
Tech Notes is a newsletter produced by the CATCA Technology Committee for the purpose of providing information to CATCA members regarding technology, current and future, in NAV CANADA.

Navigating Advanced Technology Together

As new and advanced technologies continue to be introduced into our operations, the role of CATCA members has never been more critical. These changes bring exciting opportunities for progress, but they also reinforce the importance of our expertise, leadership, and commitment to safety and operational excellence.

CATCA at the Table – Not Just in the Room

While it is essential that vendor representatives and technical specialists are present during the development, testing, and implementation of new systems, it must be clear: CATCA members are the operational experts. We are the ones who understand how decisions play out in a live environment and the impact on controllers, pilots, and the flying public.

Vendors bring valuable technical insight, but it is CATCA members who must be at the forefront of design decisions. No system or procedure should move forward without the input and scrutiny of the professionals who will ultimately use it every day.

DSCs and OSRs – CATCA's Technology Members

Throughout this process, CATCA members serving as Data System Coordinators (DSCs) and Operational System Requirements specialists (OSRs) are essential. They represent the operational voice of controllers in all matters involving technology. DSCs and OSRs work directly with frontline members to gather feedback, identify concerns, and bring forward practical insights to project and planning discussions. Having come from the operational floor themselves, they ensure that real-world experience and day-to-day operational realities are fully considered in broader decisions.

Everyone Has a Role—And That Matters

Successful integration of new technology requires collaboration from all sides—operations, engineering, vendors, management, and training. Each group has a defined role that contributes to the larger mission.

- Vendors provide the systems and technical support.
- Engineers and project teams guide implementation and compliance.
- CATCA members
 - Frontline controllers contribute operational expertise of their specialty or unit and ensure safety and practicality remain at the core of every decision.
 - DSCs and OSRs bring together the specialty/unit contributions to a common singular requirement and ensure CATCA members' frontline voices are clearly and consistently represented and considered throughout the process.

It is important that each of us stays within our intended role. When individuals or groups step outside their expertise—intentionally or not—it can create confusion, compromise safety, and slow progress. Respecting defined responsibilities is not about limiting input but about strengthening collaboration through clarity.

Why Your Voice Matters

Whether you are directly involved in development sessions, participating in trials, providing feedback, or working operational shifts, you have a role to play. Sharing observations, raising concerns, and offering insight from the operational floor ensures that the final product reflects real-world needs—not just theory or software design.

Moving Forward Together

As technology continues to evolve, so will our operations. Let's embrace innovation with confidence—rooted in our professionalism and collective expertise. By ensuring CATCA members remain at the forefront of design and decision-making, supported by the advocacy of DSCs and OSRs, and by respecting each other's roles, we will continue to shape a safer, smarter future for air traffic control in Canada.

Comment from CATCA Technology Committee

As new systems like iTEC are introduced and developed, it is essential that DSCs and OSRs are fully engaged throughout the process. At times, engineers or developers may approach individual controllers for direction or feedback. Keep in mind that they may be seeking information that could influence decisions at a national level—not just within your specialty or unit.

When this happens, it is important to refer them to the appropriate DSC or OSR. These CATCA members have a broader operational perspective, understand both regional and national requirements, and are best positioned to speak to the technological impacts on frontline operations. Their expertise helps ensure that any decisions or guidance reflect the bigger picture and support the needs of all members.

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If you have questions or would like more information about ATS technology or CATCA technology roles, please contact any member of the CATCA Technology Committee or email techcommittee@catca.ca

Technology is a useful servant but a dangerous master. ~ Christian Lous Lange