POLITECNICO DI TORINO
Repository ISTITUZIONALE

An Extended Reality-based Platform for Digital Twin applications in Urban Air Mobility and Advanced Air Mobility: Framework proposed within MOST Project

Original
An Extended Reality-based Platform for Digital Twin applications in Urban Air Mobility and Advanced Air Mobility: Framework proposed within MOST Project / De Crescenzio, F., Gomes Araujo, M., Bagassi, S., Lamberti, F., Prattico', F.G., Accardo, D., Conte, C., Sabatino, L., Bazzani, M.. - 69:(2026), pp. 1559-1562. (10th CEAS Aerospace Europe Conference Torino (IT) 1-4 Dicembre 2025) [10.21741/9781644904251-273].

Availability:
This version is available at: 11583/3005577 since: 2025-12-01T15:30:20Z

Publisher:
Materials Research Forum

Published
DOI:10.21741/9781644904251-273

Terms of use:

This article is made available under terms and conditions as specified in the corresponding bibliographic description in the repository

Publisher copyright

(Article begins on next page)

17 September 2026

Materials Research Proceedings 69 (2026) 1559-1562 https://doi.org/10.21741/9781644904251-273

An Extended Reality-based Platform for Digital Twin applications in Urban Air Mobility and Advanced Air Mobility: Framework proposed within MOST Project

Francesca DE CRESCENZIO[1,a] , Millene GOMES ARAUJO[1,b *], Sara BAGASSI[1,c], Fabrizio LAMBERTI[2,d], Filippo Gabriele PRATTICO'[2,e], Domenico ACCARDO[3,f], Claudia CONTE[3,g], Lorenza SABATINO[4,h] and Marco BAZZANI[4,i]

[1]Department of Industrial Engineering, University of Bologna, Italy

[2]Department of Control and Computer Engineering, Polytechnic of Turin, Italy

[3]Department of Industrial Engineering, University of Naples Federico II, Italy

[4]Teoresi Group, Italy

[a]francesca.decrescenzio@unibo.it, [b]millene.gomesaraujo@unibo.it, [c]sara.bagassi@unibo.it, [d]fabrizio.lamberti@polito.it, [e]gabriele.prattico@polito.it, [f]domenico.accardo@unina.it, [g]claudia.conte2@unina.it, [h]lorenza.sabatino@teoresigroup.com, [i]marco.bazzani@teoresigroup.com

Keywords: Digital Twin Platform, Extended Reality, Urban Air Mobility, Advanced Air Mobility, Unmanned Aerial Systems

Abstract. Urban Air Mobility (UAM) is currently emerging as innovative mobility solution for urban transport. To ensure its seamless integration into existing systems, advanced simulation frameworks are strongly needed. Extended Reality (XR) technologies offer powerful tools to support such simulations. This paper presents a suite of Extended Reality-based integrated simulation and interaction platforms for multipurpose testing of UAM through Digital Twins of missions and scenarios. The platforms combine various hardware and software infrastructures and components, including the IRIS Cave Automatic Virtual Environment (CAVE), an eVTOL passenger simulator, and an Augmented Reality application for drone-based aircraft maintenance. Developed within the framework of the MOST – Sustainable Mobility Project, these platforms aim to support diverse use cases and contribute to the safe and efficient integration of UAM systems.

Introduction

In the context of rapid technological advancements and increasing digitalization of systems, the airspace domain is moving towards new solutions such as Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) and Urban Air Mobility (UAM). AAM is enabled by electric take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft and Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and UAM refers to its implementation in urban scenarios [1]. These innovative aerial operations are expected to enhance the overall efficiency and sustainability of airspace systems. However, their integration into existing environments poses significant challenges related to safety, infrastructure development, and public acceptance. To address these challenges, a collaborative approach among the various stakeholders involved in this emerging transportation ecosystem is essential for achieving full-scale deployment. One key aspect of this process involves sharing information and data within realistic visualization and interactive environments. In this regard, the use of Extended Reality (XR) technologies for visualizing Digital Twins (DT) of aircraft and/or operational scenarios offers a promising path to support stakeholders, providing comprehensive, high-fidelity environments for prediction,

Content from this work may be used under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 license. Any further distribution of this work must maintain attribution to the author(s) and the title of the work, journal citation and DOI. Published under license by Materials Research Forum LLC.

Materials Research Proceedings 69 (2026) 1559-1562 https://doi.org/10.21741/9781644904251-273

monitoring, and decision-making [2]. In the aerospace domain, DT applications have already been carried out across different areas such as aircraft design and development, manufacturing, operation and maintenance [3]. Further applications have been proposed in the context of Urban Air Mobility, such as exploring ground infrastructure location and aerial corridors [4] and supporting airspace management [5]. Although there exists no consensus on the formal definition of a DT, most reputable research shares the commonality that a DT is a cyber-physical system consist of at least three components: a physical system, a virtual model and their interactions [2][6][7]. Extended Reality (XR) Technologies, including VR (Virtual Reality), AR (Augmented Reality) and MR (Mixed Reality), enable seamless human–Digital Twin interaction by blending real and digital content, integrating high-fidelity simulation modules, and fostering collaboration among users [9]. Building upon these concepts, this work presents a modular and collaborative XR-based platform for Digital Twin visualization and interaction, developed through close cooperation between academic and industrial partners within the framework of the MOST – Sustainable Mobility Project.

XR-based Simulation Platform for Digital Twin applications in AAM and UAM

In the MOST Project, an XR multisensory simulator supports the need of a convergence place for safe AAM and UAM simulation and interaction and has ultimately two main goals: i. to integrate multi-layered DT capabilities in three-dimensional DT models of UAM and AAM missions; ii. To enable a realistic, collaborative and interactive user experience through simulation platforms designed to the analysis of DTs. The proposed simulation framework has been deployed, in both software and hardware infrastructure, to different facilities of project partners and has the capability to support and simulate multiple use-cases including eVTOL passenger transport, AR drone-enhanced aircraft maintenance and public acceptance. The overall hardware-software architecture of the XR multisensory simulator is depicted in *Figure 1*.

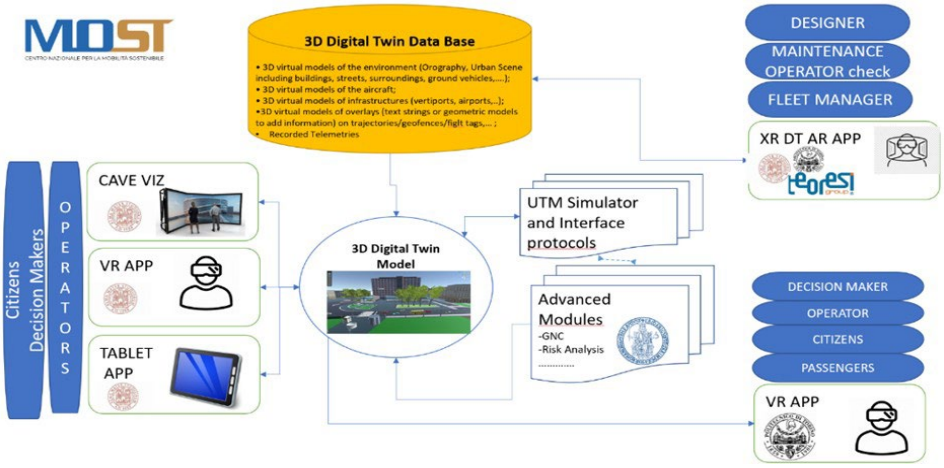

Figure 1 *The overall suite XR-based simulation platforms for Digital Twin visualization and interaction developed in the framework of MOST - Sustainable Mobility Project.*

The architecture of such XR Platform follows a modular design and is built upon the creation of a virtual scene composed of different data layers that can be combined between themselves and deployed according to the desired application. These layers are the Digital Twin Model layer, in which the three-dimensional models of the individual objects for each layer are integrated, including high-fidelity 3D models of eVTOLs and drones, urban environments and its components (e.g. buildings, streets, ground vehicles, terrain data), infrastructure dedicated to UAM (known as *vertiports*), overlays (text strings or geometric models to add information) and the recorded trajectories and paths database; The XR Visualization layer, that provides the XR Human Machine

Materials Research Proceedings 69 (2026) 1559-1562 https://doi.org/10.21741/9781644904251-273

Interface through which the application will be experienced and interacted to by the user and the Integration and Simulation Engine layer: responsible for managing layer interaction logics and data communication with external simulators or telemetry sources.

The MOST XR Platform modules

IRIS – Immersive Reconfigurable Innovative System is a unique cutting-edge immersive simulation infrastructure that allows users to experience Virtual Reality applications within an environment projected onto the walls of a room-sized cube (See Figure 2). The facility installed at the University of Bologna site in Forlì, leverages key features such as *immersion*, enabled by multiple projectors displaying high-resolution three-dimensional environments and *interaction*, enabled by input devices (e.g. tracking systems). A simulator aiming at replicating onboard flight experience from the point of view of passengers was developed by the Polytechnic of Turin (See Figure 3). The simulator reproduces an autonomous or piloted UAS mission under different visibility conditions (e.g. clear daylight, clear nighttime, cloudy with rain and foggy scenarios), during which other UAM traffic is visible to the user.

Figure 2 Immersive Reconfigurable Innovative System (IRIS) Cave platform in its open configuration displaying the Digital Twin model of Fuorigrotta, Naples, developed within MOST Project.

Figure 4 Passenger view from the UAV Passenger Simulator.

Aircraft maintenance activities can benefit from Augmented Reality interfaces due to the high level of interaction intrinsic of such procedures [10]. An AR interface to enhance drone-based maintenance and inspection procedures was proposed by Teoresi (See Figure 4*).* The system primarily focuses on enhancing real-time situation awareness by leveraging Augmented Reality to display telemetry data (e.g. battery status, aircraft position and key metrics) to remote drone operators while executing predefined aircraft inspection activities. As the operator can visualize key information to support efficient and informed decisions. The ultimate goal is to boost precision, responsiveness and overall effectiveness of airport inspection and maintenance tasks through AR-enabled workflows. To demonstrate the capability of supporting the smooth integration of AAM and UAM into the current airspace scenario, the various infrastructures and components of the XR framework were tested through a series of pilot cases integrating advanced simulation modules, such as and the risk analysis framework developed by the University of Naples and the Unmanned Traffic Management simulator provided by TopView through Cascade Funding. A further module is the Simultaneous XR simulator for airport scenarios immersive experience provided by TXT through cascade fundings.

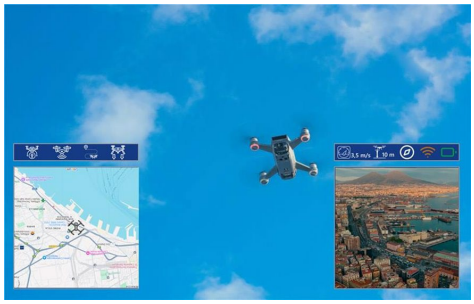

Figure 3 The AR for AR-enhanced aircraft maintenance.

Conclusion

AAM and UAM are promising concepts for the future of aerial transportation; however, further efforts are still required to ensure their effective integration into existing airspace systems. To this end, this paper has presented an XR-based platform designed for Digital Twin (DT) applications in UAM and AAM simulation. Three hardware components have been developed: the IRIS immersive system, the eVTOL passenger simulator, and an AR enhanced, drone-based maintenance application. The proposed simulation framework demonstrates the potential of bridging XR technologies and DTs, not only as tools for visualization and interaction but also as a foundation for informed decision-making among UAM and AAM stakeholders.

Acknowledgments

This study was carried out within the MOST – Sustainable Mobility National Research Center and received funding from the European Union Next-Generation EU (PIANO NAZIONALE DI RIPRESA E RESILIENZA (PNRR) – MISSIONE 4 COMPONENTE 2, INVESTIMENTO 1.4 – D.D. 1033 17/06/2022, CN00000023). This manuscript reflects only the authors' views and opinions, neither the European Union nor the European Commission can be considered responsible for them.

References

[1] EASA Pro – European Union Aviation Safety Agency on htpp://www.easa.europa.eu/en/what-is-uam. Accessed on: 25/10/2025.

[2] Liu, Y.K., Ong, S.K. & Nee, A.Y.C. State-of-the-art survey on digital twin implementations. Adv. Manuf. **10**, 1–23 (2022). https://doi.org/10.1007/s40436-021-00375-w

[3] Z, H. & Wang, L.. (2020). Application and Development Prospect of Digital Twin Technology in Aerospace. IFAC-PapersOnLine. 53. 732-737. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ifacol.2021.04.165

[4] Brunelli, M.; Ditta, C.C.; Postorino, M.N. A Framework to Develop Urban Aerial Networks by Using a Digital Twin Approach. Drones 2022, 6, 387.

[5] K. Namuduri, "Digital Twin Approach for Integrated Airspace Management With Applications to Advanced Air Mobility," in IEEE Open Journal of Vehicular Technology, vol. 4, pp. 693-700, 2023.

[6] F. Tao, H. Zhang, A. Liu and A. Y. C. Nee, "Digital Twin in Industry: State-of-the-Art," in IEEE Transactions on Industrial Informatics, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 2405-2415, April 2019.

[7] Roland Rosen, Georg von Wichert, George Lo, Kurt D. Bettenhausen,About The Importance of Autonomy and Digital Twins for the Future of Manufacturing, IFAC-PapersOnLine, vol. 48, 3, 2015, pp567-572.

[8] Qinglin Qi, Fei Tao, Tianliang Hu, Nabil Anwer, Ang Liu, Yongli Wei, Lihui Wang, A.Y.C. Nee, Enabling technologies and tools for digital twin, Journal of Manufacturing Systems, vol. 58, Part B, 2021, pp 3-21.

[9] Lorenzo Stacchio, Alessia Angeli, Gustavo Marfia, Empowering digital twins with eXtended reality collaborations, Virtual Reality & Intelligent Hardware, vol. 4, 6, 2022, pp 487-505.

[10] Eschen, Henrik & Kötter, Tobias & Rodeck, Rebecca & Harnisch, Martin & Schüppstuhl, Thorsten. (2018). Augmented and Virtual Reality for Inspection and Maintenance Processes in the Aviation Industry. Procedia Manufacturing. 19. 156-163. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.promfg.2018.01.022