

BEST User Group Winchester, 2024 Review

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Thank you for joining us in the idyllic city of Winchester and at our Bournemouth offices for the 2024 BEST User Group.

As always, it was wonderful to see familiar faces – and welcome new ones – as we came together to socialise, share operational challenges, and push the boundaries of what's possible with BEST.

Building on the interactive framework established in Amsterdam last year, we structured this year's event around your direct involvement. Your previous feedback shaped every aspect of our programme, from workshop design to product demonstrations. The result was a more dynamic and collaborative experience that put your operational needs at the centre of our development discussions.

We've been amazed by your engagement at this year's event. Your reactions and ideas are already influencing our plans for the year ahead. The excitement you showed during our BEST Insights demonstrations and UI modernisation previews reinforced the importance of keeping you central to our development process.

Looking ahead, we're thrilled to tell you that our friends at GCAA will host the 2025 BEST User Group in Abu Dhabi from 10th-12th November 2025. We can't wait to share our progress and show you our latest innovations in this exciting location. We'll keep you updated as plans develop!

BEST User Group 2024 Review

We began the 2024 User Group by sharing our product roadmap to establish context for the discussions ahead. This presentation showed how your previous feedback has shaped our priorities and vision for BEST's future.

User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX) modernisation were also a key focus. We demonstrated our investment in user-centric design principles, aiming to match our powerful simulation capabilities with intuitive interfaces that enhance efficiency across the BEST suite.

The Future of BEST Insights

Building on the foundations laid in Amsterdam last year, we began our BEST Insights sessions by demonstrating how your suggestions have evolved into Version One of the product. Your engaged response to capabilities like enhanced instructor controls and comprehensive performance tracking showed your continued investment in this technology.

To guide future development, we structured our workshop in two stages. First, you used a limited number of stars to highlight the most valuable features of our 'blue sky' thinking posters. Then, through detailed notes, you provided use cases and insights that explained why certain features resonated with your operations.



Your feedback revealed clear priorities across both training and operational domains. Enhanced instructor control during training sessions emerged as a key focus, particularly for real-time feedback and improved instructor-pilot communication. You balanced this desire for greater control against practical workload considerations.



Performance tracking stood out as your highest priority. Your suggestions outlined its potential from regulatory assessment preparation to automated exercise selection based on student performance. This capability could provide meaningful insights across all levels of training management.

You supported expanding core capabilities while emphasising scenario management enhancement in the operational domain. This aligns with your vision for BEST Insights as a comprehensive Learning Management System (LMS) with automated feedback and regulatory integration.

Customer Satisfaction and Support Evolution

Parallel to our technical workshops, we evaluated how effectively we meet your needs across our products and services. Using individual scorecards, you rated five key areas: product quality, service quality, response time, confidence in our solutions, and overall reliability. Four areas used a 1-5 scale, with one requiring a yes/no response.

Against our ambitious target of 80% satisfaction, four out of five areas exceeded expectations. Support response time (90%)

and service quality (86%) scored particularly well, while your candid feedback highlighted clear opportunities for improvement. You identified three key areas:

- Proactive communication through mobile-accessible channels
- Simplified access to documentation through searchable manuals and video tutorials
- Improved version stability during upgrades

We're already acting on these insights by analysing version distribution and exploring the transformation of our Help Desk into a dynamic resource that better meets your needs.

These changes reflect our commitment to not just meeting your expectations, but exceeding them.

Fast Airport Builder (FAB) and Image Generation (IG)

Our final day one session showcased significant developments in our visual simulation tools. FAB's evolution to 64-bit architecture marks a key milestone,



enabling the import of high-resolution imagery exceeding 4GB to enhance airport model detail.

We demonstrated progress with undulating infrastructure - a frequently requested feature that allows runways, taxiways, and roads to match real-world terrain profiles. This development led us to create an innovative approach using Scene Editor when standard elevation data proved insufficient.

Image Generation Version 5 formed the core of our IG presentation. Our rewritten



rendering module harnesses all available CPU cores, reducing hardware requirements and costs. We also showcased the Test Panel and IG Management Console, which offer precise control over visual elements from weather effects to ambient lighting.

Your engagement in this workshop shaped clear development priorities. Discussions about transitioning to IG V5 highlighted the importance of case-by-case evaluation and parallel installation during upgrades.

Specific requests, from LVNL's need for animated wildlife to BULATSA's suggestions for improved dusk/dawn lighting, continue to guide our development.

The session concluded by addressing water accumulation on sloped surfaces - particularly relevant as we implement undulating infrastructure.

After the conference setting of day one, we brought you to our Bournemouth offices.

Starting with our traditional 'Cake Thursday' welcome - an informal opportunity to meet the wider Micro Nav team.

The morning continued with tours of our



departments, offering a chance to meet our various teams and learn how they contribute to BEST; this exercise gave you insight into our Research and Development efforts, automated testing processes, Remote Tower capabilities, and more.

Following lunch, we structured the afternoon around three focused workshops, building on our day one discussion about the product roadmap and UI/UX modernisation. These sessions examined planned updates to core components of the BEST ecosystem: Exercise Manager, Sim Manager, and Pilot Interface.

We gathered quantitative and qualitative feedback about our planned interface updates using the same methodology that proved effective in our BEST Insights workshop. Your responses combined immediate reactions with detailed suggestions, providing clear direction for developing these vital tools.

Sim Manager Workshop

The SIM Manager workshop highlighted this tool's critical role in daily operations.

Search functionality emerged as a primary focus, emphasising robust capabilities across exercises, configurations, and system settings. This aligned with your vision for session management, where you supported our proposal for a three-tiered approach categorising saves as planned events, historical records, or reusable templates - a structure supporting immediate and long-term operational needs.

Position management generated significant discussion, particularly for larger installations. You proposed dynamic interface layouts that adapt to network size alongside improved workflows for managing frequencies, weather conditions, and

exercise parameters.

The potential integration with BEST Insights and implementation of role-based access control demonstrated how SIM Manager must evolve while maintaining its core reliability.

Throughout these discussions, you emphasised the need to balance enhanced capability with improved usability - making comprehensive features more accessible through intuitive interfaces and streamlined workflows.

Pilot Interface Workshop

The Pilot Interface workshop examined enhancing training control while maintaining operational focus.

The Scripting Panel generated significant interest, emphasising granular script management - particularly the ability to pause, skip, and adjust scripts based on controller workload.

Your support for integrated pre-set messages and visual countdown indicators showed how small interface improvements could enhance training scenario management.

Aircraft Information display priorities centred on the presentation of critical flight data. You advocated for more prominent displays of essential parameters like level, heading, speed, and rate of climb, suggesting the removal of aircraft model visualisations in favour of detailed flight information. The ability to customise information panels reflected your focus on operational efficiency.

While features like note-taking and chat capabilities drew interest, you underscored avoiding distractions from core training objectives. Your insights from previous chat feature implementations helped clarify how to enhance capabilities without compromising training effectiveness.

Exercise Manager Workshop

The Exercise Manager workshop explored how to enhance this cornerstone of training delivery.

Timeline control emerged as a central focus, with requests for granular playback features and the ability to zoom through the timeline view. For complex exercises, you proposed a magnified view to handle compressed data through configurable windows, highlighting

the need for dynamic updates that show immediate changes in the interface.

Version control generated equal interest, particularly around tracking multiple actions within a session. The discussion extended to long-term version management across sessions, highlighting how maintaining exercise history and the ability to revert changes would increase confidence during scenario development.

Your additional priorities included direct map manipulation of exercise objects and automated scenario generation. Practical considerations ranged from offline tile loading for restricted networks to default communications settings for multiple airports - each suggestion emphasising how new features should enhance rather than complicate training delivery.

The 2024 BEST User Group demonstrated how collaboration drives innovation in air traffic control simulation. Your input across two days helped refine our vision for BEST's future, particularly where advanced technology must align with practical operational requirements.

Each workshop revealed distinct priorities



that will shape development.

BEST Insights showed the potential for enhanced performance tracking and instructor control.

SIM Manager discussions emphasised how improved search and session management could transform complex operations.

Exercise Manager feedback highlighted how intuitive timeline control and version management could streamline scenario development.

The Pilot Interface workshop demonstrated how targeted improvements in scripting and information display could enhance training while maintaining operational focus.

A consistent theme emerged across all discussions - the importance of balancing advanced functionality with practical usability. New features must enhance rather than complicate training delivery, supported by intuitive interfaces and seamless integration between BEST components.

Your engagement ensures our development remains grounded in practical requirements, helping us advance BEST while maintaining the high standards of safety and efficiency that define our industry.

BEST User Group 2025 Abu Dhabi, UAE

We are delighted to announce that our friends at GCAA will host the 2025 BEST User Group in Abu Dhabi from 10th to 12th November.

We look forward to reconnecting and sharing our progress in this exciting location.

If there are any topics that you would like us to explore at the User Group in 2025, please email us at bestusergroup@micronav.co.uk. Your feedback is very important to us.

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