

Digital and AI in Aviation - ACP workshop survey analysis

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Overview

This note analyses roughly 40 completed feedback forms from the ACP’s "Digital and AI in Aviation" workshop. The form runs across six lettered sections (A to F), each capturing a different angle on how aviation professionals view AI. Completed forms vary in legibility, so the figures below are close reads rather than exact tallies, and should be treated as directional.

The headline: An optimistic, pragmatic audience that frames AI as an efficiency-and-augmentation play, expects it to reshape customer service first, and draws a firm, near-unanimous line at autonomous decision-making, especially anything safety-critical or ethical.

Section A: "AI for you is" (circle one word)

A one-word sentiment check. The dominant choices cluster around instrumental, positive framings rather than fear.

Word	Relative weight	Reading
Efficiency	High	Most-circled term overall
Opportunity	High	Frequently paired with a positive tone
Augmentation	High	Signals a "tool that assists" mindset
Hope / Future	Moderate	Forward-looking optimism
Machine / Responsibility	Low	Scattered, more neutral
Fear	Negligible	Almost nobody selected it

Takeaway. The room views AI as a tool that boosts and augments, not a threat. A few respondents ticked several words despite the "one word" instruction, which is itself a signal of enthusiasm.

Section B: which aviation function will AI transform first?

Customer Service is the clear front-runner, well ahead of the safety-critical core.

Function	Ranking	Reading
Customer Service	Front-runner	Lowest-risk, customer-facing
Safety	Second	Notable but behind CS
Operations	Third	Steady support
Maintenance / ATM / Security	Marginal	Barely registered

Takeaway. The audience expects AI to land first where it is lowest-risk and customer-facing, not in the safety-critical core.

Section C: agree or disagree with seven statements

Four statements drew strong consensus (agree):

- "AI won't replace people. People using AI will."
- "Trust will become aviation's most valuable currency."
- "The future pilot will manage intelligence, not just aircraft."
- "Machines don't replace judgment, they amplify it."

Two statements split the room and are worth flagging:

- **"The safest flight of the future will be the most automated."** Genuinely contested, with several qualifying it as "agree, with human-in-the-loop".
- **"Every aviation professional will become an AI professional."** The most disagreed-with statement, with many "partly" or "no" responses.

Section D: complete the sentence

"AI makes me feel..." skews positive: efficient, empowered, confident, optimistic.

Biggest concern: data security and privacy, over-dependence, and reliability of outputs.

"AI will never replace..." answered, overwhelmingly, humans and human judgment.

Sharpest signal, the two decision prompts: AI should decide routine, data-based tasks but never critical, safety, ethical or final decisions. The single most common answer to "one thing I never want AI to do" is decide on its own, or decide for me.

Section E: personal reflection

Prompt	Dominant answer	Reading
Biggest anxiety	Job loss, over-reliance	Dependence is a recurring worry
Most exciting	Speed, efficiency	Time saved is the draw
Happy to give AI	Documentation, data sorting	Routine, low-judgment work
Never trust AI with	Decision-making, safety	The firm red line
New skill learning	Prompt engineering	Named by nearly everyone
Extra free hour	Reading, family, hobbies	Strongly human choices

Takeaway. When handed a free hour, respondents overwhelmingly chose human pursuits: reading, family, rest and personal growth. The instinct is to use AI to buy back time, not to fill it with more work.

Section F: "By 2035..." predictions

Recurring themes in the free-text predictions:

- AI becomes foundational infrastructure across industries.
- It augments and assists rather than replaces, with humans kept in the loop.
- Aviation becomes safer and more efficient.
- Routine work shrinks, with a stated worry that human thinking and reasoning may atrophy.
- A few flagged rising AI-driven cyber threats requiring AI-based defence.

The Overall Story

Three clear findings stand out from the survey.

First, the sentiment is positive and pragmatic. Participants see AI primarily as a tool for improving efficiency, enhancing capabilities and augmenting human expertise—not as a threat to jobs or professional roles.

Second, expectations are ambitious but realistic. Participants expect AI to transform customer service and other lower-risk, high-volume functions first, while recognising that adoption in the safety-critical core of aviation will require a much higher threshold of trust, validation and regulatory confidence.

Third, there is a strong and near-unanimous boundary around autonomous decision-making. Human oversight remains essential, particularly when decisions have safety, ethical or significant operational consequences. The message is clear: **AI can support the decision; humans must remain accountable for the decision.**

Two important questions emerged for future discussion: **How far should aviation go in automating the safety-critical core? And does the future require every aviation professional to become an “AI professional,” or simply to become AI-enabled?**

The survey also points to an interesting emerging skill gap. **Prompt engineering is the practical AI capability participants are reaching for, while human judgment is the capability they are determined to retain.**

Ultimately, the message from the survey is not **“AI versus people,”** but **“AI with people”**—using technology to make aviation more intelligent, efficient and predictive, while keeping human judgment at the centre of safety, ethics and accountability.

Prepared by Sandeep for the ACP AI/Digital workshop debrief. Figures are directional close reads of handwritten responses.