

William J. Hughes Technical Center Press Release

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FAA Backs Research, Development in International Use of English in Aviation

EGG HARBOR TWP., N.J. – The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recently signed a cooperative research and development agreement with Ordinate Corporation, of Menlo Park, CA, to support improved English proficiency in aviation worldwide.

All International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) member states must adopt and controllers and aircrews must conform to and achieve new English language proficiency standards, by March 2008. Imposition and enforcement of the new ICAO provisions will improve aviation radio and telephone communications in English and therefore enhance aviation safety worldwide.

The goal of the five-year agreement is to create a standard Aviation English Test. Ordinate Corporation has developed a completely automated method for testing spoken language. The FAA Academy provides leadership in training and developing the FAA workforce and the aviation community.

“This is another step in FAA support to ICAO member states, air carrier operators and air traffic service providers to help them meet the ICAO March 2008 English language proficiency requirement,” said Graham Elliott, manager of the FAA Academy’s Aviation Language Training Program. “The research is to develop an automated test that both supports the ICAO in establishing a global standard, and also applies U.S. technology to the otherwise long, arduous and costly process of testing many tens of thousands of pilots and controllers.”

“This agreement is a unique, creative arrangement,” said Deborah Germak, manager of the FAA’s Technology Transfer Program. “Ordinate has agreed to reimburse the FAA Academy for the FAA’s direct expenses for this effort, and it will pay the FAA a percentage of the gross sales of every Aviation English Test sold.”

These funds will be used for further research, test improvement and training program development.

A cooperative research and development agreement between a federal laboratory and a collaborating partner is one in which the partners leverage their resources by providing people, services, facilities, equipment, intellectual property and other resources to conduct specific research or development efforts to further the mission of the agency. The government provides no funds in these agreements, but the collaborating party may reimburse the government for related expenses it incurs.

The FAA’s Cooperative Research and Development Agreement Program is based at the William J. Hughes Technical Center, near Atlantic City, N.J. The FAA Academy is located at the FAA’s Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center in Oklahoma City.