

Vodafone has announced the commencement of trials of the world's first air traffic control drone tracking and safety technology. Vodafone's pioneering approach uses innovative 4G Internet of Things (IoT) technology to protect aircraft from catastrophic accidents as well as prevent inadvertent or criminal drone incursions at sensitive locations such as airports, prisons and hospitals. This technology was unveiled at the Mobile World Congress 2018 in Barcelona.

Commercial civilian drones are too small to be tracked by conventional radar. They present a serious risk to pilots worldwide, particularly in the immediate vicinity of airfields and airports. Drones are also used for criminal purposes such as drug smuggling and delivering contraband to prisoners. Additionally, security and intelligence services are increasingly concerned that terrorists could use drones adapted to carry small but lethal explosive payloads to attack locations targeted using GPS.

Vodafone has developed the world's first radio positioning system (RPS) for drones. The Vodafone RPS is combined with Artificial Intelligence algorithms that have also been developed by Vodafone to enable a large numbers of drones to be tracked and controlled remotely. Vodafone has placed its RPS research and associated intellectual property in the public domain with no licensing fees for re-use in order to accelerate the pace of drone safety and geo-location innovation worldwide.

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