Cleaning Up All Those Wires in the Cockpit
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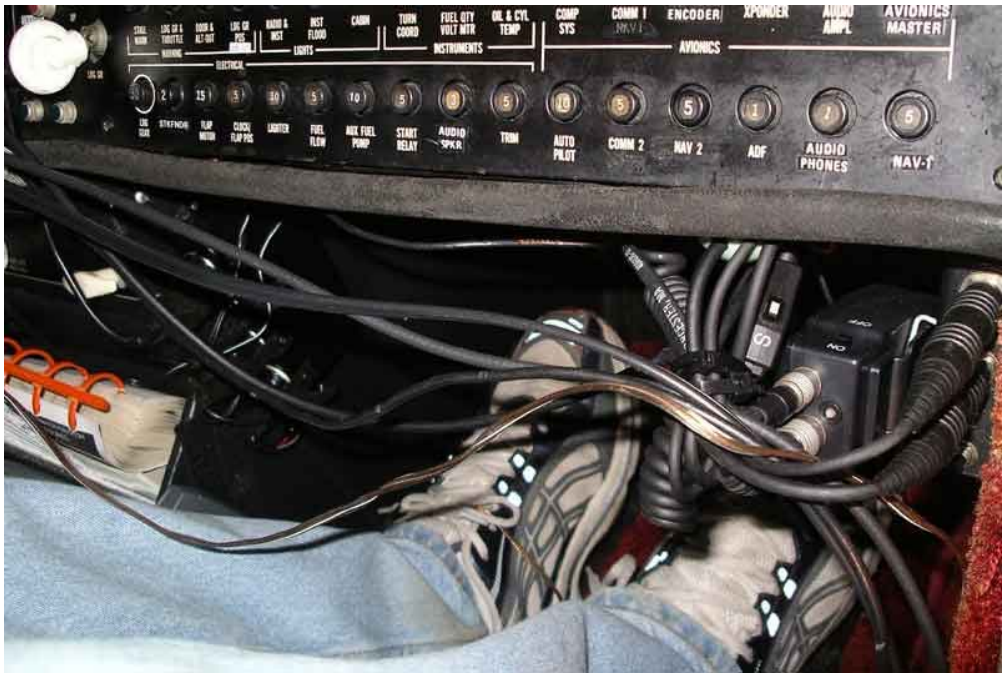
Pilots these days have many wonderful devices to help us as we aviate, navigate and communicate. The problem is these devices are electronic and either require batteries or power from the accessory/cigar jack. With the first device you plug into the accessory jack, the problem begins. Namely, the challenge is routing the wire from the accessory jack to the GPS, headset, intercom, etc. This problem compounds with the second device and becomes a nightmare with the third. Doing anything that is permanent, besides not meeting the FAA requirements for installed equipment, just makes it more difficult come annual time to get all that stuff out of there for the inspection. Then, the fun of putting it all back in! Still, it would be great if all these accessories and wires could be neatly and safely installed in a way that all these gadgets we have grown to depend on work when we need them. Does your cockpit look like this? If so, then read on.



We have been using a technique for neat temporary wiring that keeps the wires out of the way and is quick and easy to remove and reinstall for the annual. The secret – Velcro, good ole' hook and loop fasteners. Here is how we do it.

If you have more than one device to power from your accessory jack, you will need a power splitter. There are several different types available. I don't recommend the 2-way splitters with wires to two jacks because that just leaves two large plugs dangling in the air. Power splitters mounted in a plastic box make for a cleaner installation. The box can be mounted on a flat surface with Velcro or double sided tape as shown in the photo of a 4-way power splitter mounted in our Citabria. The splitter is mounted with

clips on the back of the splitter that slide under the upholstery. It powers a GPS, noise canceling headset (below in photo) and an Alternator Status Indicator and Alarm (above right in photo). We still have one slot in the splitter for a future noise canceling headset for the rear seat. The wires in the upper right side of the photo, the GPS power and Telex headset wires, are cleanly dressed out of the way using Velcro as described below.

Use a length of ¾ inch hook and loop material. Place the hook material, that's the one with a rough surface, on or under the panel where you want to run the wires. Run it the whole length of the panel where the wire will run. Cut the loop material, soft surface material, lengthwise into a 3/8 inch wide strip of material. Cut this into one-inch lengths and wrap them in a spiral around the wire at six inch intervals and anywhere else it is needed to hold wires out of the way. The wires can be routed along the hook material to the destination. The photos below illustrate the results where the handheld GPS antenna wire runs along the radio stack in a Bonanza.

The extra Velcro width can be used to hold pencils or other items to the panel as shown in the photo.

The results are shown in the photo below. Note, the wires on the right are for the David Clark noise canceling headset that uses a QC Avionix BE-9 battery eliminator. The power wire, of course, is not visible!

The material created for outer space is also the key to a clean and safe inner cockpit space. Try it.