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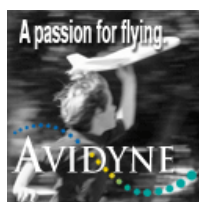
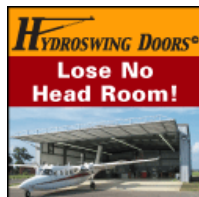
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Wed, 07 Feb '07



Top News

HOT! Release 1.0: An Aeronautical Meeting of the Minds (Part One)

Mon, 19 Jun '06

Esther Dyson's Release 1.0 Conference Tackles Air Taxi Concepts

Few approaches to aero-problem solving are as unique as that which took place in St. Petersburg, FL, this past weekend. Part conference/workshop, part-aero incubator, and part techno-geek mind-meld; several dozen aviation professionals gathered together to talk about the acknowledged (and much hyped) paradigm shift that is taking place in commercial aviation thanks to a new generation of air taxi operators and air-taxi-suitable airplanes.



This was not your garden variety techno-gabfest... it is the product of a novel organization that delights in seeking out technological turning points and then allowing the movers and shakers in that particular genre to beat them silly. Well-known high-tech writer/business person/intellectual instigator Esther Dyson is the cornerstone of Release 1.0's quarterly attempts to examine the trends and changes in a number of disciplines and see what might be done to influence, even define, their outcomes.

They delight in shaking things up this way, describing their efforts thusly... "Every quarter, Release 1.0 hosts a particular technology or emerging business model. Unlike most other industry events, our events bring together influence a particular market - technology-industry executives, entrepreneurs, investors, service providers, an for deep, meaningful discussions about trends and opportunities. Our goal is to encourage more participation a improve outcomes in some way, if only through a better informed, more transparent marketplace. We're not t industry coalitions or founding new organizations; we are talking about helping participants discover one anot partners and exploit opportunities."



This is Dyson's second workshop outing into aviation and aerospace -- the first having earned high-marks for c opportunities and insights into the burgeoning aerospace realities of the 21st century while this most recent cc fuss created around VLJs and the new Air-Taxi paradigm, explaining that "The next big phase shift will come fr service players (mostly equipped with very light jets, or VLJs) who will make latent demand visible to suppliers not to publish information but to collect user travel requests and use them to schedule and price flights dynam are air taxis: They will use the visibility of demand to create and define supply, in the form of specific flights th have happened."



The Release 1.0 conference was filled with several dozen movers and shakers... from the likes of Aircraft manu Alan Klapmeier and Rick Adam to NASA's Bruce Holmes, FAA's Andrew Steinberg and all manner of aero-inves operators, and business people. There were two critical aspects to this endeavor... the formal seminar itself, ar highly valued) social outings that put a number of highly-involved people in close proximity to each other and compare notes, learn and even talk deals. A dinner event the night before the actual workshop started in the i Florida afternoon, went on well into the darker hours, with groups of experts and entrepreneurs huddled toget that were over-taking the aviation world.

Esther (pictured below) takes a free-form approach to her events. Wholly informal in directing these meetings, event was "a workshop, not a seminar." Dyson urged attendee participation, questions, discussion and dialogu (mostly) to watch the fur fly -- only breaking in sporadically with a number of astute observations and questi major discussion points, thereafter, for much of the day.

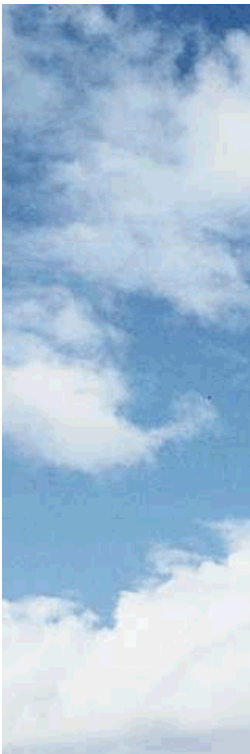


The first formal speaker at the Release 1.0 workshop was NASA's irrepressible Bruce Holmes (below), a well-k described the topic of the day as the "creating (of) a new industry". Bruce's short presentation was aptly entitl The Years Ahead!"

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He started with a description of his prior efforts in 1993-94, with NASA's AGATE program and his writing of a paper titled "Airlines," as all about one's personal command of time and about personal freedom - even describing speed (v to command time."



Holmes set the agenda for the day by not only defining what it was that everybody was talking about, but why technologies were becoming the preferred means to revolutionize the air taxi industry -- and the industries the Holmes has been a more than effective advocate for aviation and aerospace as a critical part of the NASA decision. It was obvious that he has taken a personal stake in seeing this vision come about. He related the story of a trip that he took to give a number of speeches, explaining that the trip would have taken 15 hours by car, or three days by schedule if utilizing a small regional air taxi service, he wound up requiring only a few hours to travel about for his business. At the efficiency of the system that he used, but was quite complementary of the fact that the pilot he flew with was a role model for his profession, but turned into a provocative spokesman for small air taxi benefits.

The first panel session of the day followed Holmes with Pogo Air's Cameron Burr, Linear Air's Bill Herp, DayJet's Greg Johnson, and OneSky's Greg Johnson. Their discussion of "The Pure And The Practical: Air Taxis And Similar Things," got into the economics of biz-jet/air-taxi operations, the changes this industry is now facing, and how the new VLJ revolution will replace a dated business model that was aging rapidly.



Bill Herp's highly-touted Linear Air operates a number of Cessna Caravans in an air taxi operation between NYC and quiet areas. He is quieting a number of Eclipse 500s on order. As one of the operators in the group with a real-world air taxi operation gaining ground in preparation for their VLJ advent a few months hence, Herp's real-world knowledge and optimum indication that a successful model could be built for the new air taxi paradigm.

Each of the speakers was hesitant to describe their companies as air taxi operators and distanced themselves from air taxi definitions... Ed Iaccobucci described his upcoming DayJet phenomenon not as an air taxi system, but as a service. While OneSky's Greg Johnson labeled his operation as "agents of the consumer," Pogo's Cameron Burr also set the stage for models of business travel with an added note that the previous wunderkind of the business aviation set, the low-cost model, "has seen its best days."

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