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[Hacker Delivers Fatal Blow to Major Flight Sim Website](#)

AVSIM's servers destroyed with no offline backups to restore from



AVSIM website
destroyed by hackers
AVSIM

The flight simulation community is in shock after one of its biggest sources of information has been hit and probably destroyed for good by unknown parties. The victim website, Avsim.com, had some 60,000 members and housed 12 years worth of resources for flight enthusiasts.

On the ill-fated hour of 10:00 p.m. EDT on May 12, the AVSIM was knocked offline, putting its admins on alert for the first time in almost 13 years. It is an understatement to say that the damage they found was serious.

"During the early evening yesterday, we noticed that some alarming things were starting to happen on our servers. The first sign of an issue was that some functionality disappeared on our web server. That progressed to not being able to access the web server via FTP or SSH. Finally, the web/forum server tripped offline. Next the library/email server started to exhibit issues. We went in to reboot it, and that is when it failed entirely. The partitions on both of the servers had been removed," Tom Allensworth, the website's founder, [wrote](#).

Launched back in 1996, Avsim.com focused mainly on resources for the Microsoft Flight Simulation application. Along with Flightsim.com, it grew to be one of the largest flight sim websites, which hosted community-built aircraft models, scenery, sounds, missions and utilities.

Answering to the obvious "weren't there any backups?" question, Allensworth explained that, "Yes, we dutifully backed up our servers every day. Unfortunately, we backed up the servers between our two servers. The hacker took out both servers, destroying our ability to use one or the other back-up to remedy the situation."

That might sound like a rookie mistake to some, as backing up to an offline and off-site location is considered to be the standard procedure, which also has the benefit of preventing data loss caused by physical disasters at the main storage facility. However, Allensworth maintained that, "Over 12 years of very secure operation and no successful attacks kind of indicated to me that our approach was at least working."

As it stands now, it is highly uncertain that AVSIM will ever be able to recover from the blow, leaving its community in disarray. "AVSIM is totally offline at this time and we expect to be so for some time to come. We are not able to predict when we will be back online, if we can come back at all," an official announcement reads. One thing is clear from the many comments received, though, the flight sim mob wants heads to start rolling.