
Aerodynamic Characteristics of a Generic Micro-Aerial Vehicle with and without Propeller Interactions

Jasmine Warner

Supervisors: Prof. Dries Verstraete



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

School of Aerospace, Mechanical and Mechatronic Engineering
The University of Sydney

A thesis submitted to The University of Sydney in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of *Bachelor of Engineering Honours*

Jan 2022

Declaration

I, Jasmine Warner, hereby declare that this thesis submission titled *Aerodynamic Characteristics of a Generic Micro-Aerial Vehicle with and without Propeller Interactions* is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the University or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text. Specifically, the work I contributed consists of:

1. Conducting the literature review
2. Producing a 3D model of the generic micro aerial vehicle
3. Wind tunnel testing of the generic micro aerial vehicle model
4. Analysing data of wind tunnel results; and
5. Writing this thesis report.

Assistance was received from my supervisor in the areas of:

1. Distinguishing relevant literature in respect to this thesis
2. Indicating critical software required; and
3. Ameliorating this thesis through constant feedback.

Jasmine Warner
Author

Date

Prof. Dries Verstraete
Supervisor

Date

Acknowledgements

Aerodynamic Characteristics of a Generic Micro-Aerial Vehicle with and without Propeller Interactions

Abstract

Executive Summary

Table of contents

List of figures	xii
List of tables	xiii
List of abbreviations	xiv
Glossary	xv
1 Introduction	1
2 Background	4
3 Progress	5
References	7
Appendix A Work Health and Safety	9
A.1 Physical Health	10
A.2 Covid-19 precautions	11
A.3 Mental health	12

List of figures

A.1	Risk matrix.	9
A.2	Best posture at a desk.	11

List of tables

List of abbreviations

ZK Zero-Knowledge.

zk-SNARK Zero-Knowledge Succinct Non-interactive Argument of Knowledge.

ZKP Zero-Knowledge Proof.

Glossary

Verifiable Computation A recent branch in Computer Science relating to the verification of computation, possibly done by a malicious, dishonest actor.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) are used throughout various industries to conduct missions which are either dangerous, difficult or tedious for humans to perform. The development of technologies and demand for smaller aerial vehicles has led to the development of Micro aerial vehicles (MAV). MAV's will become evermore important for both commercial and military use as advancements are made in navigation systems, cooperative control of multiple MAV's, advanced vision systems, embedded computational systems and navigational systems.

UAV's have existed for centuries and have been predominately used for surveillance and military purposes. The recent shift to the miniaturization of components, systems and aerial vehicles has already influenced the military sector with several developments underway to reduce visibility of reconnaissance aircraft and reduce the likelihood of aircraft being detected during missions. (todo: add examples) What started as a small initial interest in smaller and smarter drones has resulted in exponential growth in the sector. This coupled together with the growth in camera sensors and computer development, has led to the exponential growth in the capabilities of MAV seen today. Where an initial drone supported only low camera resolution with meagre flight times, today incorporates several systems such as gyrostabilisation, GPS capability with way-point guidance, beyond the line of vision control, speeds of 70 km/h with a 30 minute flight time and a 20 megapixel camera. (DJI Phantom 4).

While MAV technology is more accessible and viable to mass market than it has ever been before, there is no fully developed and validated way to optimize a MAV for a specified mission. Procedures today involve developing a CAD model of the MAV which is either then run through aerodynamic optimization software and/or tested in a wind tunnel to determine the main characteristics of the MAV. The largest drawback of which

Introduction

is the lack of propeller effects accounted for during wind tunnel testing. Models are typically tested without a free-flowing propeller, although these have been included in several aerodynamic software programs. A lack of validation from wind tunnel testing however, means that a full understanding of the effects a propeller has on MAV's has not been conducted. Due to the small size of MAV and the large relative size of the propeller rotor disc compared to both the wing and body size it is expected that the propeller will significantly affect the stability, noise, overall endurance, performance and power consumption of a given MAV.

Today the interest, research and development of MAV's is continually increasing, however in order to focus on particular aspects or compare various designs, a "baseline" geometry is required. An example of this is the GENMAV (Air Force Research Laboratory Munitions Directorate). While there are various baseline models (todo: examples), none have completed a physical wind tunnel test while accounting for the effects of a powered propeller. The significance

Initial GENMAV aerodynamic data was determined by using the vortex-panel method (todo: brief description) and did not involve wind tunnel testing. The effects of propeller induced flow has also been studied for both fixed and free-spinning propellers but currently no data is available for wind tunnel tests of a MAV with a powered propeller(todo: ref paper).

MAV's

The objectives of this thesis are as follows:

1. To carry out a review of current published literature and determine areas with insufficient or no research available for further development and research.
2. To design and produce a 3D model of a generic micro aerial vehicle with interchangeable empennage.
3. To conduct wind tunnel testing of the generic micro aerial vehicle model with and without propeller effects.
4. To analyse data of wind tunnel results and detail the affect that propeller effects have on general micro aerial vehicles.

An outline of the proposed final submission is listed below, however is subject to change.

- Chapter 2: Background and literature review of relevant topics and research for this thesis
- Chapter 3: Proposed setup of analysis
- Chapter 4: Implementation
- Chapter 5: Results
- Chapter 6: Discussion
- Chapter 7: Conclusion

Chapter 2

Background

Chapter 3

Progress

References

Appendix A

Work Health and Safety

Work Health and Safety is a significant concern to all workers. Although seemingly simple in nature and low in risk, office jobs have their fair share of long-term health risks that must be considered. This section will analyse a number of Work Health and Safety concerns in the modern office that applies to this ESIPS placement at Accenture. Some that will be discussed include physical health, COVID-19, and mental health.

		Impact →				
		Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Significant	Severe
Likelihood ↑	Very Likely	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	High	High
	Likely	Low	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	High
	Possible	Low	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	Med Hi
	Unlikely	Low	Low Med	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi
	Very Unlikely	Low	Low	Low Med	Medium	Medium

Fig. A.1 Risk matrix. From <https://www.armsreliability.com/page/resources/blog/beyond-the-risk-matrix>.

A.1 Physical Health

In a standard office, work is often long, repetitive, and stationary. Bad posture, uncomfortable chairs, mispositioned monitors, wrist strain over cramped keyboards, poor lighting or glare are just a few of the most common risks and hazards to physical health.

At Accenture and home, the following precautions were observed:

1. Education on the proper position to work in was studied from A.2. Notably, the height of the chair is set to the appropriate height to allow feet to rest in an almost 90 deg angle, the top of the monitor edge at eye level, and the monitor slightly tilted up to equalise the distance to all corners of the screen.
2. Good chairs were selected. I purchased a Herman Miller Aeron chair for work at home, known for its world-renowned ergonomics.
3. Used a second external monitor to relieve neck strain, as it is possible to adjust the monitor's position to the optimal position. This also provided a significant productivity boost. The brightness was also adequately adjusted to bring the most comfort to the eyes.
4. A standing desk was purchased for working at home.
5. Regular breaks were taken with the team during the time at the office.
6. An ergonomic keyboard, the Kinesis Advantage 2, was used to relieve wrist strain and improve productivity with the features such as macros.

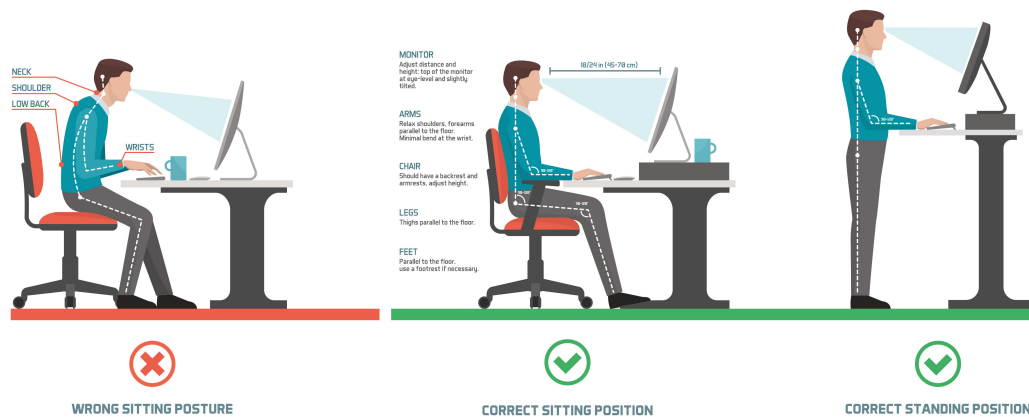


Fig. A.2 Best posture at a desk. From: <https://healthandbalance.com.au/workstation-desk-posture-ergonomics/>

Although there are many sources of long-term physical issues, these can be easily managed with awareness and mitigated effectively, resulting in a low level of risk.

A.2 Covid-19 precautions

Covid-19 has undeniably impacted the world in many ways. This highly infectious disease caused major lockdowns and shifted work from the office to the home for extended periods. In order to follow national and state requirements, Accenture and employees worked remotely and suspended office visits. Return to the office was first announced in mid-November, where a number of precautions were followed:

1. All state and national requirements were followed, including masks in public indoor areas and on transport, QR code check-ins in all locations required, and mandatory bookings for visits to the office.
2. Social distancing in all public areas.
3. Sanitising hands on every entry to the office.
4. Disallowing guest visits to the office.

Although the severity of symptoms one suffers from contracting Covid-19 vary wildly in the younger age group, the potential to be sick for a week or more, in addition to the mandatory self-isolation period, is highly disruptive to work and the greater population. As such, the threat of Covid-19 results in high risk.

A.3 Mental health

Mental health is an often under-looked part of one's health. It varies greatly from person to person, and many factors play into one's overall mental health, including social health, work-life balance, and financial status. Without careful consideration, planning and awareness of one's mental health, the employee's productivity may drop sharply.

A number of precautions were taken to care for my mental health:

1. Ensuring I was enjoying the work I was doing. I transferred internally between teams to find more exciting work that I could grow and learn in while also finding a more relevant thesis topic aligned with my interests.
2. Coming into the office when practical. Although there were many days where I was the only team member in the office, being able to experience the office, grab hot drinks in the morning with colleagues, and work in an environment separate from home was very beneficial.
3. Preventing work hours from extending into my personal time too often.

Mental health is a complex risk to quantify since it is difficult to measure and includes many factors. Overall the onus is mainly on the employee to ensure they take the proper precautions and use the available resources such as sick leave or personal time off. Particularly with the challenging program that is ESIPS, this risk is categorised as a moderate risk.