



RICHARD WHITCOMB

Innovator (1921 - 2009)

Whitcomb was aeronautical engineer who made significant contributions to our understanding of aerodynamics. His most famous calculation is known as the "area rule" of aircraft design. Whitcomb's area rule, which is still used in modern designs, allowed aircraft manufacturers to significantly decrease the amount of drag on planes as they approach the speed of sound. He also designed 'winglets', small vertical pieces on the ends of aircraft wings that also reduce drag. Winglets are a commonplace feature on today's planes and gliders.