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Keeping up with the ever-changing mountain of information that a pilot needs to retain can be a daunting responsibility. From aviation rules to airframe updates we are continually tasked with absorbing new or updated data.

Until recently this knowledge would come in the form of a printed piece of paper. Often this piece of paper was a challenge to obtain and rarely did the operator know of its existence until long after it had been published.

In today's world of technology this process is becoming a far easier task to manage. Most of the information needed to safely operate in the aviation system is available to us on line or via some other form of digital media. With all the information that is waiting to be resourced many pilots are still unaware of the availability of this information or where to find it.

A very good example of these resources is the availability of the rotorcraft flight manual via the Internet. This resource is not advertised and requires a small amount of effort to obtain access to, but is there for the asking.

The basis of our knowledge on the airframe that we operate is contained in our aircraft's rotorcraft flight manual. Most pilots do not have a thorough knowledge of this document because as a resource it must be kept in the aircraft to keep it airworthy. Rarely does an operator have an extra updated copy that a pilot can take home to study, so this required knowledge base goes unfulfilled. This has created a predicament where we are required as pilots to have a complete knowledge of the rotorcraft flight manual, but the access to this document is limited. Now with availability of on-line resources this is no longer an obstacle for today's aviator.

Two very good examples of the availability of airframe information is Bell's "Helicopter Technical Publications" and Eurocopter's "TIPI" websites. Within these online resources a pilot can reference not only his or her rotorcraft flight manual, but also many other important documents on the safe operation of their airframe.

For many different reasons the manufacturer needs to retain control over who is accessing this information so a simple sign-up process is required by all manufacturers.

Bell publications are available at www.bellhelicopter.net. After accessing this web page the user will see an option on the right side of the screen labeled "New User". Select this menu item and a sign-up page will appear. Simply fill out the requested information and within 7 days, access will be granted to their online airframe documents.

Within these documents the pilot will find the complete rotorcraft flight manual along with various technical publications. Not only does the pilot now have access to required knowledge anywhere in which Internet access is available, but this information is also instantaneously updated concurrent with revision release.

Eurocopter's publications are available at www.eurocopter.com/techpub. To sign up for access to the Eurocopter publications click on the "Inscription" option on the right side of the page. Again the applicant is required to fill out an application for entry into their online resources. When filling out this form there is an option for pilot, maintenance, or pilot & maintenance documents. In order to have complete access to their available online resources the "pilot & maintenance" option needs to be selected. After the applicant completes the form, access will be granted within approximately 3 days.

Within the TIPI website the pilot will find a wide variety of online publications from reports on recent areas of concern to service bulletins to rotorcraft flight manual updates. When accessing the rotorcraft flight manual documents the user will notice that only the updated pages are posted within TIPI. The exception to this is if the model of airframe is new, in which case the initial posting of the document is complete.

This new mindset that the information that we need is now available to us on the World Wide Web requires but a small learning curve. We simply need to seek it out and it is there for reference. As the saying goes – "ask and thou shalt receive". ■

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