Boeing Completes Ground-breaking Autonomous Teaming Flights

Flight tests in Queensland validated the company's advanced autonomous technology

AUSTRALIA, Dec 2, 2020 – Boeing [NYSE:BA] recently completed flight tests with five high-performance surrogate jets operating autonomously in a team at the new Queensland Flight Test Range in Cloncurry, Australia.

Boeing's advanced autonomy technology, including on-board command and control and data sharing capabilities, were tested using the 3.4-meter (11-foot) aircraft.

"The tests demonstrated our success in applying artificial intelligence algorithms to 'teach' the aircraft's brain to understand what is required of it," said Emily Hughes, director of Phantom Works International. "The data link capabilities enabled the aircraft to communicate with the other platforms so that they could collaborate to achieve a mission."

Testing lasted 10 days, with aircraft incrementally added until the five operated together. During testing, the aircraft reached speeds of 270 kilometers (167 miles) per hour.

"With the size, number and speed of aircraft used in the test, this is a very significant step for Boeing and industry in the progress of autonomous mission systems technology," Hughes said.

The activity was the final milestone delivered in partnership with the Queensland government as part of Boeing's Advanced Queensland Autonomous Systems Platform Technology Project. During the project, Boeing has worked with over 90 personnel from a number of small-to-medium enterprises including RFDesigns, Amber Technology Ltd., Premier Box, McDermott Aviation and Five Rings Aerospace.

Technology and capabilities proven under this program will form part of the Boeing Airpower Teaming System and future Boeing autonomous platforms.

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