The
CIX
VFR Club

WHY IS MEMBERSHIP OF CIX IMPORTANT?

First of all let me say that the club welcomes virtual pilots who are not members of Cix. We feel that non-Cix members should be "Associate Members" for reasons which will be apparent below. Associate members would enjoy all the privileges of full members, except that not being members of Cix, you would miss out on a lot. You would also not have any decision-making role within the club, although ideas and suggestions would always be warmly welcomed.

Let me try and explain why membership of Cix is central to the Cix VFR Club's culture. The debate about associate members took place entirely within the Cix VFR Club "conference" on Cix, so it took a day or two. A "conference" is a hybrid between email and a web forum, although it is a system almost as old as email itself, and pre-existed the web as we know it to day. It has message threading, so that "conversations" are more easily followed. For those without broadband, it is also cheap, because messages are composed off line and sent and received in "batches" rather like email. But unlike email, all the "postings" are visible to all members. It is private to members and therefore reasonably secure from malicious attack.

CIX CONFERENCING – AN INFORMATION HIGHWAY

Cix conferencing is almost unique. Along with its American counterpart, Compuserve, it was THE information highway before the Internet existed. From Cix has arisen a "club" of "Cixen" who are rather like a very large (15,000 approx) family. For example if you buy or sell anything within the Cix auction system, transactions almost never fail through non-delivery or non-payment. Cixen trust each other, and that trust is accepted throughout the organisation.

Cix costs in the region of £8 per month, and includes "conferences" on almost any topic you can think of. A very large number of its members are in the computing business, (you can get an answer to almost any computer related problem) and also a large number are self employed business people who use Cix to exchange info about Tax, Company Law, employment problems etc. etc. ...and many are members just for the fun of belonging to an information club. I have been a member since 1988, and, working alone from home, life would be lonely for me without it.

The Cix VFR Club works as a club because we are members of the Cix family, and within the conference we chat about all sorts of things related to aviation, and some not. In particular, there is a lot of traffic before and after an event as we discuss proposed outings, share our experiences afterwards, and exchange photographs etc. (screenshots), just as you would in the member's bar of an aero club. I am telling you all this because without being a member of Cix you would miss this, to us, important aspect of club life.

The web site has two roles. Firstly it is used to publish the finalised flight plans and general information, and to enable all members to quickly see the "photographs" that we all take while on our trips, as one weakness of Cix is the archaic method of uploading and downloading files. Secondly it is our public face, because we do have a political motive - we want there to be more VFR flying on Vatsim, which we have seen gradually "taken over" by the heavy brigade, and we believe VFR flying is actually more fun, (Why do you think so many real world airline pilots fly light aircraft in their spare time?), but also want the group flying (hence our club motto - "We no longer fly alone") and live ATC available from Vatsim.

FREE TRIAL

Cix exists in two forms, on-line and off-line. The off-line service was developed when telephone costs were high and modem speeds were low. Using proprietary "Off-line Readers" you could (and still can) collect all your messages and emails in a short script-driven process which connected with the

CIX

VFR Club

Cix server software (CoSy – developed by the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada). This process is known to Cixen as "blinking", as the time from connection to disconnection is typically 2 or 3 minutes.

With the burgeoning of the Internet, Cix developed an on-line interface, which allows exactly the same facilities as the traditional off-line service, but is accessed via the Internet, and users are on-line throughout the process. Cix offer a One month Free Trial of the on-line system at http://web.conferencing.co.uk .

TEAMSPEAK

During our flights we use Teamspeak on our own private channel to exchange flight information, point out landmarks, warn of problems etc. (Sometimes this can be slightly embarrassing as, for example, you "whisper" to members that we are going to arrive at Gloucester en masse and surprise the ATCO, but you pressed the wrong key and transmitted this gem to the Vatsim world!) Associate members would, of course, be able to make use of our Teamspeak server and talk to other members during flights and at other times when Teamspeak is active, though this isn't often, as we have the use of Cix of course.

I hope we have not put off potential members - the opposite is the intention. We would welcome any virtual pilot who wants to fly VFR, but this outline about Cix is to show you that it might just be worth joining.