install a new skin.



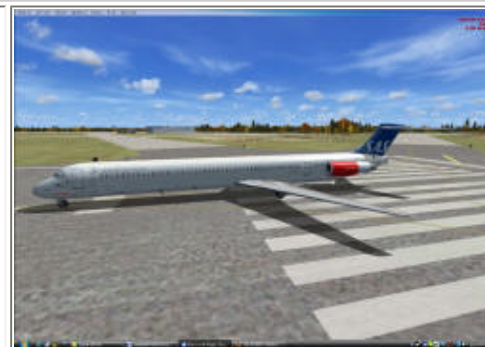
This Plane has Spirit!



Good old Delta



The New Delta



You know this Aircraft is SASsy!

Panel:

Well, the panel is a mixed bag, a very mixed bag. On some cases, I love it, but on certain other things, it kills the experience for me. The ways I love it are the 2d panel and the major textures are sharp and it is easy to read the labels. The thing that really kills it for me is that the 3d virtual cockpit isn't all that 3d. The large objects are in 3d, yes, but as someone who is hooked on virtual cockpits, the fact that 95% of the things in the cockpit are painted on really got on my nerves. It all looks relatively 3d from some viewpoints, but someone with a TrackIR or just looking at some areas can tell they are 2d painted on. The other reason this gets on my nerves is that, when I'm in DX10 mode, I expect shadows in my 3d pit, but if the knobs are all in 2d and painted on, they won't cast shadows, which further kills the immersion factor. On the plus side though, I have to say that the avionics are very complex, which is the way I like it. This is something that really needs to be focused on by more developers, as the complex avionics are something I am willing to say that I would pay a little more, say five or ten dollars more for compared to simplified stuff. I'm a bit saddened though about the FMC. The FMC is nice and complex, but the problem is that it has a tendency to crash FSX. That's right I said it crashes FSX! as in CTD, or game over man, game over.



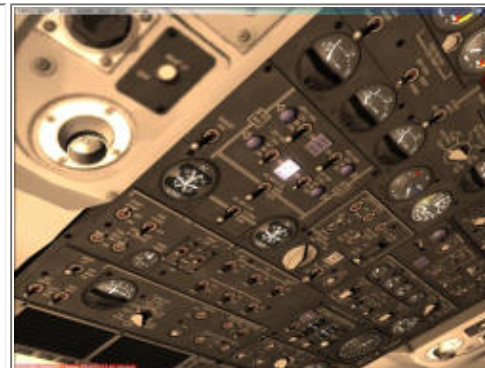
Oh boy, I'm Screwed!



The AP Dash looks fine.



Think again...



Overhead panel... Yep flat.



FMC's are flat, and it looks like gauges are painted on.



Buttons and dials are flat



2D Front Panel



2D Upper Pedestal



2D Upper Overhead Panel



2D Lower Overhead Panel



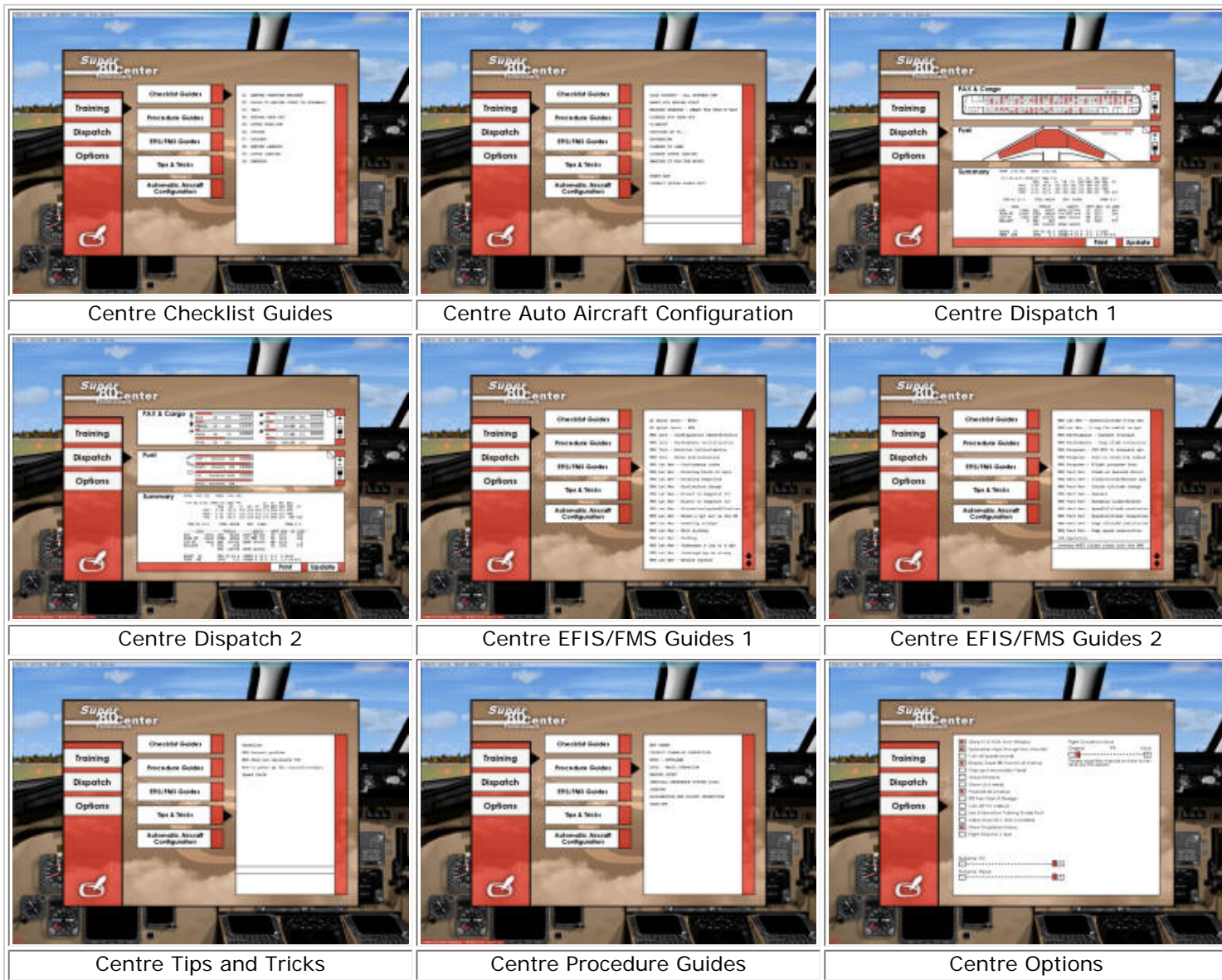
2D Lower Pedestal

Furthermore I have noticed problems where the 3d panel would not update until I switched to the 2d panel. This is a glitch that really ticks me off at times. The other real problem I have with the panel is that in 2d, you can see the windshield wipers move, but you can't see them move in 3d. I would have loved to see some rain and windshield wiper effects in the 2d and 3d panel. Also I would like to see the rain repellent spray on to the windshield when I activate it. That would be another nice touch for realism. I noticed that when you click something like the FMC in the 3d pit, the 2d panel for it pops up. In some ways this is nice, but in other ways I would prefer to be able to punch in the FMC data in the 3d cockpit rather than having to do it on a 2d panel popup. Another issue I had was that the 3d pit was not very well textured on the areas where there were not knobs and switches. The textures just looked too, shall I say, clean and pristine. I got to the point at which I feel that it's not that good looking or realistic if the textures make something look like it just came off the factory floor. To be honest, I feel that the textures just have to look dirtier to look more realistic, for instance add some scratches or some worn off paint on some of the more used objects. For instance worn off paint on the pedals, or paint coming off the wheel. Finally I would have liked to be able to mess with the autopilot switches and knobs without having to do other things before I could even interact with them. Oh, just to be fair, I have to commend Coolsky on the attempt to make the switches look 3d, but attempting is no excuse for not actually modeling them.

Extra Features:

The extra features include a training program, a dispatch program, and a bunch of various other neat things. The training program is a very good idea for an aircraft this complex, but it has a few flaws, one of them major. The major flaw is the way it is laid out. The first training program listed in setup didn't mention one key thing about starting up the aircraft; you have to turn on the external power. Oh I have a little idea for making the training program better in the future versions. How about actually making the training stuff missions, that way you can have a voice over of an instructor training you on how to operate the aircraft. I love the dispatch page, as it allows you to customize the payload to a very good extent. This includes things such as gender and age of passengers along with their weights, and it also includes selecting which seats are taken. Furthermore it allows you to select how much cargo you are carrying. The virtual first officer was a good idea, but flawed in execution. When landing I had him going in to a loop of v1 and v2 along with rotate. Finally, I would have liked to see the option to have a choice of a few different first officers male and female from different regions. It doesn't sound right when flying a China Southern Airlines aircraft to hear

an American first officer.



Summary & Closing Remarks:

All in all, the Coolsky Super 80 Professional is certainly a very complex and nice add-on, and while it isn't for everyone, it is very much so worth the money if you enjoy the MD-80 and you are willing to read a big manual. The main downsides are the glitches and the lack of detail on the 3d cockpit. Sadly, the 3d cockpit looks like something that was just slapped together in a hurry. While the textures in the 3d cockpit are nice for the most part, they are a bit weak in other areas, as the cockpit just doesn't look like it has been used that much. In fact, it looks like it just rolled off the factory floor. Furthermore, the 3d cockpit lacks detail in having the knobs, switches, and buttons modeled in 3d, and as such, someone like me who lives in the 3d cockpit, may have some issues with it being a bit.... flat. The training program was a good idea, but was seriously flawed in execution. Furthermore, the aircraft has some glitches that got on my nerves. While it isn't

perfect, it is worth the price of admission if you are not very concerned about the internal visual model, however the visual model lacking detail as it does, will kill the immersion in the 3d cockpit. I personally recommend that if you can settle with a low detail 3d pit and a couple glitches you should go for it, but sadly, in my personal tastes, I cannot say that I would be willing to pay 60 dollars for an add-on that doesn't have a detailed virtual cockpit with all the objects in the cockpit modeled in 3d along with a crash to desktop when using certain FMC functions.

Test System

Computer Specs

Processor: Intel Core 2 Quad Q6600 @ 2.4ghz

RAM: 4 gigs corsair 800mhz

Motherboard: XFX Nforce 680i It SLI

Video Card: Nvidia Geforce 8500GT 512 megs

OS: Windows Vista Ultimate 64 bit Service Pack 1

Joystick: Microsoft Sidewinder Precision Pro

Head Tracking: TrackIR 4 Pro

Flight Test Time:

18 hours Flight + 7 hours with my head in the manual

What I Like About The Super 80 Proccessional

- Very detailed avionics suite
- The training suite is a good idea
- Very good frame rates in the cockpit
- The 2d panel is very clear and sharp
- The flight handling is well done
- Plenty of liveries, and easy install of more liveries that you download off the internet by using the Flight1 Repaint Manager to install them
- DirectX 10 support out of the box
- The included virtual first officer is a very good idea
- The McPhat liveries are sweet, and more people should take lessons from how they do it
- The dispatch handler is very cool

What I Don't Like About The Super 80 Professional

- The virtual pit was too low detail for my tastes
- The FMC causes FSX to crash in some modes
- No rain effects on the windshield, nor any reason to use the windshield wipers or the rain repellent
- The windshield wipers didn't move in the 3d pit or on the external model
- Various bugs and glitches
- A lot of the internal textures are too clean and pristine
- Some procedures in the training mode were not fully detailed or were clumsily laid out, and left me stumped

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CoolSky Super 80 Pro

[\(adobe acrobat required\)](#)

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