

SEPTEMBER 2025



VOL.2 - ISSUE 11

Newsletter from The Commercial Aviation Association of Southern Africa NPC

From our CEO

The developing Algorithmic Trap needs urgent attention if we wish to heal our world

This thought piece would typically have an aviation slant; however, with recent ongoings, I thought it pertinent to focus briefly on a concern that I see evolving like a cancer.

Now, while I have my own views on activists and have both commonalities and direct differences of opinion, I am and remain an advocate of the freedom of speech. The worst leader is one who enjoys only confirmatory support - there needs to be objection and diverse opinion to evolve critical thought. Strong opposition is a significant necessity, especially in this new age.

In an era where billions of people carry a smartphone within reach almost every moment of the day, social media has become not just a pastime, but the primary lens through which much of society experiences the world. Platforms like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube do not merely present information neutrally; their algorithms decide what users see, shaping perceptions of reality itself.

This invisible hand of curation is not benign. Increasingly, it has become clear that algorithm-driven content selection fosters polarisation, isolates individuals from divergent viewpoints, and entrenches hostility across racial, political, and religious lines.

When combined with the psychological vulnerabilities of users, the result is a dangerous cocktail: one that breeds antagonism, diminishes empathy, encourages violence as a perceived solution, and even accelerates sociopathic withdrawal from society.

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Lead Partner

The recent **assassination of a U.S. conservative activist, Charlie Kirk**, underscores how online-fuelled polarisation can spill into tragic real-world violence. While the motivations of individuals are always complex, it is undeniable that the ecosystems of division cultivated by social media algorithms create fertile ground for such acts.

How Algorithms Divide and Conquer

At the heart of the problem are algorithms optimised not for truth, balance, or understanding, but for engagement. We measure engagement in clicks, shares, watch time, and comments – metrics that strongly correlate with emotionally charged content. Outrage, fear, and tribal loyalty keep people scrolling longer than calm or nuanced discussions.

As a result, platforms increasingly expose users to content that validates their existing worldview while vilifying opposing perspectives. Algorithms feed a conservative-leaning user an unbroken stream of right-wing media clips, memes mocking liberals, and warnings about cultural decline.

A progressive user sees content framing conservatives as oppressive, dangerous, or backwards. Platforms feed religious believers content that reinforces their faith identity while portraying outsiders as immoral or threatening, and they offer secular users feeds that mock religion as ignorance.

People often refer to this algorithmic filtering as the “**echo chamber**” effect or “**filter bubble**,” where social **media feeds turn into ideological cocoons**. Within these digital walls, users don’t just miss contrarian or divergent views – they actively see them framed as threatening, ignorant, or evil.

Erosion of Social Interaction and Exposure to Difference

Historically, communities, workplaces, schools, and public squares forced individuals to engage, sometimes uncomfortably, with people of differing opinions, beliefs, and identities. One could not easily curate a braai to exclude every contrary voice. Disagreement is inevitable, and with it comes tolerance, empathy, and a willingness to compromise.

Social media has undone much of this natural exposure. Algorithms allow individuals to immerse themselves exclusively in worlds that confirm their biases.

Instead of face-to-face debate, where nuance and humanity soften disagreement, online interactions reduce opponents to avatars or caricatures.

Moreover, the depersonalised environment of social platforms amplifies antagonism. A stranger behind a screen is easier to insult, mock, or dehumanise than a colleague or neighbour. Confrontation becomes a sport. Instead of persuading or listening, people are rewarded, via likes, retweets, and shares, for their most combative and extreme expressions.

The Psychological Disposition to Violence

The long-term consequence of algorithmic polarisation is not simply annoyance at opposing views, but an erosion of empathy and a psychological disposition that sees violence as a legitimate remedy.

When algorithms elevate antagonistic and emotionally charged content, they normalise the framing of political opponents not as fellow citizens with different opinions, but as **existential threats**. Such feeds shape one's worldview, and the more natural it feels to interpret disagreement as aggression, and aggression as requiring self-defence.

Researchers have documented that exposure to polarising and antagonistic online content increases anger, diminishes cognitive complexity, and reduces willingness to compromise. For specific individuals – particularly those predisposed to aggression or mental instability – this can escalate into real-world violence.

The horrific assassination of Charlie Kirk illustrates the tragic endpoint of this process. Regardless of the perpetrator's individual motivations, the broader environment in which political figures are portrayed online – as enemies, destroyers, or embodiments of evil – cannot be ignored. Algorithms help construct these perceptions by continuously amplifying content that escalates conflict rather than fostering understanding.

Sociopathic Retraction from Society

Another disturbing dimension of algorithm-driven polarisation is the tendency of some individuals not only to grow antagonistic but to withdraw entirely from ordinary social life. When exposure to contrary views occurs, it is often framed in confrontational or mocking tones, pushing individuals further into defensive retreat. Over time, this can create a sense of alienation so profound that individuals disengage from physical communities altogether.

This sociopathic retraction manifests as withdrawal into online-only existence, where the individual interacts almost exclusively with like-minded digital peers. As offline social bonds weaken, empathy for real-world neighbours, co-workers, or strangers atrophies. Detached individuals intensify their desire to remove others; this chilling mental shift drives them not only to dislike divergent voices but to treat them as obstacles they must eliminate.

History shows that the progression from alienation to violence is not inevitable, but in societies where algorithms continually exacerbate “us versus them” mentalities, the risk of extremist manifestations increases. Political leaders in South Africa actively polarise and revive narratives of race and the past. They bombard the public with social media rhetoric, delaying the natural progression toward inclusivity and deepening societal divides.

The Broader Consequences

The dangers posed by social media algorithms are not limited to isolated violent acts. They also erode democratic processes, undermine trust in institutions, and corrode the social fabric that holds pluralistic societies together.

- **Democracy Weakens:** Constructive debate becomes impossible when opposing sides view each other as enemies. Compromise, the essence of democratic governance, is replaced by gridlock and hostility.
- **Trust Collapses:** People no longer trust mainstream media, science, or government institutions when their feeds constantly portray these entities as corrupt or biased.
- **Communities Fragment:** Even within families or workplaces, algorithmically amplified polarisation creates divisions that break relationships apart.

These consequences ripple outward, producing not only political instability but also personal and communal despair. Herein lies the power and the control within a device that should change our lives for the better. We are going to have to think smarter and find ways to increase social physical interaction once more, especially in our youth.



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Possible Solutions?

If algorithms are the architects of polarisation, then solutions must address both the design of these systems and the habits of users.

- **Transparency and Regulation:** Governments and civil society must demand transparency from tech companies about how their algorithms prioritise content. Regulation may be necessary to curb the most harmful amplification of extreme or violent material. However, foremost, parents need to manage access and exposure and assist in delivering this root cause intervention.
- **Algorithmic Redesign:** Platforms could reorient their algorithms to value diversity of exposure and de-prioritise content that is explicitly antagonistic. While this might reduce engagement metrics, it could improve social cohesion. This needs volumes of work, but it must be rapid.
- **Digital Literacy:** Users themselves need education in recognising echo chambers and resisting the dopamine-driven pull of outrage content.
- **Regular resets:** Social media algorithms require regular resets, calibration, and possibly the introduction of contrary views and ideologies to ensure critical thinking.
- **Encouraging Offline Engagement:** Societies must reinvest in physical community spaces and activities where people of differing backgrounds interact, building empathy that digital platforms erode.

Conclusion

In my opinion, the designers of social media algorithms never intended them to promote harmony, empathy, or truth. Designers built these algorithms to maximise attention. In doing so, they unleashed forces of division, polarisation, and antagonism that now threaten the very foundations of civil society.

The assassination of Charlie Kirk is only one in a growing pattern of political violence that reflects these dangers. If we fail to rethink the algorithmic architectures that dominate our lives urgently, we risk driving our societies deeper into fragmentation, isolation, and violence.

The time has come to recognise that these are not just “apps” on our phones – they are the architects of perception, behaviour, and destiny. Without intervention, the path they carve leads toward a world more divided, more hostile, and more violent than the one we inherited.



Kev Storie - CAASA CEO



Commercial Aviation Association
of Southern Africa NPC



2026 Lead Partner

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OUR AFFILIATE PARTNERS



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4. All your contact details, including your website and social media links.

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Reach out to our General Manager, Melissa Sewgolam (melissa@caasa.co.za) and she'll make sure your voice is heard amongst our fellow members and beyond.

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Annual General Meeting

Save the Date

Wednesday, 5 November 2025
Time: 10am

Hosted virtually, via **Microsoft Teams**

Save the Date

You are Invited!

Annual Awards Dinner & Year-End Celebration

Friday, 31 October 2025

Time: 5pm onwards

Venue: Indaba Conference Centre

Dress: Formal

RSVP: melissa@caasa.co.za





CAASA Awards

Help us honour excellence–Nominate your colleagues and others who have made impactful contributions to the aviation industry in 2025.

CAASA hereby invites members to put forward names of suitable potential candidates for the following:

Certificates

1. Certificates of recognition

Members of the industry.

2. Certificate of Appreciation for Exceptional Services to CAASA

Members of the industry with a focus on CAASA members.

3. Certificate of Recognition by CAASA of SACAA employees

Recognition for Contributing to Excellence in the Aviation Sector within the Regulator

4. Development in Aviation Safety (Certificate)

Recognition for Contributing to Excellence in Safety in the Aviation Sector is only issued to a worthy recipient once identified.

Trophies

1. General Aviation Industry Award

A floating trophy is handed to a person within the aviation community who has made an exceptional contribution to aviation during the previous year. The person does not necessarily have to be a member of CAASA.

2. Aviation Excellence Award

A floating trophy is handed to a person within the aviation community who has made an exceptional contribution to aviation during the previous year. The person does not necessarily have to be a member of CAASA.

3. Lifetime Award for Significant Contribution to Aviation in Southern Africa Handed to a worthy person and is only shared under exceptional circumstances.

Kindly send through your nominations to melissa@caasa.co.za by no later than 3 October 2025 for our award committee to review. Together with your nomination, please submit a brief written motivation outlining why you believe the nominee deserves this award or recognition.

Aviation Africa 2025 – CAASA Report



Report – Aviation Africa Summit 2025, Kigali, Rwanda

Authored by: Kev Storie, CAASA CEO

Subject: Post-Summit Report – Aviation Africa Summit & Exhibition (Kigali, 4–5 Sept 2025) and CAASA’s position, participation and strategic next steps.

Executive summary

The 9th Aviation Africa Summit & Exhibition, held in Kigali on 4–5 September 2025, convened ministers, regulators, airline executives, manufacturers and industry stakeholders to accelerate Africa’s aviation recovery, connectivity and low-altitude innovation. The Summit issued a continent-level communiqué with concrete policy recommendations and showcased transformational technologies – most notably eVTOL and pilotless air-taxi demonstrations – that signal a rapid shift in how African transport systems will integrate low-altitude and urban air mobility (UAM).

CAASA’s delegation played an active role in panels and bilateral meetings, emphasising regulatory harmonisation, safety, and the commercial interests of Southern Africa carriers and service suppliers: attendance, theme and high-level tone.

The Summit (Radisson Blu / Kigali Convention Centre) united public and private sector leaders under the banner of “Flying forward together – developing partnerships for Africa’s future skies.” H.E. President Paul Kagame opened the event and used the platform to urge African states to remove legacy constraints and pursue more liberalised, better-connected skies across the continent. The atmosphere combined urgency (on liberalisation and SAF) with excitement about new technologies and investment opportunities in infrastructure.

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Key technical and policy highlights (most material outcomes)

- **Continental communiqué / nine-point plan** – Summit delegates adopted a multi-point communiqué focused on market liberalisation, improved inter-state coordination, and rapid implementation pathways for continental air connectivity initiatives. This communiqué will be a reference point for advocacy and for working directly with the AU and regional economic communities.
- **Urban Air Mobility & eVTOL milestone** – Commercial demonstrations (including a reported pilotless eVTOL demonstration) attracted significant interest from governments and infrastructure providers and crystallised UAM as an immediate regulatory challenge and commercial opportunity. Companies presented technical roadmaps and partnerships for trials, operations, and regulatory sandboxes.
- **Sustainability & SAF focus** – Sessions addressed how Africa can produce, certify and incentivise Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), with a clear steer that practical policy (blending mandates, fiscal incentives and supply-chain partnerships) will be required to scale SAF in the region.

CAASA's presence and contribution

CAASA attended with a small team, presenting AAD and focusing on non-schedule and business operators, with some of CAASA's industry affiliates.

We aimed to (a) ensure that AAD featured in multi-stand visits and invite potential exhibitors or attendees to AAD 2026, (b) advocate for regulatory harmonisation over unilateral approaches by promoting trusted partnerships that ease cross-border movements, and (c) secure strategic partnerships for members in equatorial Africa across training, ground support, and supply chain development.

CAASA's presence was visible in plenary Q&A, a regulatory roundtable and several bilateral meetings with regional regulators and industry partners. We also used the Summit platform to reaffirm CAASA's commitment to a pragmatic, safety-first pathway to new mobility (UAM) and to resign the AfBAA agreement.



L to R – Kev Storie – CAASA CEO, Dawit Lemma – AfBAA Chairman and Craig Middleton – AfBAA Vice-Chairperson/Treasurer

Cont.

1. Strategic implications for CAASA members

• **Regulatory harmonisation is now an immediate, actionable priority.**

The communiqué's emphasis on rapid implementation increases the probability of accelerated timelines for liberalisation and common standards. CAASA must position its members to influence standard-setting and ensure commercial protections and predictable safety oversight, while acknowledging the complexities of South African regulatory deficiencies and the current focus on correcting the LP and FOP issues.

• **UAM / eVTOL:** technology is moving from proof-of-concept to operational demonstration in Africa. This creates new service opportunities (last-mile, medevac, charters) and new regulatory burdens (airworthiness, airspace integration, ground infrastructure, cybersecurity). CAASA has already proposed a SA-region sandbox for trials in the Western and Northern Cape.

• **SAF and sustainability:** momentum at Kigali means early movers who secure offtake agreements, feedstock partnerships, and policy support will gain a competitive advantage.

CAASA believes industry members should focus on SAF sourcing, incentives and financing options.

2. Business development and partnerships

During the Summit, CAASA representatives held constructive bilateral talks with several OEMs and UAM firms exploring African deployments. Several member firms reported promising leads for infrastructure contracts and training partnerships. We will convert leads and invites to AAD into formal invitations over the next quarter.

3. Risks and mitigations identified

- Safety and public acceptance risks for pilotless operations: CAASA should insist on staged, safety-centric regulatory sandboxes and independent risk assessments. This includes advocating at the regulator for Management of change processes, economic impact assessments and meaningful safety risk assessments in a blended manner rather than safety before all, to ensure an economic industry growth trajectory.
- Financing constraints for SAF and infrastructure: CAASA will support member access to blended finance and coordinate consortium bids.

4. Communications & advocacy

We should amplify CAASA's Kigali role through an integrated communications push: the member newsletter, targeted op-eds and direct briefings with national regulators and industry partners. Our messaging must stress safety, harmonisation and commercially viable pathways for non-scheduled operators, sandboxes for UTM and UAS systems and reforms in the regulators.

5. Conclusion – future outcomes to expect

Kigali has shifted the needle: expect more rapid policy initiatives around open skies, based on bilaterals and simplified access permits focus, a spike in UAM pilot projects in Africa, and growing political support for SAF supply-chain development. For CAASA members, this creates both opportunity and complexity: first-mover commercial advantages, but also near-term regulatory and investment challenges. By moving swiftly on harmonised regulatory guidance, SAF tasking and pragmatic sandbox proposals, CAASA can protect members' interests and secure a seat at the decision table shaping Africa's aviation future.

On a closing note, RWANDA's trajectory in social cohesion, moving past race and cultural focus to an inclusive society based on mutual respect and environmental respect, showcases what is possible in Africa and how far South Africa has fallen behind with its race-based, backwards-looking policies. Unless there is a change, we will see further decline. In the rest of Africa, a true partnership among industry, regulators, and governments is prevalent, which is not the case in South Africa, where the regulator has adopted a dictatorial approach.

Aviation Africa 2025 in numbers

- Over **2,100** attendees
- **97** countries represented, of which **52** were African countries
 - **115** airline/operators
- **382** airline/operator representatives
 - **120** exhibitors/sponsors/partners
 - **34** CAA Director Generals
 - **14** Air Chiefs
 - **10** Ministers of Aviation



Watch Kev Storie in interview at Aviation Africa 2025, [here](#)



AVIATION AFRICA 2025

4th – 5th September
Radisson Blu Hotel & Convention Centre, Kigali, Rwanda

in pictures



L to R – Kev Storie and
Melissa Sewgolam – CAASA



L to R – Dean Polley – SSASS and Kev Storie – CAASA

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- Safety Management System (SMS), including RPAS (13 - 17 October 2025)
- Quality Management System (QMSA) (6-10 October and 1-5 December 2025)
- Lead Auditor (LA)(28-30 October 2025)
- Internal Auditor (IA),
- Crew Resource Management (CRM), both initial and refresher
- Safety and Emergency Procedures Training (SEPT - Part 135)

We also provide specialised internally developed courses such as Emergency Response Planning (ERP), Occurrence Investigation (OI), and Coordinator Occupational Health and Safety (COHS), along with dynamic critical thinking one-day workshops scheduled for November 2025 in, Root Cause Analysis (RCA), Risk-Based Approach (RBA), and Management of Change (MOC) — all tailored to give professionals practical tools they can apply immediately.

Our courses are available as corporate in-house training, delivered virtually online, or conducted in person. For training information and quotations, email us at: academy@litson.co.za

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Affiliate Partner Profile



Who we are: Cor Beek founded the Helicopter Association of Southern Africa (HASA) in 1972 and became its first president. In 1977, he became the chief executive officer of the Commercial Aviation Association. He retained these positions for nearly twenty years. HASA has been advocating for the helicopter industry in South Africa for 53 years. The dynamics of aviation have changed significantly, and we now face an ever-evolving landscape in which our members must operate.

Our Service: To represent the interests and rights of our members whilst actively engaging with the regulatory bodies on matters affecting the helicopter industry. We aim to provide support, advice, and information to the helicopter industry.

Our Purpose: HASA strives to support the helicopter industry in ensuring its operations remain relevant. The unique nature of helicopter operations necessitates active engagement with regulatory authorities, ATOs (Approved Training Organizations), AMOs (Approved Maintenance Organizations), ATCs (Air Traffic Control), and manufacturers to ensure safe and profitable operations. Through continuous collaboration, HASA has established an international partnership with HAI (Helicopter Aviation International), which has now been rebranded to VAI (Vertical Aviation International), facilitating regular international engagement. We work together as a community, with support from other helicopter associations worldwide, to ensure we continue to build out the strategy and development of the global helicopter industry.

Being a member of HASA ensures that you have a voice in the industry, and together, we can actively support the sustainability and growth of the helicopter industry.

Coming together is the beginning, keeping together is progress, and working together is success.

Let's build the future of aviation - together.

For membership details, please contact our General Manager,
Melissa Sewgolam at: melissa@caasa.co.za

Meet Our Affiliate Partner President

Each month, we introduce you to the members of our CAASA Board and Council to give you context as to their qualification and overall commitment to our vital sector.

This month, we welcome our **HASA President and CAASA Council Member, Jan Andries Coetzee III.**



André was raised and attended school in Henley-on-Klip, a village south of Johannesburg.

Having started flying helicopters at the age of 15, he completed a B. Eng (Mechanical) degree at the (then) Rand Afrikaans University and elected to become a helicopter maintenance apprentice after graduation.

Henley Air was started by André and his father Johann, and the business grew incrementally from its base at Rand Airport.

André is a registered Professional Engineer (ECSA) and currently serves as the Executive Chairman of Henley Air and holds a PhD in Aviation Management (Da Vinci Institute of Technology), Aircraft Maintenance Engineer licence, Airline Transport Pilot Licence (Helicopter) and acts as Designated Flight Examiner (Class I) on behalf of the SACAA.

His love for flying has yielded in excess of 16,000 flying hours with ratings on more than 45 helicopter types. He is an avid cricket lover and is married to Lonell with three daughters.

