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## It's a bird, it's a plane ... it's a quadcopter?

BY CHRIS CONETZKEY, Editor of the Business Record

Friday, July 05, 2013 2:33 PM

If on Wednesday night at Yankee Doodle Pops, you, like me, looked to the sky and wondered what the strange device was that was hovering above and peering down upon the crowd, I have the answer.

No, it wasn't a UFO; the aliens weren't back for "Independence Day 2." And no, it wasn't some new military drone. The hovering mystery was the DJI Phantom quadcopter - an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) fitted with a GoPro camera capable of shooting photographs and videos.

The quadcopter was being operated by Stefan Hansen, co-founder of Des Moines-based [Fresk Interactive](#).

I was at the Des Moines Symphony's viewing party and just happened to be sitting next to Chris Kramer, deputy director of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, and she told me that Hansen was using the quadcopter to shoot aerial photos of Yankee Doodle Pops. Hansen was going to be sending Kramer the photos for her department.

The quadcopter functions through a standard radio-controlled remote and is GPS integrated so that it compensates for wind and



Stefan Hansen's DJI Phantom quadcopter - Photo by Drew Maif



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remains stable. It can even return to a set location, should the craft go missing or the connection be lost.

Yankee Doodle Pops on July 3, 2013.  
- Photo by Stefan Hansen

Right now, Hansen is only using the quadcopter for private research purposes and his own private outlet channels (Instagram, Facebook, etc.). The reason, Hansen said in an email, is that the laws surrounding utilizing UAVs for commercial purposes remain murky, "and just haven't caught up to the pace of technological advancement."

Indeed, this reminded me of two food-related stories involving UAVs and the tricky legal hurdles they present. In the United Kingdom, Domino's delivered a pizza via its DomiCopter and put the experiment on [YouTube](#) - it has been viewed more than 1 million times. In San Francisco, Darwin Aerospace showed off its Burrito Bomber, a drone that utilized GPS to deliver burritos to homes.

Alas, we'll have to wait quite some time for burrito bombs or any other UAV-related services. The Federal Aviation Administration is still in the process of drafting guidelines for the commercial use of drones and is expected to address the issue sometime before 2015, [Mashable](#) reported. For a U.S. News story about the future of deliveries utilizing drones, [click here](#).

So while Hansen can't commercialize this yet, he said he does plan to continue using the UAV for documenting events, shooting architecture and even for some short film projects he is working on. In fact, if you're at the 80/35 music festival this weekend, look to the sky - he plans to get some shots.

But, if you've heard rumors that the Business Record will soon begin delivering your weekly print product via a device called the RecordCopter, I'll just say we can neither confirm or deny those reports.

[Click here to see more aerial photos from the event on our Facebook page](#)



Des Moines Symphony viewing party on top of the State Historical Building. You can't see it well at this size, but in the larger version you can see me and my wife (Kaci) staring up at the quadcopter  
- Photo by Stefan Hansen

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