

# Satcom-based Planet service boosting special flight operations

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The satcom-based Planet service was developed with ESA's help for air-ground communications in light aircraft. It is now used by larger aircraft and rotorcraft operations worldwide. Credit: Airbus

Thanks to ESA, aircraft are using satcoms to share realtime information

with other aircraft and ground stations to improve flight operations.

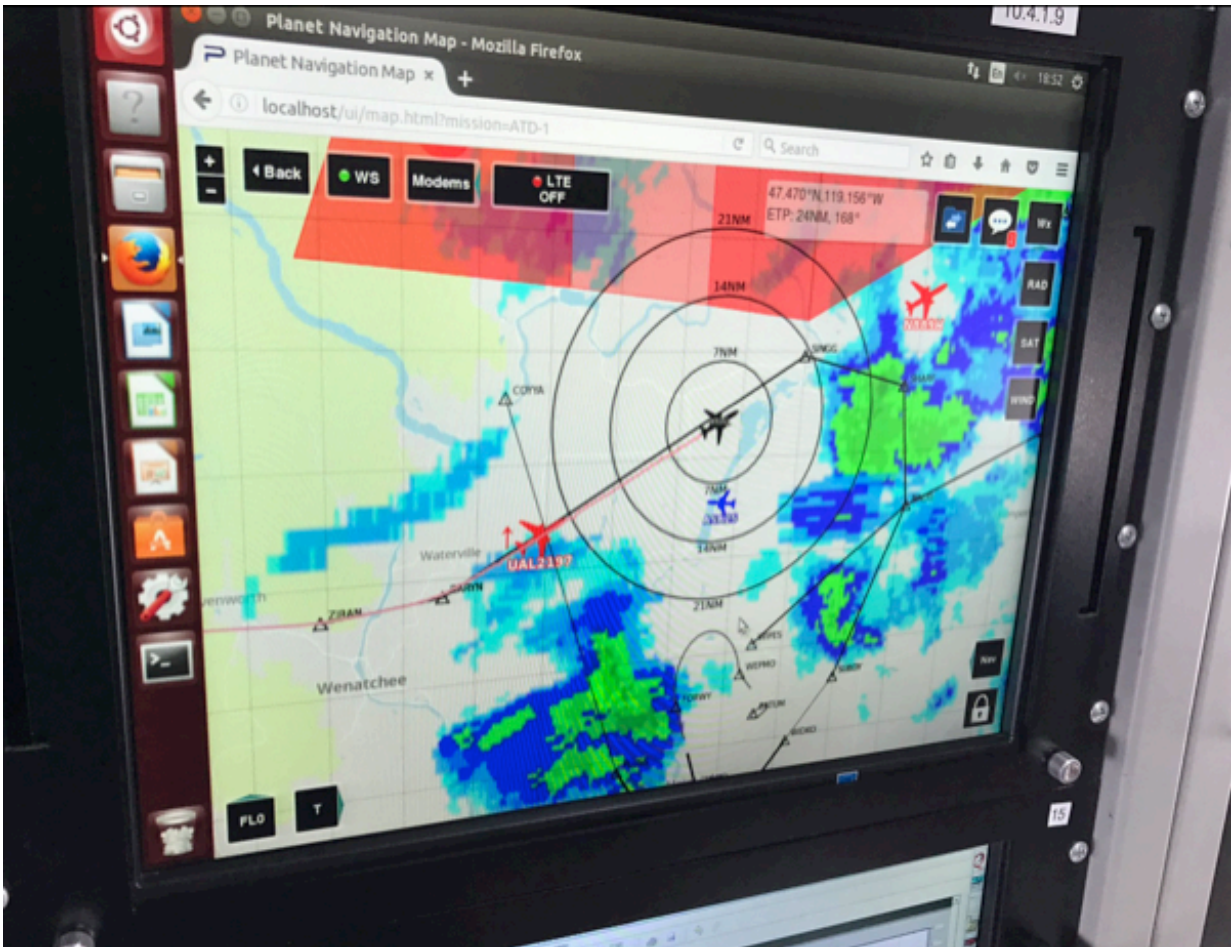
The satcom-based Planet service, developed with ESA's help by the Atmosphere company, was originally intended to provide [light aircraft](#) with inflight updates on weather conditions and hazards. It is now used for larger aircraft and rotorcraft to support scientific missions and commercial air transport.

NASA test flights last month used Planet to help demonstrate future technology and procedures aimed at improving air traffic flow into busy airports. Planet was key to improving realtime coordination, communication and data exchange via satellite between aircraft and NASA ground staff.

Major research institutions such as the DLR German Aerospace Center now routinely use the service in their atmospheric research.

This often involves several aircraft flying simultaneously in the same area with multiple instruments taking measurements. Using Planet, aircraft can be better coordinated based on information transmitted in [real time](#) to the ground.

The major benefit is being able to access the information gathered during the mission before the aircraft lands.



The satcom-based Planet service was developed by Atmosphere with ESA's help. Planet improves real-time coordination, communication and data exchange via satellite between aircraft and ground staff. Credit: Jon Ostrower

Similarly, Airbus has used Planet in Asia, Europe and North America to study the formation of ice crystals on [aircraft](#) at high altitude. In addition to realtime coordination, Planet delivered colour-enhanced infrared satellite imagery and icing maps in real time to make the icing encounters as productive as possible.

Inmarsat and Honeywell used Planet as part of their GX Aviation World

Tour to check their new wifi service for passengers before it is offered through commercial airlines.

"Even though this is a niche market we have secured important customers and are encouraged by the increasing number of enquiries," noted Jean-Marc Gaubert, CEO at Atmosphere.

ESA's Davide Tomassini commented, "We are delighted that Atmosphere's Planet satcom service has become so established and so valued among their new customers."

Provided by European Space Agency

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