



Pilots have to manually land planes at smaller airports | Photo source [Fin MacBrayne on Unsplash](#)

GERMAN SCIENTISTS DEVELOP ‘EYES’ FOR AUTOPILOT LANDINGS

 MOBILITY & TRANSPORT

The research has the potential to help pilots make safer landings at smaller airports

Spotted: Researchers at two German universities have developed technology to help pilots land planes safely at small airports. The vision-assisted system makes it possible for pilots to land at airports that lack ground-based systems.

Currently, pilots have to manually land planes at smaller airports. Unlike larger airports, smaller airports lack the ground-based systems that autopilot technology depends on. That means that pilots have to rely on GPS, but those signals can be inaccurate, the researchers said. That means that today, pilots have to take manual control when the plane is at an altitude of no less than 60 meters. It also means that, if visibility is poor, no planes can fly in.

Researchers at [Technology University of Munich](#) and [Technische Universität Braunschweig](#) created a system that doesn't require assistance from the ground.

The system's "eyes" are two separate cameras. The first camera operates normally. The second is an infrared camera that can provide data when visibility is low. The new system also includes custom image processing software, created by the team. The software uses the data from the cameras to determine where the aircraft is in relation to the runway.

10th July 2019

Email: presse@um.de

Website: tum.de

Takeaway:

The German research team says the technology could have a major impact on the future of aviation. Potentially, it could be used for **automated aircraft transport freight and automated flying taxis**, the team said. Industry experts believe the future of aviation is in automation, including completely automated commercial flights eventually. Springwise recently spotted a pilot program that **uses drones and autonomous farming vehicles to sow and harvest a field**.