



## Clearing the Flight Path: How COPA.fyi is Guiding Cirrus Pilots

by Laurie Einstein Koszuta



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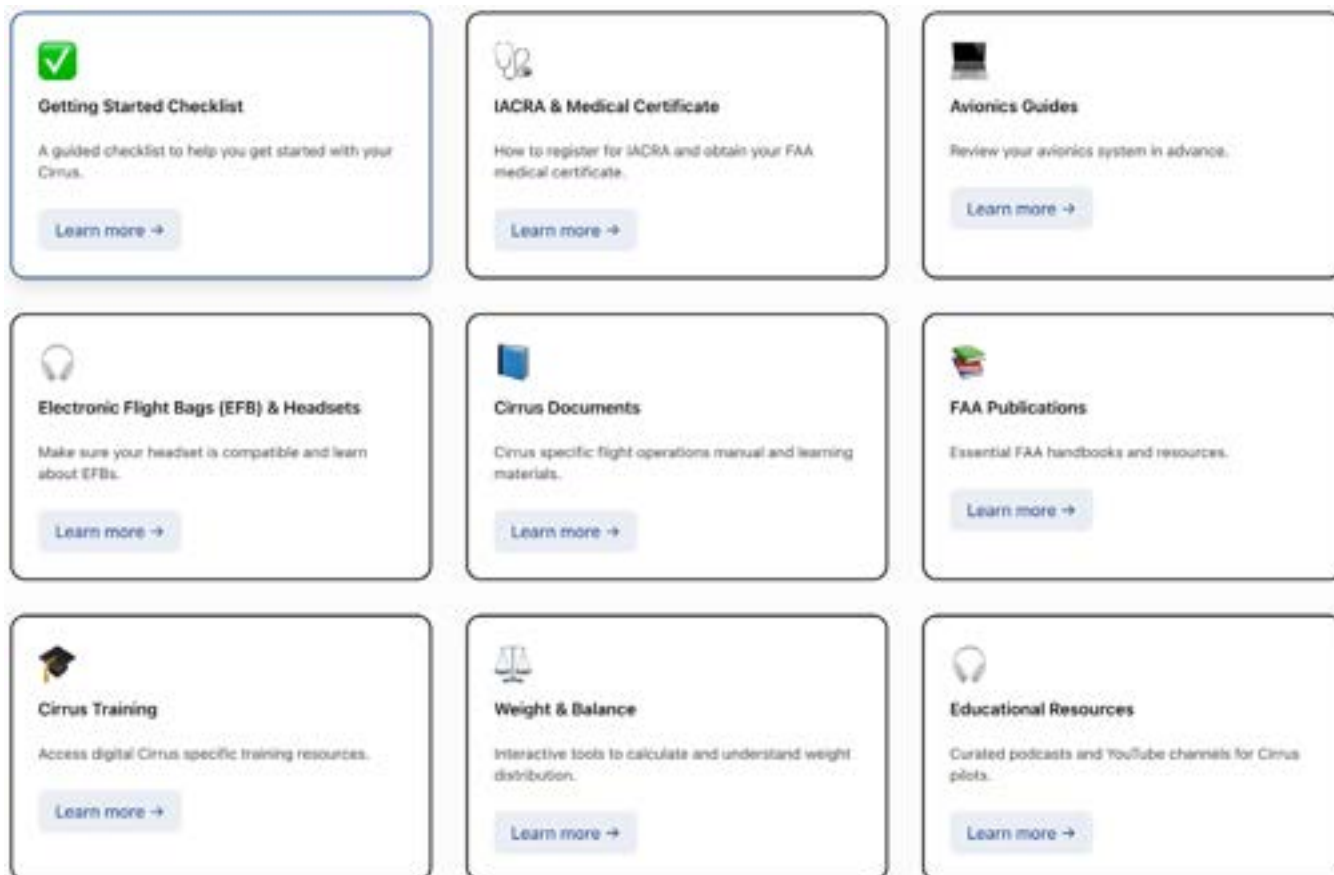
**When Marty Goodman, a Cirrus owner and Training Center Instructor (TCI) out of San Diego, California, began training new Cirrus pilots, he noticed a familiar pattern of confusion, frustration and wasted time.** The stumbling block wasn't flight maneuvers or ground school material; instead, the trainees were getting stuck trying to navigate the scattered maze of aviation resources online.

Students struggled to find the most basic information, including selecting the correct class of medical certificate, scheduling an exam, registering with the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Integrated Airman Certification and Rating Application (IACRA), choosing the right headset or locating the correct aircraft and avionics manuals. And it wasn't just new students that had trouble; even experienced pilots admitted they didn't always know where to find essential information related to aviation or the Cirrus aircraft they were flying.

Determined to streamline the onboarding process, Goodman began compiling links into a simple Excel spreadsheet that included resources to FAA materials, Cirrus information, Garmin guides, checklists and more.

"I thought it would be easier if I just gathered everything, put it in one place and then emailed it to my students as needed," Goodman explained. "It was really just a quick spreadsheet at first."

That may have been true, but it marked the beginning of something that would grow much larger.



**The intent** of creating COPA.fyi was to offer a streamlined entry point and to connect Cirrus pilots to “vetted, high-quality resources,” portrayed above.

## A Community Effort Takes Shape

At the 2024 COPA Migration in Scottsdale, Arizona, Goodman attended a session where longtime safety expert Rick Beach highlighted a troubling trend: a high percentage of Cirrus-related fatalities involved non-COPA members. It was a statistic that Goodman found sobering.

“I raised my hand and asked if there was a way for COPA to be more intentional in connecting new pilots to the resources they needed,” he recalled. “Since I already had the information in a spreadsheet, I suggested we rebrand it as a COPA document and then distribute it as a printed card or digital file.” The idea was that introducing new pilots to COPA early in their training with something of value may encourage them to join COPA and begin their Cirrus journey with a safety-focused mindset.

Kelly Nimmo-Guenther, a COPA board member who was sitting in on that session, heard Goodman’s idea and immediately saw the potential of how information can increase safety. She spoke with Goodman after the session, and within days, secured board approval to form an exploratory task force.

The task force consisted of board member Peter Brown (technical lead and site developer), Ethan Narber (director of COPA operations), Nathan Barnes (managing producer for COPA Studios), Nimmo-Guenther and Goodman.

After Brown reviewed Goodman’s spreadsheet, he proposed a more ambitious idea. “I thought what Marty had was good,” Brown said, “but I thought it would have more value as a user-friendly website and mobile platform designed to walk a new Cirrus pilot through every early and necessary step.”

Narber added, “Member feedback is always important to us, but this idea was certainly one of the larger initiatives COPA has brought from concept to reality. What started as an idea at Migration quickly evolved into a coordinated team effort.”

Over the next two months, the basic concept evolved rapidly. The team met weekly to refine the platform and actively solicit feedback from CSIPs and TCIs nationwide.

“That instructor feedback-driven development made the tool even stronger,” said Nimmo-Guenther. “Platinum CSIP Ed Watters sat with me for two and a half hours going through the whole thing,” Nimmo-Guenther said. “We took every bit of feedback seriously. We wanted to know what information was missing, what we could add and how to make it as useful as possible. Our goal was always to ensure COPA.fyi offered everything a new or even an experienced Cirrus pilot might need.”

Based on the input, Brown built a working prototype within a week. Soon, COPA.fyi had grown into a free mobile and online hub offering Cirrus pilots everything they need to get started. It included access to:

- FAA publications and handbooks
- IACRA and medical certificate guidance
- Cirrus SR series documents and quick reference guides
- Avionics manuals
- Weight and balance tools
- Checklists and pilot operating handbooks
- Cirrus and COPA training

“It wasn’t about duplicating information,” Brown explained. “It was about creating a trusted, centralized destination.”

“We partnered with Cirrus Global Flight Training Manager, Karl Fischbach, to send out a welcome letter to their entire roster of current CSIPs and TCIs about COPA.fyi,” said Nimmo-Guenther. Having Cirrus and COPA join in spreading the word on this useful and free tool really helps advance the common goals of commitment to excellence and safety.”

## What’s in a Name?

The project even got a lucky break with the name COPA.fyi.

“Erik Gunderson, COPA’s immediate past president, had already registered the domain COPA.fyi,” Nimmo-Guenther said. “When we found that out, it was perfect. COPA.fyi fits as a hub for everything new and experienced pilots need to know.”

## Training, Not Sales

Goodman was clear about the platform’s intent. “It’s not a marketing tool for aircraft sales,” he said and then emphasized, “Its sole purpose is to enhance training, improve safety outcomes and increase pilot preparedness by offering a streamlined entry point and connect Cirrus pilots to vetted, high-quality resources.”

The site is also not meant to replace COPA’s forums or member-only content. “We’re committed to owning and further advancing COPA.fyi long-term,” Nimmo-Guenther confirmed. “Peter has developed a feedback button, where users can share any additional ideas for improving the site.”

“We quickly realized that COPA.fyi wasn’t going to be just a helpful list. It could be a bridge into the COPA community, especially for new Cirrus pilots who might not know COPA exists,” Nimmo-Guenther emphasized. “This is a win-win-win. It helps COPA grow, supports Cirrus training centers and most importantly, promotes pilot safety. This is the kind of resource Cirrus instructors and their students can use immediately.”

## Spreading the Word

To support the rollout, COPA is launching a broad awareness campaign featuring:

- Articles and announcements across COPA’s channels
- Direct outreach to Cirrus Training Centers nationwide
- Live presentations at CPPP (Cirrus Pilot Proficiency Program) events
- A promotional video by TJ Shembekar showcasing site features
- A Cirrus welcome letter for CSIPs and TCIs
- A 50% one-year COPA membership discount within the app to convert early users into members

Even the soft launch showed promise.

“I had a student who I wanted to enroll in Cirrus Approach, as well as have him obtain operating handbooks,” said Goodman. “I introduced him to the COPA.fyi application, and when he came back the next week, he said, ‘I didn’t have time to do anything yet, but I did join COPA.’”

To Goodman and the team that was proof of immediate value, as there are many ways for COPA members to learn and grow, increasing safety for them and everyone in the skies.

Explore COPA.fyi today, whether you’re a new or experienced pilot. You will find valuable information no matter your proficiency level, and be sure to share with other pilots and instructors.

*This first launch of the site is dedicated to the memory of Kevin Slatnik, who inspired Marty to become a TCI, founded the Coast Cirrus Platinum Center at KMYF and was taken from us far too early.* ➦