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## The Joystick Generation

For a long time, the term "toy" for model aircraft was almost an insult. Nowadays the line between playing and model flying is fairly blurred.



However, when I think of a 400 km/h jet model or a scale model painstakingly reproduced to scale in thousands of hours, the term "toy" is no longer really appropriate. So let's now look at a model flight category that really lends itself to playing – indeed, where playfulness and a relaxed attitude have become an actual philosophy. I'm talking about the very lightweight radio controlled

models made from foam that have become possible due to the miniaturisation in electric flight. They cost little and are virtually indestructible. If, nevertheless, something does break, it is quickly repaired with a few drops of superglue. Most of these electric flight models weigh between 100 and 200 grams. They are either delivered as sets with ready-cut and colourfully printed

panels of 4 to 6 mm thickness or the real freaks will follow their own imagination and cut them with a balsa knife and paint them or apply artful airbrush decorations. The speed of the smallest electric motors is accurately controlled via the radio control. Models are very responsive but fly slowly and uncritically due to their low mass. This is why indoor flying in halls has become a big trend.

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Nevertheless, they are also flown outdoors, but can only cope with light winds. Many young people have come to love this new electric flight category, not just because of the low cost involved, but also to be different from the "established model flyers" and because of a desire for freedom and independence – just freestyle, what else? Since these young people are experts at playing with joysticks and monitors in all variations, it's just a very small step to model flight simulators and from there to indoor models.

Thus we find these youths with their models soaring in halls and gardens, cheerfully dancing through the air, somersaulting and pirouetting. Nothing is impossible, one might almost think that they have defeated gravity. It is hard to motivate them for the "classic" aerobatics manoeuvres – just like snowboarders enjoy their descents away from the regular slopes while listening to music from their MP3 players. The model flight joystick generation is reluctant to follow prescribed flying patterns. But their freestyle performances with accompanying music reflect a joy of life, creativity and enthusiasm for free flying. They give us an insight into the young model flying generation – the joystick generation.

