

CNN wins go-ahead to test drones for news coverage

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CNN, whose headquarters are pictured in Atlanta, Georgia, on November 29, 2012, has reached an agreement with US aviation regulators to test drones for news gathering

CNN said Monday it has reached agreement with US aviation regulators to test drones for news gathering in the US, the network said.

Conceived initially mainly for military purposes, private use of the small

[unmanned aircraft](#) allowing for image and information gathering is practically banned in the United States, except at low altitudes (below 122 meters, or 400 feet, and far from airports).

"Our aim is to get beyond hobby-grade equipment and to establish what options are available and workable to produce high quality video journalism using various types of UAVs and camera setups," said CNN Senior Vice President David Vigilante. UAVs are [unmanned aerial vehicles](#).

Tests are being carried out at the Georgia Tech Research Institute, based in Atlanta, Georgia where CNN, owned by Time Warner, is headquartered.

FAA Administrator Michael Huerta expressed hope that the accord will help "safely integrate unmanned news-gathering technology and operating procedures into the National Airspace System."

"Unmanned [aircraft](#) offer news organizations significant opportunities," Huerta said.

There are growing calls for legislation to be passed so [drones](#) can be used in new coverage. No date for such rules have been published.

"Our hope is that these efforts contribute to the development of a vibrant ecosystem where operators of various types and sizes can safely operate in the US airspace," Vigilante said.

So far there are just a few exceptions to the Federal Aviation Administration ban on drones for aerial surveillance, monitoring of constructions sites and gas flaring and for video production companies.

Besides privacy concerns, one of the biggest obstacles to their

authorization is the fear of mid-air crashes.

Some 193 cases of drone flights near aircraft were recorded by the FAA from February 22 to November 2014, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association said.

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