

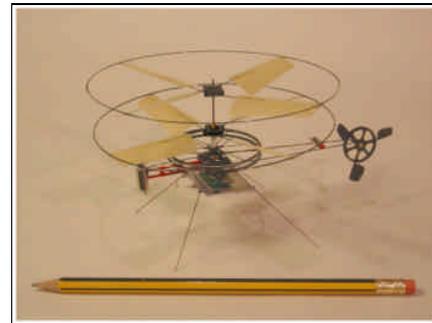
The Evolution

What is more satisfying for creative people than to realize steps of innovation and progress that seem to inspire a large community? The answer is simple: Nothing. Both Alexander Van de Rostyne and Petter Muren are in this league.

Alexander has been putting Micro helicopters on the world map starting 1997 with his first Pixel 1. First successful flights took place on April 9th in his home in Belgium. This was a fully functional autonomous radio controlled helicopter with a take-off weight of 125 grams. Those days, a 'normal' remote controlled helicopter weighed somewhere between 5 and 10 pounds, 2 to 5 kilograms. It started a rat race to go lighter and lighter. Six years and 20 prototypes later, the just released Pixelito is still a 4 channel fully functional helicopter. Weight is down to 6.9 grams now. That is almost 20 times lighter than the Pixel 1. It uses the swashplate-less, servo-less control system that he developed and patented. In the meantime, Alexander developed the world famous Piccolo for Ikarus. This created a new category of radio-controlled helicopters. They are economical, battery powered, very crash resistant, can be flown anywhere, anytime and are just cute.



Creating a new category that is what Petter Muren from Norway did too with his Proxflyer. Petter's ambition was not to make a helicopter. He wanted something very stable, easy to fly, using rotors. That is exactly what he accomplished. For the first time ever. A dual coaxial rotor, a clever aerodynamical and mechanical setup, combined with some lateral thinking, lead to a new and different type of flying vehicle. It was first released to the public eyes in 2003 in a 120-gram version. Over the last 5 years many prototypes and consecutive refinements had been developed almost undisclosed, with Petter hiding close to the Norwegian fjords. Petter too patented his concept. And he too ended up with his newest Proxflyer Micron at 6.9 grams.



So are these two cute little things competing for glory? Not according to Petter and Alexander. The Proxflyer Micron has unequalled stability, but has somewhat limited 2 channel controllability. The Pixelito has everything a 'real' helicopter has, including the challenge to the pilot. They are both unique, both very refined implementations of very different concepts.

Petter and Alexander met in October 2003 for the weekend at Alexander's place in Belgium. They are convinced that this was a rare encounter of two men who spend hours, days, years of brain cell effort in unraveling rotor theory seen through the eyes of a non-academic's mind. That weekend they took up the challenge together to go for something that would at least surprise a few, hopefully please many. That was the beginning of the development of the Pixelito and the Proxflyer Micron. They kept each other informed about the progress by e-mail. And they decided not to compete for the same spot. So they both froze the spec at 6.9 grams, each of them being convinced that there is plenty of room to go even lower.

That is why these two little animals have been disclosed at the same time, as the imperfect twins. It's a matter of elegance and respect. Of winners without losers. Of pride without deception. Of showing what creativity and craftsmanship can bring to all of us.

Of course this is not the end, and the quest for progress will go on. By Alexander and Petter, and by many others out there.

It does to objects what it does to people: it's called Evolution