

BoardConnect: Innovative technology delivers better entertainment and service on board

People have come to expect the anytime, anywhere availability of a broad range of on-demand entertainment options, comprehensive service and shopping opportunities and access to the Internet. Lufthansa Systems' in-flight entertainment (IFE) solution BoardConnect offers airlines the chance to offer this service on board their aircraft.

Most current IFE solutions are complex and hard-wired. Therefore they are expensive to purchase and install, difficult to maintain and inflexible to use. BoardConnect, in contrast, is a kind of intranet on a plane which replaces a wired network with a wireless network based on established standards. Instead of connecting every single seat to the on-board content server through several kilometers of cables, BoardConnect has just a few access points. Passengers log on to this network with their own laptops, smart phones or tablet PCs to access the content on the server. Alternatively, integrated seat-back screens or mobile devices provided by the airline can be used to connect to the WiFi network.

BoardConnect uses standard software solutions. For example, multimedia content is served up via Microsoft Silverlight, a browser plug-in which comes pre-installed on most new devices. Silverlight works with both Windows and Mac operating systems. For iPhone, iPad and Android users, there is also an app available. Once an aircraft is additionally equipped with broadband Internet access, passengers can also connect to the Internet while in the air.

Fast Figures

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50 tons of jet fuel can be saved annually on a Boeing 737-800 with 189 seats thanks to the reduced weight as a result of wireless technology.

Highlights

- Broad range of on-demand entertainment options thanks to WiFi connection
- Passengers can use their own devices
- Customized on-board service and generation of additional revenue
- Low installation and operating costs

BoardConnect offers airlines a number of advantages, starting with installation and maintenance. While the installation of conventional IFE systems requires an extensive downtime of the aircraft, BoardConnect can be fitted during routine overnight layovers or maintenance checks. If the airline subsequently changes its cabin layout by expanding its business class or putting in more rows of seats, this will not affect BoardConnect. Thanks to the minimal installation effort, the solution is ideal not just for long-haul jets but also for smaller aircraft such as the Airbus A320 and the Boeing 737, which generally offer very limited IFE options. BoardConnect has very few components so it is much easier to maintain.

A platform for innovative services on board

The great improvement to on-board services available with this new technology is just as important to airlines as a broad range of entertainment offers. BoardConnect has heralded the age of interactivity in on-board services. In-flight entertainment and services can now be integrated on a single platform in the aircraft.

The user-friendly BoardConnect interface is based on conventional web browser technology. Airlines can skin the interface to match their corporate design and provide any information they want, including passenger-specific data on connecting flights, special offers or mileage status. Passengers can also use BoardConnect to choose their meals, order drinks or purchase goods from the on-board shop. Airlines can quickly and easily integrate their own services or those of partners, which opens up new opportunities for generating additional revenues on-board – an aspect which is becoming increasingly important in light of the ongoing pressure on ticket prices.

Good for the environment

BoardConnect has a positive effect on an airline's environmental performance as well, since the elimination of kilometers of cables and other components makes the solution much lighter. For a Boeing 737-800 with 189 seats, this leads to fuel savings of around 50 tons per aircraft per year. The savings are even greater if no seat-back screens are installed.

For several years, Lufthansa Systems has offered a mobile infotainment system for cruise ships. This system has proven itself over and over again thanks not least to its great reliability, its cost-efficiency and the ability to easily provide guests with up-to-date, personalized information. BoardConnect is based on the same principle, but with one critical difference: it is wireless.

But the opportunities for the system haven't yet been exhausted. The technology behind BoardConnect can also be used on other forms of transport, such as trains, buses and ferries – for the benefit of providers and passengers alike.

For images and pictures, please go to <https://www.lhsystems.com/index.php?id=12517>

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