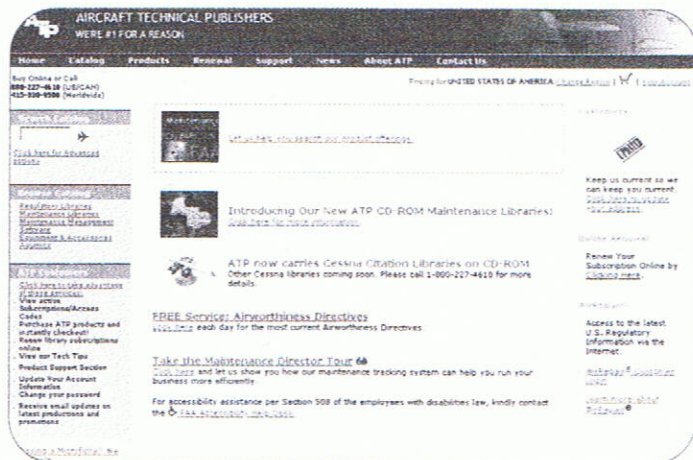


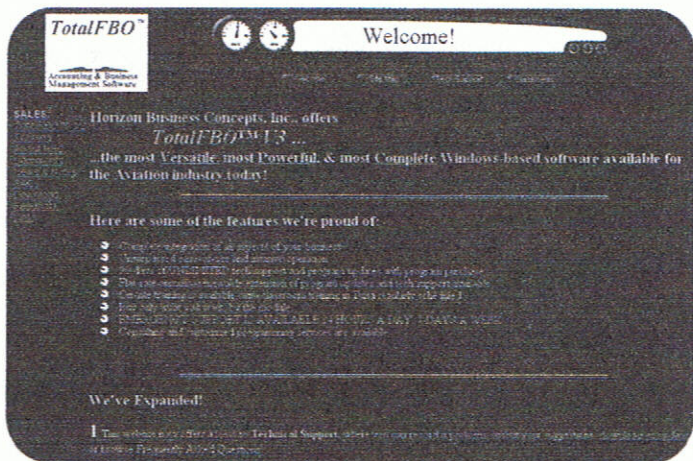
Maintenance Management Software

For the Small Operator

A two-airplane Part 135 charter operator needs maintenance tracking software and evaluates three providers' offerings.



Aircraft Technical Publishers (www.atp.com)



Horizon Business Concepts (www.hbcinc.com)

In our high-tech world of automation and glass cockpits, tracking required aircraft maintenance and inspections has become a job in itself. As more and more integrated and automated systems are added to our aircraft, so are required inspections. These required inspections keep the aircraft legal and safe to fly. Many operators of small aircraft have started using some type of maintenance tracking software for assistance in tracking this required maintenance. These programs range from just a maintenance tracking package to a complete FBO program with accounting, scheduling, IRS reports, and more.

In the mid-1990s, the FAA realized that electronic maintenance record keeping was gaining in popularity. After soliciting recommendations from industry personnel, the FAA changed regulations pertaining to aircraft maintenance records to allow for electronic logbooks. One of the major changes was in the regulations where it was stated that records be kept in a "form" and manner acceptable to the FAA. It now reads "format."

Operators of all sizes can benefit from using maintenance tracking software. This includes small charter operations like my company, a single-pilot, two-airplane operator, to larger operations with a fleet of aircraft and maintenance personnel. I started researching maintenance tracking software when my company decided to obtain a FAR Part 135 operating certificate. I was seeking a program that could track inspections and/or maintenance due and that could also be used to dispatch the aircraft. The dispatch option had to show upcoming inspections/maintenance on the dispatch sheet. I also needed a basic accounting and a charter quotation package. Having the ability to track duty and flight times for the pilots was also important.

Deciding which package to purchase wasn't easy. I was overwhelmed by all of the different programs available. I was finally able to narrow my options down to three different programs, Maintenance Director, Total FBO, and FBO Manager. Each one has features that are useful for my operation.

Maintenance Director

Aircraft Technical Publishers (ATP) is the developer of Maintenance Director, which is an electronic logbook for tracking up to 50 aircraft. It is designed to comply with all of the FAA's requirements and proposed electronic logbook rules and delivers quick and easy access to all maintenance records. Maintenance Director is a maintenance planning and electronic recordkeeping program. The software tracks all service bulletins, airworthiness directives, time-limited parts, and inspection items. The program is totally customizable and gives the users great flexibility.

Maintenance Director's E*Log is an electronic aircraft logbook. Logbook entries are entered directly into E*Log, which can be used to track as well as plan maintenance.

To meet the needs of operators of specific aircraft types, Maintenance Director uses schedules that contain pre-made maintenance programs.

Schedules are updated monthly to ensure that all information is current and up-to-date. All maintenance schedules are based on the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedule. This information includes airworthiness directives, service bulletins, type certificates, and maintenance and inspection requirements for the aircraft. The user has the ability to modify the schedules as needed. For example, if the manufacturer recommends a compressor wash at every 100 hours and you want to change that to every 50 or every 150 hours, you can. Maintenance Director is not yet fully integrated with ATP's airworthiness directive service, however, ATP plans to offer this capability in the future. Some of Maintenance Director's pre-made aircraft schedules include the King Air 200 & 90; Learjet 31, 35, 36, 45, and 55; Piper Cheyennes; Falcon 20, 50, and 2000; Citation II, V, and V Ultra; and some Hawkers. Maintenance Director also has pre-made schedules for General Electric, Pratt & Whitney Canada, and Honeywell engines.

One entry into the aircraft maintenance record will update the status board, makes a logbook entry, updates compliance history, and records the current part configuration. Maintenance Director also gives the user the ability to override manufacturer time intervals on inspections. For example, if you are given a higher TBO on something, perhaps due to a customized inspection program, and the manufacturer has set a certain TBO, you have the ability to override this within the program. The program gives the person entering the data up to 500 characters for such fields as "Method of Compliance," "Description of Work Performed," and "Return to Service" to enter all necessary information.

Maintenance Director will track the life of an aircraft component or part (serial-numbered parts) while it is in inventory. For example, if a particular aircraft component has a shelf life or time-limited life, when the component is removed from an aircraft and entered into inventory, the component history will follow. The component will now be listed in inventory. Once the part is put on an aircraft the shelf-life history follows. The program now knows what aircraft the part is on. A part can also be marked as serviceable, unserviceable, or repairable. Maintenance Director can also track inspections and/or calibrations that are due on tools.

Maintenance Director is a solid maintenance planning and tracking program. Gone are the days of searching

Cornerstone Logic (www.cornerstonelogic.com)

through pages and pages of logs to verify if a required AD was complied with or to find how many cycles or hours are on a part. Maintenance Director allows the user to find such information with the touch of a few buttons.

Getting started with Maintenance Director takes some time and dedication on the user's part. However, a fast start service is available. With this service, a team of Aircraft Technical Publishers's A&Ps with Inspection Authorization will review your logbooks and enter the current status into Maintenance Director. The fast start service can take anywhere from a week or two up to a month, depending on the complexity of the aircraft and the hours on the aircraft. Training is included in the price of the program at ATP's headquarters in Brisbane, California.

I found two other programs that offer comparable features. Both programs include more than maintenance tracking, which may be beneficial to smaller operators, especially charter companies. One is called Total FBO by Horizon Business Concepts. The other is FBO Manager by Cornerstone Logic.

Total FBO

Total FBO is a complete business package including accounting, charter, flight school, maintenance tracking, and maintenance shop features. Total FBO's accounting program includes accounts receivable and payable, invoicing, check register, general ledger, and payroll. Flight school and charter modules are also available. These two modules include charter quotes, scheduling, flight school records, flight school and charter dispatch, and pilot records. A feature beneficial to Part 135 charter operators is that Total FBO has the ability to track and document charter pilot duty times. One of the features that I like about Total FBO is that you can purchase only the modules that are useful to you and your operation.

The aircraft maintenance and management module includes: work orders, pricing, inventory control, and aircraft maintenance. However, Total FBO is not an electronic recordkeeping program; the program is fine as a supplement to traditional paper logbooks. The user has the ability to print reports such as maintenance due and work scheduled in the maintenance shop.

Total FBO does allow the user to enter aircraft times and when inspections are due. The user has the ability to cus-

Maintenance Director (all prices listed are for single user, network prices available)

1. Planner—\$1650.00. Includes monitoring of life limited and overhaulable parts, recording of times and cycles, preparing component reports for aircraft, engines, or inventory, forecasting maintenance, and component requirements.
2. E*Log—\$4995.00. Includes everything in "Planner," plus tracking of life limited and overhaulable parts, printing paper logbook pages for sign-off, maintenance history and compliance status in searchable electronic format, tracking complete component install history, and one aircraft schedule one-year update service.
3. Enterprise—\$5995.00. Includes everything in "E*Log," plus tracking multiple fleets, enhanced data query options, forecasting upcoming maintenance requirements and one year update service for a series of aircraft schedules (i.e. Learjet series).

Total FBO (all prices listed are for single user, network prices are available. Individual modules available with per-module pricing.)

1. Full package—\$5699.00. Includes all modules.
2. Standard package—\$4999.00. Includes all accounting modules, shop orders, payroll, maintenance and management, inventory, ordering/receiving, charter quotes, reservations, flight school, preflight dispatch, and avionics.
3. Shop package—\$3999.00. Includes all accounting modules, shop orders/quotes, payroll, aircraft maintenance, inventory, ordering/receiving, and time clock.
4. Avionics package—\$4199.00. All accounting modules, shop orders, payroll, aircraft maintenance, inventory, ordering/receiving, avionics, and time clock.

5. Flight school package—\$3799.00. Includes all accounting modules, payroll, aircraft maintenance, reservations, preflight dispatch, and flight school records.

6. Charter package—\$3799.00. Includes all accounting modules, payroll, aircraft maintenance, charter quotes, reservations, charter dispatch, concierge, and AC-U-Kwik import option.

7. Accounting package—\$2299.00. Includes all accounting modules.

FBO Manager (all prices single-user version, other prices available)

1. FBO Manager Basic package—\$1495.00. Includes sales activities, creates invoices and statements, inventory control, sales tax tracking and creation, pilot and instructor reporting, aircraft tracking and reporting, Part 141 flight school tracking and reporting, and import and export to accounting packages.

2. FBO Manager Lite-Flight School—\$3495.00. Includes all Basic features, plus monthly recurring charges, bar code support, tax on tax capability, aircraft maintenance tracking, rental dispatch checking, leaseback tracking and reports, medical and biennial flight review tracking and reports, networkable, security, user-defined reports, cash drawer support, and credit card processing.

3. FBO Manager Standard—\$ 4895.00. Includes all features of FBO Manager Lite plus detailed fuel management, customer fuel balance tracking, and shop order management.

4. FBO Enterprise—\$ 5895.00. Includes all features of FBO Manager Standard, plus charter quoting, customer concierge functions, inbound flight services and reservations, tail number, and standard phrases for service orders.

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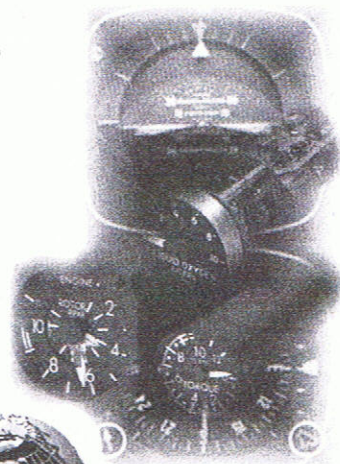
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tomize and add fields here, too. When an aircraft in your fleet is dispatched for a flight (charter or flight school), the dispatch sheet will show the status of the various inspections (date or time when due). Dispatching the aircraft will also check the currency of the pilot.

Total FBO offers a week-long training course to get users started. The training is offered at Horizon's Broken Arrow, Oklahoma facility, although customer-location training arrangements can be made.

FBO Manager

Cornerstone Logic's FBO Manager is another package that tracks aircraft maintenance and offers more features for a small charter operator. Features include invoicing, billing, inventory, and pilot information. Like Total FBO, FBO Manager is not an electronic recordkeeping program. However, FBO Manager does print logbook labels and FAA 337 forms.

FBO Manager can track maintenance for multiple aircraft. The program is customizable in that the user can add inspection requirements for each air-

craft. The program can use Hobbs, tach, and or calendar time to track inspections or maintenance due items.

As times are entered from flights, this information is used to generate reports showing maintenance due. The operator can use this information to help schedule and plan work in the shop. FBO Manager will also generate workorders with lists of discrepancies. This section also allows the user to enter corrective actions and parts used. Inventory tracking is also available for parts inventory. The value of the inventory can be tracked in the accounting section.

Training for FBO Manager is available on site on at Cornerstone Logic's facility in New Smyrna Beach, Florida. Telephone support and assistance (unlimited for 90 days) is also available to help in getting started. FBO Manager will also help in converting data from other software packages.

In researching these three software packages, I have found that many operators chose Maintenance Director for its strong maintenance tracking and electronic aircraft logbook capa-

bilities and then supplement it with a full FBO program like Total FBO or FBO Manager (myself included). ATP does plan to integrate Maintenance Director with some of the complete FBO packages. ■ **AM**

Resources

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Cornerstone Logic
New Smyrna Beach, Florida
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