VATSIM SETUP GUIDE – SQUAWK BOX 4

Introduction
Online flying brings a whole new meaning to the "as real as it gets" theme, to make the move as easy as possible for you! This guide will help you register, download, install & use the software needed to connect to VATSIM (Virtual Air Traffic Simulation Network).

Requirements
- Valid working copy of Flight Simulator 2004 or FSX
- Windows NT 4, Windows 2000, Windows XP or Windows Vista
- FSUPIC (Does not need to be registered) http://www.schiratti.com/dowson.html
- Working microphone

These are the basic items you need to get up and running on VATSIM. When you have these installed, and working, you are going to need to make a new account with VATSIM itself, unless you already have a VATSIM account.

Registration
Visit: http://cert.vatsim.net/vatsimnet/signup.html
Once you have your VATSIM ID & password. Make a note of these and you are ready to go! Try to store them some where safe.

Software
VATSIM allows you to use 2 different types of software to connect to its network. The one we will be using is squawkbox, the most popular software for use on VATSIM. This is a free piece of software which is simple and easy to use. To download squawkbox please visit: http://squawkbox.ca/downloads/.

Once downloaded, launch the installer and follow the simple steps by clicking next to install the software.

Once all is complete you are ready to load flight simulator!

When you are loaded up in flight simulator you must ensure that you are always on a gate or stand before connection. It is bad to suddenly pop up on the main active runway (especially if someone is on finals) as it can cause a lot of problems!

You are at your gate, checklist to hand, fuel calculations have been done and you have found a route off the flight manifest… what to do now? That's right – **START** squawkbox. Scary eh?...No not at all. All you have to do is open the flight simulator menu (by either pressing alt, or if in window mode, it's already there) then click on the squawkbox button, followed by start squawkbox.

When squawkbox has fully loaded, you will be presented with the main window
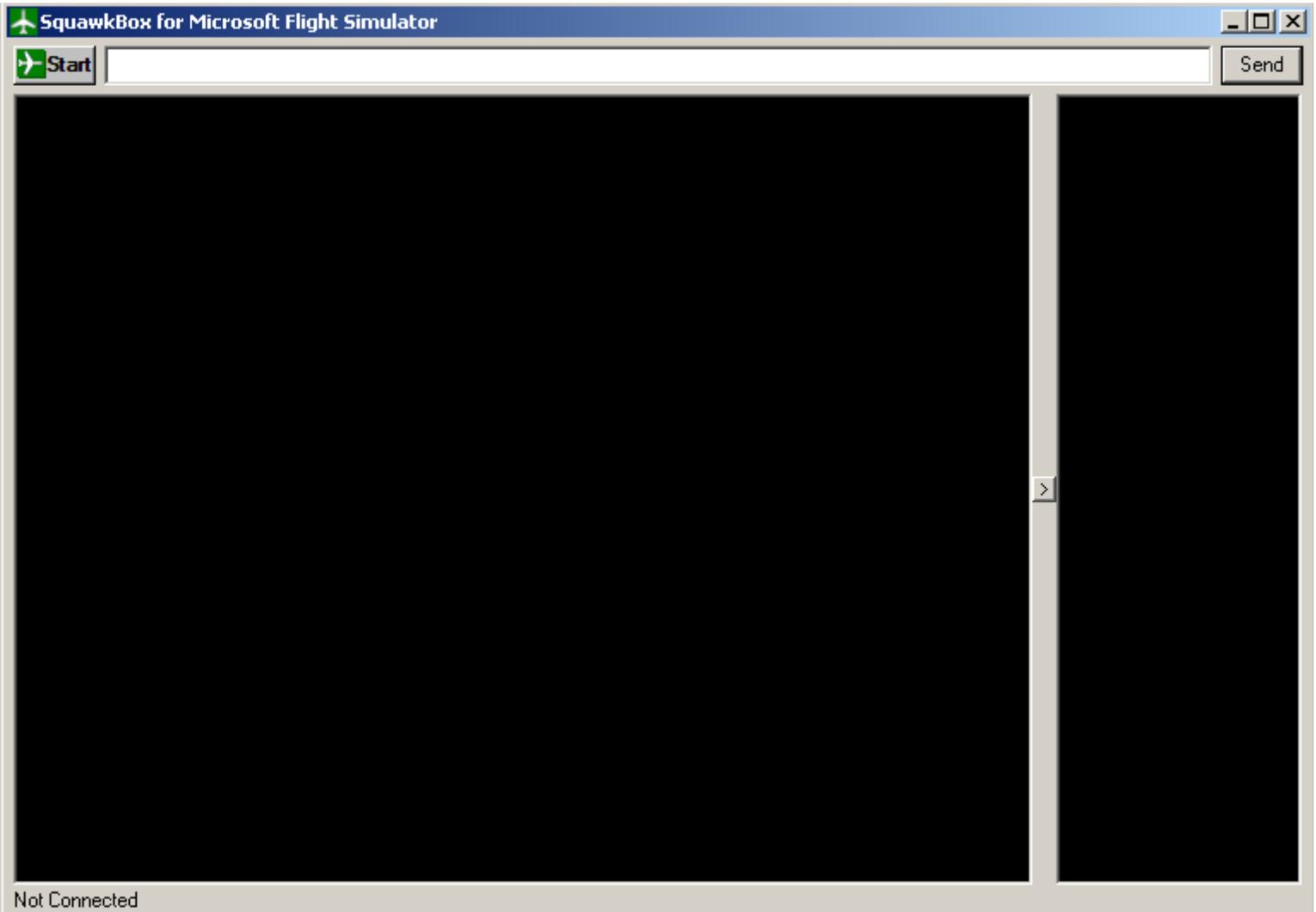
It's now time to set up your basics and get connected. In the main squawkbox window, click the **START** button and go to options. Here you can set up colours and soundcards etc, but the main one you will need to set is your PTT (Push To Talk) button, so go ahead and do this now!
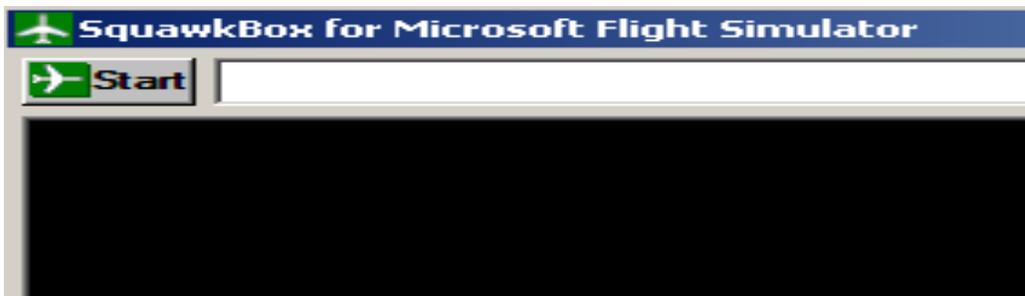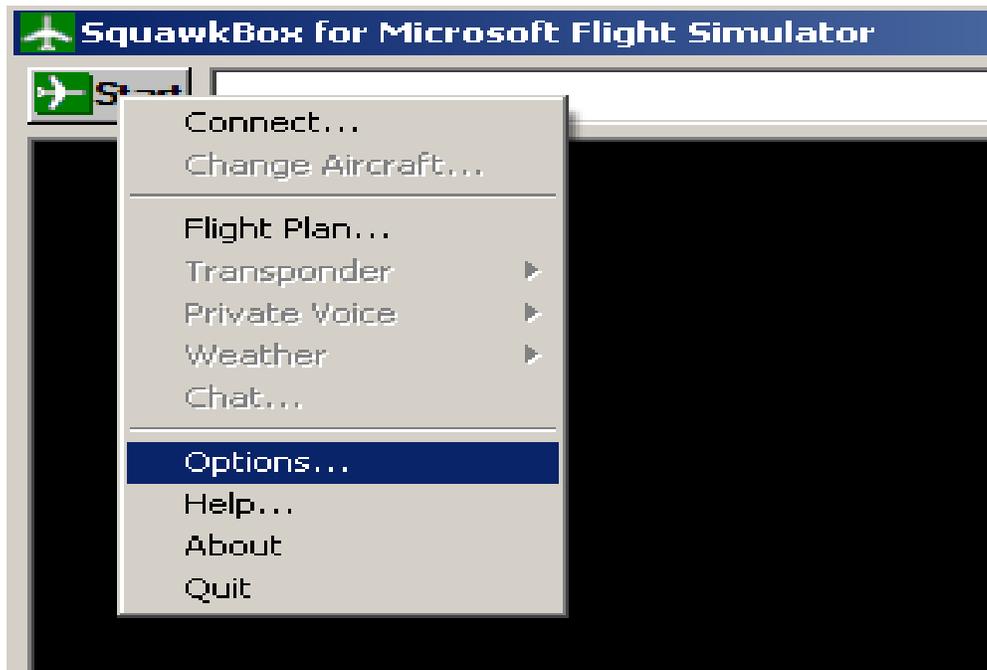
Once you are done, click ok, click start again but go to '**CONNECT**'. You will now be presented with the main window to connect to the VATSIM servers. A few boxes will need to be filled in here, but once it is done you won't have to do it again, promise! You will NOT have to do it again, unless you reinstall your flight sim or operating system.

Most of this box is self explanatory. The server selection can be left as it is unless you have a better connection on another server, but this is your own choice. Username and password will be contained in the email from VATSIM which you will have already received.


The pilot information boxes are **FIRST NAME** and **LAST NAME**. The **AIRCRAFT** box is to show other members connected to the VATSIM network what type of aircraft you are in. Every time you connect you must input what type of aircraft you have, so click the **AIRCRAFT LIST** button, enter the aircraft name, and select it from the most common list, then click ok. And there you have it; you are now fully ready to join the virtual airways!

CLICK THAT CONNECT BUTTON!

Your flight simulator will automatically connect to the multiplayer network.
Next you will hear a "Bing Bong" from squawkbox saying you are connected. At this time you will get the
VATSIM welcome message, meaning you are now fully connected to the server!
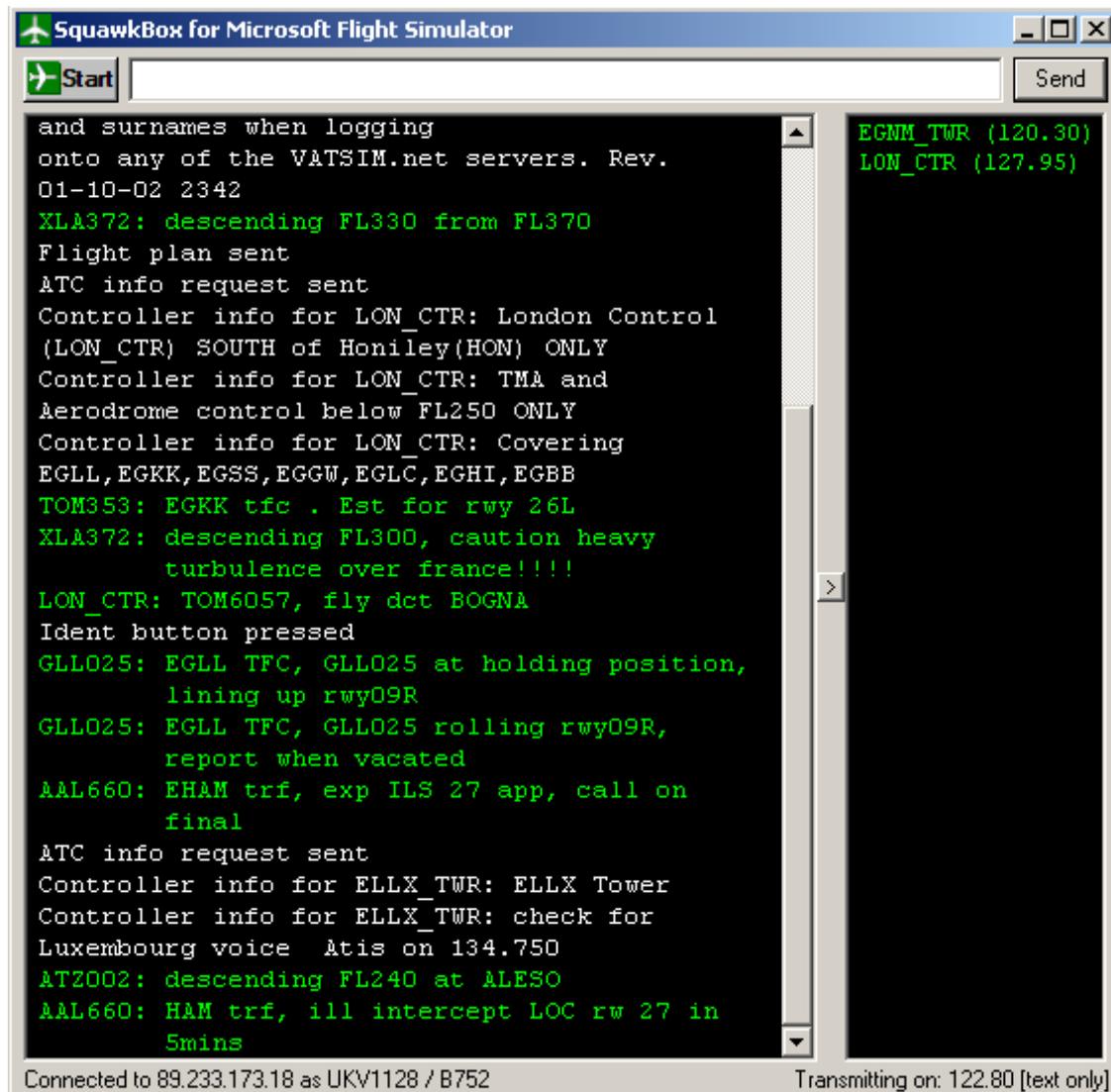
As you can see in the above box there are two sections;

1) This is where all Text/UNICOM/Chat occurs for pilots this is mainly used for UNICOM and is only used
if you are not connected to any ATC in the region you are flying.
What is UNICOM I hear you ask? Well this little beauty allows us pilots to let all other pilots know any
necessary information regarding any aspect of your flight; from pushing back from the stand to the top
of decent on arrival. Bearing in mind, this is only needed if you are not on an active air traffic control
frequency! 122.80MHz is the frequency of Unicom.

2) This box has all the active controllers that are available at your airport. In this box specifically you can
see that LON_CTL is online. LON_CTL covers quite a bit around the UK but sometimes limit themselves
depending on air traffic levels! When clicking the name of the available controller you have two choices.
You can send them a private message or can obtain the controller's current ATIS information. So you're

ready to go, fuel is calculated and pax are loaded. The next thing to do is file a flight plan to inform ATC of your intentions.

To do this just click that start button again and go to **Flight Plan**. See below for an idea what is required:

Now as you can see, I have filed a flight plan from EGSS (London Stansted) to ESSA (Stockholm.) It gives atc/other pilots in the area a rough idea on my departure time in ZULU, estimated flight time and also how long my fuel is going to last. My cruising airspeed of the plane I am using (for this 757 roughly about 290 kts on a good day) and what my cruising altitude is going to be (always in Flight Levels (FL)), goes in these two boxes. Next we have our voice options. Now I must say, on any network you will always need a microphone, not just for the realism, but primarily for efficiency in replying to ATC. The last thing you want is to be on a short finals then type out "UKV1128 is cleared to land runway XX". This takes time and by then interrupts your concentration on flying the plane. Voice is a major part of any online flying network, so I would strongly advise to give it a go. Select Voice send and receive!

On the right hand side you can select your aircraft's capabilities and the route you will be taking, not usually all ATC will know what the aircraft is made of so you can fill this in if you wish, if not N/A is fine. But the main thing is the route. The route is always found again on your flight manifest, you can copy it over to here to allow ATC to see your intentions so he can give you the right SID (Standard Instrument Departure) for the departure.

When all this is filled out go ahead and click the **Send Flight Plan** button. This will now have a little strip pop up on the controller screen telling him everything he needs to know about your flight, clever eh?

Ok now you're all ready to go, fuel is on, flight plan is sent, you need to call for your clearance, some airports just require you to ask for a Push and start some require a clearance on the ground; this is one thing you will have to look at your self, just follow everyone else's lead!
What I have done is listed some examples of the radio communication for you to get a rough idea of what to say and what to hear for: -

"Tower Noble 1234 requests IFR (or IFR clearance or airways clearance, etc.) to EGSS with ALPHA"
Or
"Tower Noble 1234 requests clearance to EGSS with information ALPHA"

ALPHA = Current ATIS information (remember the right click to get controller info? Alpha will change every time the ATIS is updated i.e. B = Bravo, C = Charlie and so on!)

Now comes the read back from the controller, if he is happy with your flight plan he will have your clearance, he will say something like this: (**have a pen and paper ready**!!)

(Noble 1234) "Cleared to EGSS as filed, STEIN TWO departure, runway XX, initial altitude 6000, squawk five-one-zero-four"

Every time a controller says something to you, you repeat it back to make sure it's correct:

Read back = Cleared to EGSS as filed, STEIN TWO departure, runway XX, initial altitude 6000, squawk five-one-zero-four Noble 1234"

All response is done by pressing your PTT button you set earlier on; **NEVER JUMP THE LINE**, in other words wait for about 10 seconds so as to ensure no one else is talking then make your read back.

All frequency changes are either done in your aircraft on your Radio Stack, or if you don't like to fiddle with that you can type this in manually into the text box in squawkbox: **.com1 122.80** (active frequency, notice the decimal at the front, this is always needed) These are basics to get you connected and setup and ready to fly the airways on VATSIM, don't be nervous, we all start somewhere. If you have any questions feel free to email me direct or post in the Online help section of the forum and one of the staff team will get back to you!

For more information please visit Vatsim's pilot resource centre at: http://www.vatsim.net/prc/