

PC FLIGHT

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The Ultimate 757 Collection

QualityWings • FS2004/FSX • Ian Broni

I came across the QualityWings 757 by accident one day whilst browsing the usual flightsim websites and at first glance was impressed with the visuals of their product. I always remember a certain PCPCI member, who happens to be a pilot, always saying that a 757 would look wonderful in the new Aer Lingus colours ☐. Curiosity got the better of me and a bit more research followed as I was looking for something a bit heavier to fly than my trusty Fokker 100, which can only cruise at about FL320 and always be overtaken by other faster Boeings and Airbuses. Something else caught my eye in reading the blurb and other postings about the product, which appealed in some ways to me – I don't consider myself what you might call a "hardcore" flightsimmer in that I don't really subscribe to having every button and knob work and every intricacy of the air conditioning be fully represented. For me I expect things like a cold and dark start up, FMC (even though up to now I didn't really use one) and the general systems replication – enough to be able jump in, start her up and fly an airway route for a couple of hundred miles. To quote the QualityWings website "The Ultimate 757 Collection is the most extensive 757 Package ever created for Microsoft Flight Simulator. There is truly something for everyone. Every 757 ever to come off the line from Boeing has been reproduced for your enjoyment. And with Mid-Level systems programming, we've simplified the simming experience while providing you the look and feel that makes the Boeing 757 such a special airplane to fly". The key phrases here are "mid-level" and "simplified the simming experience" and their strap line: "Complexity, simplified". Now it really must be stated that the list of what is actually included makes it read like a very complex aircraft indeed, so do not be deceived by some of the terminology used.

The package is available for download via their website and comes as one large file (I cannot remember how big the files was!). Also available is a large 179 page manual and over 125



different paint schemes. What you get with the package is: 15 highly accurate and detailed models of the Boeing 757-200 and 300 series, including a freighter and package along with a US military variant called a C-32. Included in these versions are engine variants of Rolls Royce RB211 and Pratt & Whitney 2000 series engines and then to top it all are variants with blended winglets – all included as standard. Flight dynamics are stated as "realistic BUT balanced" and the sound set covers both engine types, along with flightdeck environmental sounds, EICAS warnings, GPWS, realistic click sounds and Level A warning and Level B caution sounds. The key outside features include; shock strut compression, realistic XML controlled wingflex, which reacts to turbulence, XML controlled flap system including simulated flap relief system, XML controlled slat system including auto slat feature, XML controlled flight/ground spoilers, XML controlled rudder (locks at low speeds), super smooth gear animation, detailed thrust reversers including blocker door animations, all passenger, service and cargo doors, APU doors (which only opens when APU is on), Outlet valves and RAM air inlets, AOA sensor and wheel



chocks – in all over 100 animations. The flightdeck includes a detailed 2D cockpit featuring both widescreen (16:10 ratio) and standard (4:3 aspect ratio) resolution bitmaps, standard 757 gauges or Retrofit LCD displays upgrade based on real world 757/767 cockpit retrofit, detailed 3D virtual cockpit with parallel functionality as 2D environment, autopilot with VNAV, LNAV, flight level change and autoland capability, thrust mode selection panel, EICAS system with realistic differences between engine types, EICAS messages along with aural sounds modelled, Traffic collision avoidance system with aural sounds, customisable GPWS with full altitude callouts, 757/767 retrofit displays upgrade option included, FMS and Standard and LITE panel modes available on the fly via the QualityWings Control panel with standard mode balancing realism and simplified approach whilst the LITE mode offers those who really want things simple! Enough? – to me it sounds like the business – this may not suit home cockpit builders (e.g. Terry, who want the trolley dolly call bell to work along with accurate toilet flushing sounds included).

At this stage you will understand that this product is as complex or as simple as you want it to be. I have to say my first impressions were based on the visuals and the sounds, both of which attracted me to the product. I will talk a little about the manual shortly but a word about their comprehensive web based forum and a number of tutorials on YouTube, which I found particularly excellent. Installation of the product was straight forward and easy to follow, through at the very end of the installation process a splash screen appeared with the message “The product Quality Wings – Ultimate 757 Collection is correctly installed but not active yet on this PC – Do you want to activate it now?” Your PC needs to be connected to the internet for you to complete this task but doing so only takes a couple of minutes after which you get a message to

say it has been successfully activated – this is an interesting installation process indeed and probably helps weed out dodgy downloads.

The included 179 page manual (which needs to be printed out!) covers every aspect of the 757, including two tutorial flights – one simple and one advanced, along the same route. Reading all 179 pages of the manual is a large commitment in itself however, I learnt a lot from it, particularly as I had not flown a 757 in a very long time. An interesting feature is the ability to select “on the fly” via the configuration file – there are well over 100 including the ability to pre-select: aligning of IRS’s on aircraft load, turn packs on upon aircraft load, turn yaw damper on upon aircraft load etc. etc. This allows you to pre-configure your 757 with numerous settings so you can literally load the aircraft within FS and be ready to go. This feature really does need some reading before you go and make any changes but it is a feature that can be very useful. There is a very detailed section in relation to Folder Structure which guides you through the 757 installation folder structure within your FS folder and it explains the various installed aircraft. This is followed by a Repaint Kit section and a Livery Manager section in the manual. The Repaint Kit takes you through the options which allows you to repaint your own 757 in high quality liveries but as there are over 100 available for download from their website – but no Aer Lingus. I have also checked Avsim and they have quite a number of freeware liveries available as well.

Before we finally jump into the aircraft, there are a few other things I need to point out. Both 2D and 3D panels are provided plus a choice of either a standard flightdeck, which includes the traditional EADI and EHSI, or a retrofit flightdeck, which has a more modern LCD upgrade featuring two 10” flat screens for the PFD and ND displays. The 2D cockpit also features widescreen (16:0 aspect ratio) and standard (4:3 ratio) resolution bitmaps. One of the key features of this aircraft is the sound quality – there are two engine types in-





cluded, the Rolls Royce RB211 and Pratt & Whitney PW2000 series. Having listened to both, I have to say that the sound reproduction is excellent with the changing in pitch as you open and close the throttle making it as real as it gets. Also included are a mixture of flightdeck and cabin environment sounds, e.g. cooling systems, air conditioning packs and the undercarriage as it is deployed and retracted. The ambience captured in the recording of the engine sounds along with all the other associated sounds like GPWS, EICAS warnings etc. certainly give you that "757" feeling as you sit high up in your cockpit.

When viewed from the outside, you will immediately be taken by the clarity of the visual effects. The level of detailed is amazing with every nook and cranny of this 757 brought to life. I spent quite some time scrolling around and zooming in and out and I could find no fault whatsoever. It is worth pointing out that included in the package is the ability to individually open and close all the main and service doors on the aircraft, the two main underside cargo doors, the cargo doors on the freighter version, apply wheel chocks – add AES to all of this and you really get a great bundle. In the cargo version you also have a large forward cargo door which opens in two positions – canopy and fully open. Other fine details include; the APU door, which only opens when the APU is running, detailed thrust reversers with blocker door animations, outflow valves and RAM air inlets. In one of the few circuits I did, it was great to watch the undercarriage retract and the wheelwell doors close up after the wheels had retracted - even the movement of the flaps is captured in very fine detail. The lighting effects are also superb and although I was tempted to update my aircraft with the 3D Redux lights, in the end I didn't bother as I was happy with the standard with the package. A

neat little addition I noted later was an APU unit which sits on the ground just behind the nose when you select external power.

Now for the Cockpit. As I said before, there are two types of cockpits supplied – Standard and Retro along with the standard 2D and 3D cockpits. In 2D mode, you get your standard main panel (Captains view only) along with thirteen additional subpanels, which are controlled through a small SimIcon panel which sits in the bottom left hand side of the main panel. The thirteen panels are : 1/ QW – this is a small panel depicting the aircraft which allows you to select all six doors individually (3 passenger and 3 service) plus the two cargo doors along with positioning wheel chocks or opening the cargo door if you are using the cargo version. The panel also allows you to select EADI style as in Tape or Round style, Panel Mode as in Standard or Lite (a bit more on this later) and F/D Style as in Dual or Single. 2/ Overhead panel – self explanatory although it does include a new button. If you select "Lite" mode from the QW panel it gives you a new button positioned just above the battery switch which says "Start" in green or "Stop" in red. Basically it shorts circuits all the normal engine start up procedures by pressing Start (it will literally self start the aircraft – and Stop does the opposite!) 3/ The Throttle quadrant. 4/ The radio stack. 5/ ADI is an enlarged ADI, 6/ HSI is an enlarged HIS. 7/ A is the approach mode panel which gives a better overall view out the window when in the landing phase. 8/ E1 is an enlarged EICAS primary engine display. 9/ E2 is an enlarged EICAS secondary engine display, which includes a Status page. 10/ FMS – self explanatory. 11/ EFIS control panel. 12/ L gives a small overhead panel in the main panel model, which shows the light switches and finally 13/ T shows the rudder/aileron trim panel. In the retro panel there are two additional buttons – 1/ PF which gives an enlarged Primary Flight display and 2/ ND which give an enlarged Navigation Display. In all cases you actually resize the subpanel windows to your own requirements and move them about your screen –





I found this to be extremely useful in setting the aircraft up the way I wanted. Overall I found the 2D Panel very well represented, considering the overall size of a 757 cockpit. Initially I found some of the digital readouts a bit small but this was soon sorted by resizing the panels to my own requirement. There is a lot of information presented here, particularly in the older panel which does not benefit from the combined information presented in the retro panel, which includes more modern PF and ND display screens. With this in mind you have to use the sub panels quite a bit to get yourself around the large cockpit but with the SimIcons this proved to be less of a problem than when first presented with the array of sub panels. I got quite comfortable with the panel having overcome the resizing matter and was soon in and out and zooming around to my hearts content without any problem. Having studied the 2D panel for some time I was a bit dubious of how the 3D panel would look and feel but to my surprise it looks and feels great with very defined and readable instruments, to such a degree that on my first circuit I ended up using the 3D panel and flew the aircraft around no problem. Interestingly, all the 2D working buttons, knobs etc., are fully replicated in the 3D panel and nothing is left out.

A nice touch in 3D mode is that you can raise and lower the arm rests and even open the manual cabinet behind the F/O seat. All in all, the panel representation is excellent and I found it easy to use and not lacking in anything. I did start to read the manual and try the FMS but either my patience ran out or my pot of coffee was not strong enough to get me through in one piece, this is something I will have to revisit. However, the FMS does interact with the autopilot to provide lateral and vertical navigation and users can manually create flight plans, load stored flight plans or import current flight plans and you can modify the active flight plan route while enroute. The FMS data can now also be updated via the Navigraph NavData service which issues updated AIRAC cycles on a monthly basis. In terms of systems replication, this is where a little clarification is needed to be written – the QualityWings 757 does not claim to be a full procedures simulator but more a high level of automation in systems with a simplified approach – or as they say “Complexity, Simplified”. This is certainly the case in the Lite panel mode with the quick start

button option for those who just like to hop in and fly without having to spend 20 minutes or so turning knobs and switching switches. Many of the systems are simulated, like hydraulics, electrical, fuel systems etc., with some limitations on others like the bleed air system but they never claimed it to be anything else – in some ways this is what attracted me to the aircraft. I don't have a cockpit system at home apart from a Saitek Control yoke, pedals and throttle quadrant and I don't particularly want to spend ½ hour programming things when I am anxious to go fly online, so the strap line of “Complexity, Simplified” actually suits me, although I did take exception to the Lite version and avoided this button.

In flying the aircraft I found it very stable and easy to fly. I even made a few full auto landings without a hitch. The YouTube tutorials (which I highly recommend) pointed out the best way to fly a manual approach, keeping the pitch to a minimum and so ensuring no tail strikes on landing. The included manual along with the QualityWings forum are very informative with an answer to every question I went looking found in the manual, although it could have been better laid out in more defined chapters rather than some very large ones, which made finding some information more laborious. I have the Saitek Pro Flight Yoke System plus their rudder pedals and two of their Pro Flight Panels (radio and autopilot). Apart from some initial finger trouble on my behalf - programming the throttles and flaps etc. via FSUIPC, everything else just worked straight away, which cannot be said for some other well known aircraft I have that refuse to work with the Saitek panels.

I enjoyed doing this review and flying the Boeing 757. The QualityWings 757 is a bit like the ad for Ronseal – It does exactly what it says on the tin. They don't go and make fanciful claims about the aircraft but some users seem upset that it does not perform like a PMDG aircraft – which is exactly what they were not trying to do. There is a niche for the type of simmer who is quite happy spending 5 minutes getting themselves sorted, loading fuel, the FMS and then with a few clicks are pushing back from their stand and on their way – for others who like the works well there are other products out there that can meet that requirement. QualityWings have created a refreshing model of a Boeing 757 that is demanding and yet relatively simple to use and fly and yet does not skimp on quality. They have already made a name for themselves and I am sure their next project will be well received within the flight-sim community. I for one have now found an acceptable long range aircraft that I can quite easily hop into and take into the VATSIM skies – my only disappointment is that Aer Lingus never operated the Boeing 757, so my callsign “Shamrock 159” will have to lay idle when I am in this aircraft.



Available from www.qwsim.com for both FS9 and FSX, cost €37.53 or STG£30.74 (non refundable) but you get versions for the one price. ✈

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Product Reviews

The opinions expressed of products reviewed are the personal opinions of the reviewers.

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Saturday 16th October
10.00 am—5.00 pm
Carlton Hotel, Swords Road
(beside Dublin Airport)

The colour PDF versions of the magazine are available on the 'Members Area' of our website



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