26.7.2023 – 15:03z

We need to talk about the state of military jets for MSFS.

Yes, you read the title right. I spent over $250 of my own hard-earned money on military jets for MSFS, so you don't have to. This article was initially going to be a top-five review list! I was going to try out a bunch of planes, make some recommendations and take some nice pictures… wham-bam another top 5 list for our readers to enjoy! How naïve I was. I could never have predicted the rabbit hole I would be thrust into.

Let's not lie to ourselves: MSFS is not the simulator of choice for military jets. If you want to fly warbirds in a simulator, then play Digital Combat Simulator. For the rest of you that actually want to enjoy your hobby, play War Thunder. Those are your best options for warbirds that won't result in utter disappointment.
I should clarify the warplanes in MSFS are not outright terrible if you have the right mindset. You simply cannot go into this expecting a simulation value anywhere near that of DCS. Nor should you expect any weapons systems. I am legally obliged to tell you that you won't get 'em. I expect a written apology from Microsoft for the decision to ban weapons in the MSFS Marketplace on my doorstep by the end of the week.
The aircraft that you will read about in this article are just a few of the many aircraft I planned on including in my initial top-five review list. I chose these specific aircraft to cover in detail because they were particularly frustrating or disappointing, and I felt as though they best represent the growing shovelware plague that MSFS is facing. If you would like to see a complete list, follow the "Complete list of aircraft tested" link in the Table of Contents below.

Anyways, I did exactly what I told you not to do and went into this expecting a simulation value on par with DCS. Boy, was I mistaken.
The woes of the modern military jet and the F-35 Lighting
I was about to embark upon my important mission, starting with the purchase of the IndiaFoxtEcho F-35 Lightning II for $35.99: not a bad price, especially when compared to DCS military jets, which cost more than twice that. I gave it a download and loaded it up with bated breath. Coming from Digital Combat Simulator, there's a certain allure to 5th gen military jets. DCS is only privy to near fully de-classified aircraft, which means the most modern military jets in the simulator are from the '90s.
There are benefits to this approach, the primary being the ability to properly and completely simulate the military jet being purchased. Aircraft in DCS almost never feel half-baked and are always feature-filled. The caveat to this is obvious: we simply cannot enjoy modern military jets. Understandably, the F-35 Lightning was a very exciting choice. However, I couldn't compare anything with my experiences in DCS: that would not be fair to the developers. I approached my flight with the non-milsim flight simmer in mind.

I load into a cold, dark aircraft: a large flat glass display is blank. Looking around the cockpit, there are maybe six switches, which certainly made the aircraft feel much more approachable for beginners. Still, I found the startup phase to be more challenging than expected.
After some initial confusion (frustration) with the digital fuel controls, I managed to get the bird started up and began my taxi role. The displays are strange… and immediately disappointed me. Even an inexperienced flight simmer will be bombarded with "inop" messages appearing on almost every other page. There seem to be at most two layouts that a pilot would realistically use, and those layouts are extremely shallow. There's no depth to any of the systems. Everything has a singular function and performs it well enough.

I enter the runway, hold the brakes, open the afterburner, and begin my rollout. The jet is fast, really fast… too fast. I'm not sure how realistic this is, but for the military jet fondly known among airmen as "Fat Amy," she certainly rocketed off the ground. The takeoff roll and rotation were incredibly forgiving, requiring minimal thought, with the aircraft lifting off the ground by the slightest touch of the flight controls. This is not how military jets behave. We'll talk more about the flight model in a bit, but initial impressions were not great.

Lift off, gear up, and we're climbing to my cruise altitude of 35,000ft. I planned to cruise a bit over the orange Nevada deserts before practicing some basic flight maneuvers, followed by more advanced flight maneuvers. I made an unrestricted climb – fly it like you stole it – and quickly reached cruise speed of Mach 0.90 and altitude shortly thereafter.

Cruising is not exactly the regime of military jet fighters, but it gave me some time to delve further into the display and its functions. There are menus within menus, yet they serve no purpose. I would say there is less than 5% systems depth, which was a frustratingly small amount of simulation for a $36 product.

I understand that flight simmers coming from DCS are not the target for these products, but that begs the question: who is? If the purpose of these products is to target people who may not understand how lackluster these military jets are, then this feels like a dubious practice at the best of times. Perhaps I am being too negative. I decide to begin my flight maneuvers.

Immediately, I notice a problem. The second you get anywhere near a departure from controlled flight (stall), the aircraft handles very strangely. I'm the first to admit that despite my best efforts, I have yet to fly an F-35, and I doubt that will change anytime soon. However, based on my experience in DCS and watching videos of this jet, how this handles in high attitude and slow flight is abnormal and totally unrealistic.

I'm not sure if it is caused by the FBW system or just poor aerodynamic modeling, but instead of the pilot slowly losing control over the aircraft, you maintain an extremely high level of control, even as the nose dives over. You would not experience this even with the Harrier Jump Jet and its variable exhaust nozzles, which make it highly maneuverable in these flight regimes. The bottom line, the aircraft's flight model is extremely "arcade-y," which may be satisfying for some. However, for those looking for an engaging flight model or any systems depth, you should look elsewhere.

For those of you that want to mess around in a military jet that visually looks like an F-35 despite its extreme flaws, then you'll be happy with this purchase. However, is it fair to assume that no matter how novel, we should expect at least some level of simulation when we're buying products for a flight simulator? For similar prices, many add-ons have varying levels of simulation difficulty, allowing both novices and pros to enjoy their product exactly as they prefer. The F-35 is rigidly placed in this novelty section of the market, apparently giving an excuse to charge exorbitant amounts of money while providing a product not worth half of that.

One of the features I figured I'd test out was the VTOL capability of the F-35B. It's always fascinated me to watch forward-flight military jets taking off vertically. I can't imagine what the transition from vertical to horizontal flight feels like. It must be exhilarating. I can, however, tell you what it's like in MSFS. Terrible. The concept is novel, of course. However, the execution is glitchy, jarring, and totally unrealistic. If it couldn't be implemented properly, it shouldn't have been included in the package.

The disappointment I felt for this product was enormous. However, this was partially my fault. I went into this expecting DCS levels of systems modeling and received what was comparably a Tonka toy. However, is this really a bad product, or am I just the wrong customer? This really hits on the core of my problem with these products, are developers trying to create the best products they can? Or are they creating half-baked products to capitalize on the big names? In my opinion, it's the latter. Although, I would be happy to be proven wrong.

I understand that the F-35 is highly classified, and IndiaFoxtEcho has almost nothing to go off of. However, this product's price and sheer market volume paint a picture of a community that is either unaware of how poor it is or complacent with a novelty item. And that's fine. Novelty items can be great fun! However, to charge this kind of money on a novelty item? That feels like market manipulation. That feels like developers capitalizing on the novelty of this item and raking in the cash. Is the flight community all right with that? Are we alright with that?

Well… $36 dollars down the drain, and that was with what is widely purported to be the best modern military jet for MSFS. This certainly hadn't started out well.

The plague of the big-name aircraft, shovelware, and the F-22 Raptor
Depending on how old you are, you may or may not be aware of what shovelware is. In the earlier years of the videogame boom, there was a prevalent practice of releasing games alongside the release of popular children's movies or TV Shows. I was just a young boy getting into video gaming at the time, and the number of times I would get these games from family members who didn't really understand but who were trying their best…

Take any popular children's films of the early 2000s, and you'll find dozens of games based on them. Most of these games were exactly the same, copy-pasting the same formula with different characters. The purpose was generally to target older, unsuspecting people who were trying to get something nice for their kids and didn't know any better.

You're probably wondering why I just gave you a history lesson on shovelware. It's fair to say the F-22 Raptor is the most well-known military jet on the planet, the first fifth-gen fighter, beating the competition by over ten years and in a close tie with the F-15 Eagle for the best strictly air-superiority fighter ever built. If you ask any moderately informed child what their best airplane is, 95% will say the F-22.

With a cult following, of course, there is a version of the F-22 available in MSFS. Top Mach Studios' F-22 Raptor is the only add-on that I am comfortable recommending to interested customers and for one reason. Top Mach Studios has a free "light" version on Flightsim.to which is perfect for little Timmy, who wants to fly an F-22 and doesn't care about how detailed it is. However, with their recent release bringing the jet to Xbox, Top Mach Studios has now made it available – at a cost – to buyers who have no other choice and who are of a particularly younger demographic.

I'll admit, I haven't tried the free version of this jet. I went straight into a purchase – coming in at $35.99 – through the MSFS Marketplace. I was unaware that the free version even existed at the time, which is perhaps a testament to how a buyer not interested in the smallest amount of research will be tricked into buying this jet. I certainly was, and boy, was I disappointed.
The F-22 Raptor is one of the United States' closest-kept secrets. The jet has never been sold to allied countries and is used only by the US Air Force – unlike the F-35, which is used by countless other allied countries – in an effort to keep its incredibly advanced stealth and fighter technology secret. Top

Mach Studios gets a pass for not having much data available to use for developing this product. The systems simulation is understandably non-existent. The flight model is really the selling point for this product, so it's a crying shame that it's absolutely abysmal.

It's very clear that the flight model is not intended to be realistic. The jet is purely intended to be used as a toy. This is something we touch on later, but products being sold for a simulator come with a certain level of simulation expected from them. The F-22 by Top Mach Studios is capable of flat spins, belly-flops, and extraordinarily high-gee maneuvers. While the F-22 is an incredibly maneuverable jet, and it's known for its ability to outperform basically anything else flying… this flight model feels as though there wasn't even an attempt for some semblance of realism.

While the flight model makes no attempt at realism, it is still entertaining to blast around mountainsides and pretend you're Maverick from Top Gun if Tom Cruise could get the keys to an F-22. While that is certainly enjoyable at first, the fun factor rapidly wears off, and what you're left with is a mediocre and uninteresting jet. Honestly, this jet is so unremarkable there's nothing else for me to add here. It's a waste of money, and if you are on PC and even remotely interested, then just get the free version.

A tangent on the abhorrent state of questionable aircraft in MSFS – Bredok3D's Eurofighter Typhoon
We have arrived at the bottom of the barrel, Bredok3D, infamous for his Eurofighter Typhoon and Boeing 737 MAX. I won't speak on the B737MAX here. Right now, we're only looking at the Eurofighter, and trust me, that's more than enough… The Bredok3D Eurofighter Typhoon takes every single problem with these modern military jet fighter add-ons, makes them worse, puts them on a feature list, and then charges you money for it. This product insults every other product on the market. Other developers' products, with even the smallest amount of effort made, are brought down by the full weight of awfulness Bredok's Eurofighter brings with it.

Let's start with the good… there is no good.
Perfect! Now let's move on to the bad.

The most egregious effort by Bredok3D to avoid putting any actual work into this product must be the systems modeling. Bredok3D ripped the Asobo Boeing 787 Navigation Display, EICAS, and Heads-Up-Display. Stuck the default A320 NEO Flight Computer haphazardly into the dashboard. Placed a GNS650 display where the Upfront Control panel should be. And finally, placed the A320 NEO Primary Flight Display in between this Frankenstein of a creation. But hey, at least Bredok changed the MODEL name in the A320 flight computer to say "TYPHOON."

It's not even as if Bredok put any effort into shamelessly ripping these systems. The Boeing 787 displays are all the wrong aspect ratio, making them look worse than the external modeling on this jet. This is saying something because the external modeling is something a child could've put together. Somehow the A320 display, which is already intended for a 4:3 aspect ratio, is all messed up. This makes me think Bredok didn't even bother measuring the right display windows to house these ripped avionics.

Upon closer inspection, you'll notice that the flaps and landing gear controls are stolen from other default MSFS aircraft, the entire cockpit uses buttons stripped straight from the 787, and the multimode radio panel is squashed into a backup horizon display on the right panel…

Look, I understand that add-on development is difficult. I definitely couldn't do anything similar to even this product. But you cannot charge money for this. It is simply unacceptable. Furthermore, it is available for purchase on the MSFS Marketplace. This is beyond irresponsible from Microsoft. I simply cannot understand how this made it past moderation teams. Microsoft is complicit in Bredok3D's dubious business practices, and by continuing to allow their products to remain on the MSFS Marketplace, they are actively promoting their products to unsuspecting customers.

A rapid descent into madness and a direct comparison, the F-16 Fighting Falcon
At this point, my bar had hit the floor. I was almost ready to give up. After a several-day break, I shifted my initial narrative from being a list for beginners and instead directly compared the SC Designs' F-16 Fighting Falcon and the F-16C Viper for DCS. The purpose of the comparison was to try to understand what the developers wanted from their products. Were they looking for external modeling prowess? Maybe they wanted a realistic flight model. I figured there was no better way to find out than to have a baseline.

The F-16C Viper in DCS is a phenomenal machine and a true pleasure to fly. It amazes me that military jet aircraft can be simulated to such high fidelity and be available to the public. The F-16 Fighting Falcon by SC Designs, coming in at $34.99, was going to be nowhere near as high fidelity: I knew that. However, I was still curious to discover the places where MSFS add-ons developers considered the simulation unnecessary or perhaps where they went beyond that of the DCS developers.

As I loaded up the F-16 in MSFS, I asked myself: what does flying the F-16 in MSFS give you that flying it in DCS doesn't? With this question written down, I was ready to start. The F-16C by SC Designs was specifically my bird of choice. You also have the F-16D and F-16I, a 2-seater variant and an Israeli Air Force variant, respectively. The F-16C is the only modeled version in DCS, so it surprised me that SC Designs chose to model all three. This is the first time I've felt a developer has done more than the bare minimum to put a military jet on the market.

I began my engine start procedures. The F-16 is intended to start up rapidly to be scrambled for Air Superiority or Defense missions as necessary. I was ready to go in about 20 seconds, which is way faster than normal. Already the systems depth was obvious, whereas in DCS, you need to align the INS and Head-Mounted Display, combined taking about 4 minutes. In MSFS, you start the engine with a handful of button clicks and are good to go. Not exactly the simulation value I anticipated, even with my bar set this low.

With the engine started and everything ready to go, I noted some modeling discrepancies, of which there are many. However, compared to other military jet modeling, this is honestly not that egregious and stays somewhat similar to reality. The grey paneling in the background is incredibly ugly. However, that is the only modeling/texturing issue that really bothered me.

Similar to my F-35 tests, I wanted to push this to cruise altitude using an unrestricted climb before practicing some flight maneuvers and seeing how it held up against a direct comparison. Takeoff in DCS is very tricky: military jets use spindly little landing gears meant to minimize weight and the footprint needed to stow them onboard. That makes takeoff rolls a precarious balance of rudder and roll inputs. I can't say the same for MSFS, which allowed me to rocket the F-16 off the ground with no rudder inputs at all. Nothing surprises me anymore.

As I climbed, I kept the afterburner open, a practice you would never do in DCS because of how thirsty an after-burning F-16 is. However, in MSFS, the fuel flow seemed very low. As I continued to climb, I

noticed the performance was much better than in real life. I was pushing 25,000 feet and nearing Mach 1 while pushing a 65-degree nose-up pitch. Even the F-15, with no drop tanks and a greater than 1-1 thrust ratio, would still struggle to do this. Something with the performance of the engine in this add-on is not quite right.

Out of curiosity, I decided to see how far I could go. I pushed the aircraft past 35,000 feet, 50,000 feet, and 75,000 feet… at this point, I was laughing to myself. I was not expecting SC Design to make an F-16 that doubled as a space shuttle. Now that's taking initiative. The F-16SS, SC Design's contribution to the United States Space Force. Fully capable of space travel at several times the speed of sound!

Let's just say I was very disillusioned at this point. I pointed the nose down – remarkable pitch control at 80,000ft – and hurtled towards the earth as fast as I could. With damage turned off, I accelerated well past Mach 2… speeds that at this altitude would tear this airframe apart instantly. I pulled back on the stick at 10,000 feet and managed a 10.3G pull to level flight at Mach 1.4. I was having a great time! I know what you're thinking: "it's unfair to draw these conclusions with the damage turned off: surely, if it were on, the airplane would pull itself apart, right?"

That is the whole point. These military jets have systems to prevent such things as an over-gee pull. You can bypass them, sure. Do you think SC Designs coded in the bypass switch function on the HOTAS? Of course not. Did SC Designs code in an over-gee limiter? Of course not. The airframe on the F-16 is drag-limited and, even in a full-power nose dive, would not be able to reach the speeds I was getting in my testing. The wings would generate so much lift they would violently tear off. The volume of air passing through the engine would tear it apart. The aerodynamic drag should not allow this airframe to accelerate past Mach ~1.5. Did SC Designs properly simulate aerodynamic drag? Of course not.

I had, at this point, given up on the concept of properly simulated military jets in MSFS. In an effort to test the flight model, I began my flight maneuvers at reasonable speeds. The F-16 is one of the most maneuverable mass-produced modern military jets. Maintaining your speed around 300-350 knots is optimal for the best turn performance. I'll tell you what, I was pleasantly surprised by how this handled at these flight regimes. However, the near departure behavior is again incredibly predictable and unrealistic, with insane pitch control in slow speed, high-attitude flight regimes. I am beginning to sense a theme here.

When compared to the F-16C in DCS, this product again feels like a toy. In fairness, I no longer believe it is being sold as anything but a toy. I believe this military jet is not designed to give you simulation value. It's designed to give you a good time pulling 9G's blasting around the MSFS scenery at Mach 1.4. However, if that's what you're interested in. Maybe I have a better option for you.

The final step of the five stages of grief – acceptance and the F-18 Super Hornet
For the group of readers that has made it this far. Firstly, thank you! This article keeps growing in length, and I'm glad you suffered through my ramblings. The ending is in sight. Secondly, I know a group of you were wondering when I was going to talk about the F-18 Super Hornet that comes default for MSFS. Well, here we go.

The best option for flying a modern military jet in MSFS is free and has sat under your nose this whole time. The F-18 Super Hornet that comes default with MSFS is by no means perfect. It has many over-simplified systems and follows the trend of systems shallowness. However, all that is made up for by the flight model. The MSFS F-18 Super Hornet has a phenomenal flight model.

I know you're wondering why I would wait until the end to bring up what was your best option. The truth is, I didn't experience just how good this military jet was until trying out the Maverick missions that are available in MSFS. The low-altitude high-speed challenges really showcase all the spectacular flight characteristics of the F-18.

The F-18 is an interesting military jet developed to be used by the Navy. It makes several compromises in terms of fighter capabilities in order to meet the Navy's unique requirements. The most dramatic of all these compromises is the engine power or the lack thereof. The F-18 is an incredibly underpowered military jet, requiring serious attention to speed and energy management to get the best out of it. For those of you that don't believe me when I say the F-35 and F-16 are incredibly overpowered, I ask you to try a vertical climb in the F-18.

The beauty of this power deficit is the ballet required to keep this jet in its optimum maneuvering windows. It's a constant balance between trading altitude and energy for maximum turn performance. All while having incredible control of the nose. One of the biggest threats when dogfighting the F-18 is this command it has over the nose. If a pilot is in the position to get the nose on, the F-18 uses its unique forward aerodynamic lift surfaces and can instantly trade all of its energy to do so. Instant death for any unfortunate pilot on the receiving end.

All of this sounds great, and what's even better? It's all simulated wonderfully in MSFS, including all the safety systems that prevent over-gee and similar out-of-flight envelope situations. If you're a certain Flight Simulation YouTuber who made a YouTube Short ranking the G's that all these military jets could pull and were shocked to find that the default F-18 could pull only 9G's? That's because that is the maximum allowable G pull that the onboard computers will let a pilot initiate, and MSFS actually put in the effort to simulate this aircraft's systems properly.

For those of you who want to mess around with a military jet, blasting through mountain ranges and buzzing towers, the F-18 in MSFS was designed for this role. It is the perfect balance of a military jet that provides extreme entertainment value while giving you some realism and simulation.

This is exactly where every other mod I have talked about so far has failed. They have all leaned too heavily on the entertainment value, the novelty, and the big name, neglecting that none of that means anything when there is no simulation value. Little Timmy, with Mom's credit card, wouldn't notice the lack of simulation on these military jet add-ons, but the average flight simmer will. So who are the add-ons targeted to? You and I? Or little Timmy being irresponsible with money? Is this practice exploitative?

I highly recommend anybody looking for a blast in a military jet to choose the F-18, save some cash, and get an experience that is better than any of the paid add-ons can give you.

Some sort of conclusion, I guess
Well, you made it. We're at the finish line. The light at the end of the tunnel is within reach. Bear with me for a few more moments as I gather all my thoughts in a messy and rambling conclusion. You should be used to that by now.
I am not the judge, jury, and executioner of modern military jets in MSFS. However, I still feel as though sharing my unique experience and opinion is important. The community needs to make a decision. All of the military jet add-ons I talked about here only scratched the surface of what is available on the MSFS Marketplace. I was going to make a list, but there are literally hundreds of them, and that's not a valuable use of article real estate.

I also understand that it is not entirely the developer's fault. My time in the MV-22 Osprey by Miltech Simulations (not covered, but tested extensively) showed that some of the limitations are down to the MSFS platform and its lack of simulation for very specific flight regimes. The MV-22 Osprey's VTOL capability, as implemented by Miltech Simulation, is a poorly realized trick that utilizes complex exploitations of MSFS CFD calculations, creating something to the effect of a VTOL aircraft that is both jarring and hilariously unconvincing.

It's a shame: Miltech Simulations clearly put extensive effort into carefully recreating the MV-22 Osprey to a very high level of detail. The external and interior modeling is excellent, with great animations and an overall convincing appearance. However, the systems modeling leaves much to be desired, with shallow avionics and flight computers comparable to the F-35 Lightning II by IndiaFoxtEcho. Add that with the poorly realized VTOL simulation, a resultant of MSFS limitations, and you are left with an all-around disappointing product. A word used to describe every single product I tested for this article.

To get a better idea of how the community receives these aircraft, I decided to dig a bit deeper into the dark web of internet reviews for products that are so obviously and abhorrently terrible that a review above 1-star is either faked or a blatant lie. Let's look back at the Eurofighter by Bredok3D, where we know that there is no questioning the complete lack of quality or effort. Here are some reviews:

Let me remind you what the cockpit looks like:
There are reviews listed that highlight cockpit texturing. However, the overall rating of three stars and 26 five-star reviews to 9 one-star reviews paints a bleak picture. I highlighted these reviews because they comment almost exclusively on the flight model and top-speed performance. Firstly, let me assure you that the flight model is nothing special and is, at best, a copy-paste of the F-18 flight model with severely inaccurate performance data. Secondly, top-speed performance is neither here nor there when it comes to the rating of a military jet add-on.
What these reviews show us is clear. The buyers of this product are not concerned with the way the cockpit looks, how poorly the military jet is modeled, or even how realistic the flight model is. The buyers of this product simply enjoy it for blasting around MSFS scenery at Mach 2.0, which I can respect. However, don't forget that buyers paid real money for this product. Bredok3D is making a profit off of this product.

Without going into much detail, the English in most of these reviews is fairly poor. This could be indicative of buyers with non-native English-speaking backgrounds or buyers of younger age. While this is entirely speculation, I believe that the latter fits the pattern of behavior from buyer and seller, as seen throughout this article. The buyers for these products are generally a younger audience. Perhaps influenced by certain YouTubers who do not call out these products for being unrealistic but rather praise them for it.

This younger audience has never had an easier route to these products than the MSFS Marketplace. Enabling most buyers to purchase these military jets with only a few clicks, having absolutely no idea what they are purchasing. Who is benefiting from this? The add-on developers and MSFS. I do not believe that MSFS enables this practice with intent. I cannot say the same for the add-on developers. We wrote a whole editorial about the strengths and weaknesses of MSFS Marketplace here: this is one of its greatest weaknesses.

The state of the MSFS Marketplace is a disaster. Product after product is a low-quality cash grab developed by add-on developers with minimal effort. Want to make this 100 times worse? I believe these developers knowingly and actively target an audience of younger, inexperienced, and naïve customers. I believe this is further supported by the lax requirements for posting products on the MSFS Marketplace and by the YouTube environment of creators providing free advertisement while also making a profit.

It is time for the community to call out this practice. The younger audience won't ever know the difference. However, if the experienced flight simulation community makes it very clear to these developers that their lack of effort is not going unnoticed, I believe we can push for a real change. I don't know what the ideal military jet market is for MSFS. Perhaps one shouldn't exist. However, I don't believe being complacent while buyers who don't know any better are being taken advantage of is acceptable.

It's time to put an end to this.

Complete list of aircraft tested:
To avoid this editorial getting any longer than it already is, not all aircraft were covered or mentioned in the text. The aircraft omitted were of similar quality and contained the same issues outlined in the text.

IndiaFoxtEcho F-35 Lightning II – $35.99
Top Mach Studios F-22 Raptor – $35.99
Bredok3D Eurofighter Typhoon – $17.74
Miltech Simulations MV-22 Osprey – $34.00
SC Designs F-16 Fighting Falcon – $34.99
Sim Skunk Works FRF-104 G Starfighter – $22.25
DC Designs F-14 A/B Tomcat – $27.80
DC Designs F-15 Eagle – $31.29
DC Designs AV-8B Harrier II – $27.76
After-thoughts
This article is a tough read. It's not easy to be this harsh on a community I am so passionate about. Flight simulation has taken up a big part of my life, which is why I find some of these products and practices particularly frustrating. Some of the developers I listed here have some truly phenomenal products, absolutely excellent and miles ahead of any of the products I discussed. That doesn't excuse the quality and subsequent expense of these products.

I don't want to generalize the audience. Most of you are just as if not more experienced than I am in the flight simulation community. I am hoping that many of you are well aware of this problem and maybe even agree with me. I feel like this article needs to be written. We need to expose and highlight the increasing presence of shovelware products on the market. We need to expose that most MSFS Marketplace users are on the Xbox platform, which comes with a certain demographic of players.

I don't wish to make myself a martyr here. I've written over 6,000 words on video game airplanes: it's nothing special. The real core of the issue for me is that when it comes to taking money from people, especially if they are non-informed, we cannot let it go unnoticed.

FSNews