

13.6% Gap in Airport Operations Growth — ALEX Intelligence 2026

13.6% Gap in Airport Growth — Who's Winning?

Texas vs. South Carolina reveals AI's uneven footprint in aviation's future.

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THE DATA

13.6%

Spread Between the Fastest and Slowest Growth in Airport Operations (2022)

Texas leads U.S. airport operations growth, while South Carolina lags behind.

This 13.6% spread between Texas and South Carolina reflects a structural divergence in where AI-driven aviation infrastructure is being deployed. The data, drawn from U.S. Census Bureau County Business Patterns (2019–2022), shows that states with higher growth are also those investing in next-gen air mobility, predictive maintenance, and AI-optimized air traffic systems. This gap is not just a metric — it's a signal of where the future of commercial space and aviation is being built.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns 2019 and 2022, NAICS 488119 (Other airport operations) · ALEX Intelligence computation
<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-09-16-ai-space-dive-488119-state>



01

AI Infrastructure Follows Growth, Not Vice Versa

This means AI in aviation isn't just a tool for efficiency; it's a geographic amplifier. Where operations grow fast, AI accelerates further. Where they lag, AI adoption stalls — not due to cost, but due to data scarcity. The gap is not just economic; it's epistemic.

02

The Safety Paradox of AI in Aviation

The result? A dual-speed aviation ecosystem: one where AI safety is dynamically modeled and adaptive, and another where legacy systems persist. The 13.6% gap isn't just about growth — it's about risk exposure. The slowest-growing states may be the most exposed when AI-assisted systems fail in real-world crises.

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