

Electronic charts and CFS in Canada

We have been getting several inquiries from members who want to know when Nav Canada will be providing pilots with electronic VFR charts in Canada.

COPA President and CEO Kevin Psutka is the primary contact for COPA with Nav Canada and he is a member of the Nav Canada Advisory Committee that provides feedback directly to the Nav Canada Board of Directors. Psutka has emphasized this issue for many years and some progress is being made. For example, Foreflight now provides IFR information such as en route charts, approach plates and taxi diagrams. Nav Canada has recently completed an agreement with Foreflight to provide VNC charts but there is no date set for them being available. The CFS is being repackaged into electronic format but it is unknown when it will be available for Foreflight and other providers. A response on this issue came recently from Nav Canada's Janelle Denton, manager customer contact centre & aeronautical publications.

She said Nav Canada has completed the digitization of all VFR charts and is now in the process of working with external vendors to test them within their applications for quality and safety features. Once testing is complete, vendors will have the opportunity to enter into commercial license agreements and make the VFR charts available in their products to customers.

This project has a "high priority," and although Denton said she is not able to provide a firm timeline, "I feel comfortable saying we have made progress and expect the charts to be ready in the near future."

In addition to the VFR charts, Nav Canada is aware of the challenges that the CFS places on customers. "We are currently exploring options to improve the CFS as a product, one being breaking it down by province similar to the CAPs and offering it to our customers through electronic download. The CFS data is available to third party vendors who are interested in entering a data license agreement with us and meet certain insurance and liability requirements."

The Canada Air Pilot, Restricted Canada Air Pilot and Water Aerodrome Supplement are available for purchase in electronic format from Nav Canada's online store. These products are available as a complete PDF of the publication. Customers can purchase and download the PDF electronically and print their required pages. Nav Canada anticipates additional products and formats to become available in download format in the future.

Nav Canada will continue to work towards modernizing Canadian Aeronautical publications so they are available in electronic format for flight planning and navigational use, where permitted by Federal regulations Denton said. "At this time, ForeFlight and FltPlan.com are both official sources of Nav Canada's electronic aeronautical data. These companies provide Canadian data electronically in their applications and subscriptions can be purchased directly from them.

"In addition to these two companies we have ongoing discussions with other third party vendors who wish to offer Canadian data in their applications. This is in an effort to make our aeronautical data available to our customers in an electronic format and through a variety of options."

Standby for more... hopefully coming soon.