

For the first time, a privately developed aircraft has flown faster than sound

A new generation of companies, including Boom Supersonic, are aiming to meld new ideas, technology, and a commercial approach to develop more cost-effective travel at supersonic speeds. The significance of Tuesday's flight is that it marks the first time one of these companies has built and flown its own vehicle above the speed of sound.

Now, on to the real thing

Although this is an important and notable step—this flight was the culmination of 11 successful test flights of the XB-1 since March 2024—it is only a step along the path toward development and operation of a commercially successful supersonic aircraft. Now Boom must build the real thing.

The company said the XB-1 demonstrator validates many of the key technologies that will be incorporated into Overture, including carbon-fiber composites, digital stability augmentation, and supersonic intakes. However, Overture will feature a different propulsion system named Symphony. The company is working with several partners, including Florida Turbine Technologies for engine design, GE Additive for additive technology design consulting, and StandardAero for maintenance to develop the engine.

There appears to be plenty of demand in the commercial air travel industry for a company that can develop and deliver supersonic aircraft to the market.

Boom Supersonic said it has taken 130 orders and pre-orders from American Airlines, United Airlines, and Japan Airlines for the Overture aircraft. In 2024, Boom said it completed construction on the Overture "Superfactory" in Greensboro, North Carolina, which will scale to produce 66 Overture aircraft per year. Boom is hoping to start delivering on those orders before the end of the decade.

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