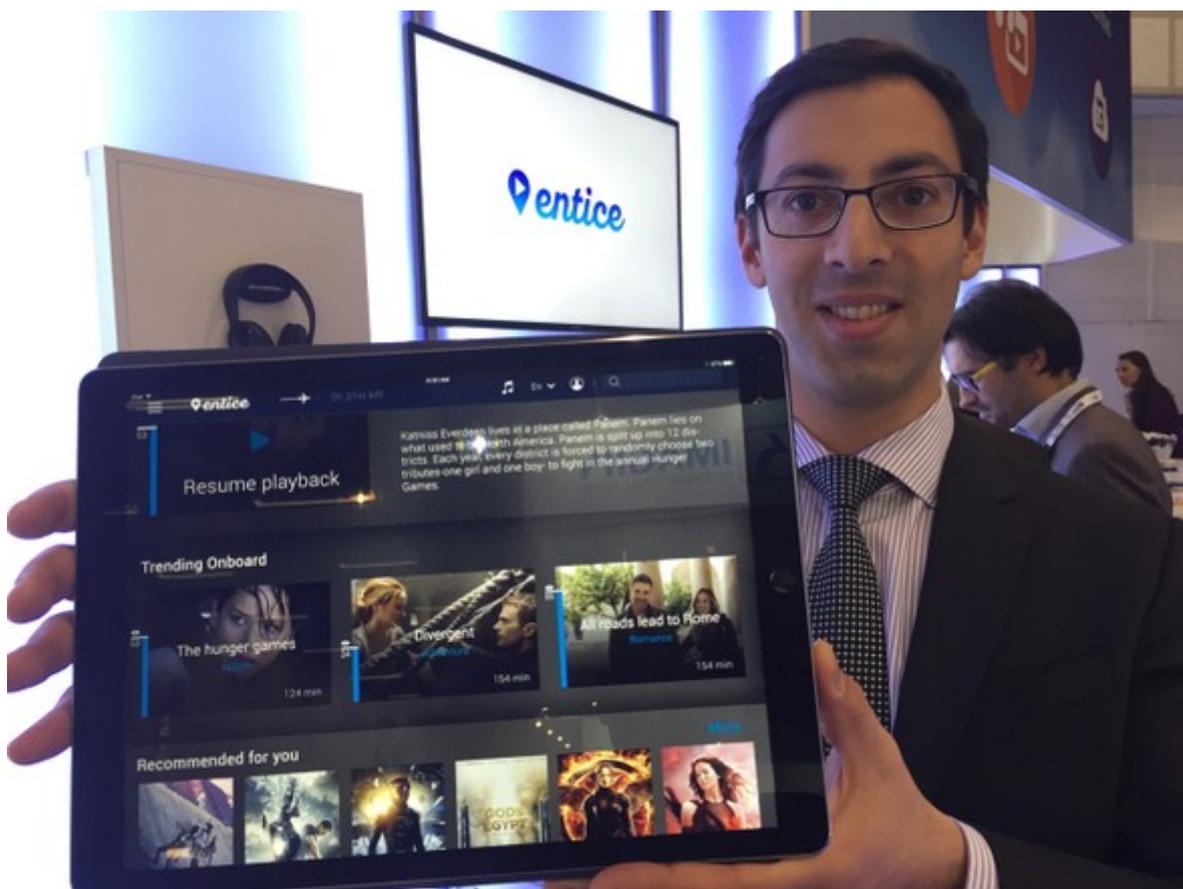

IFEC Zone packed with innovation and development

By **Rick Lundstrom** on April, 14 2016 | Inflight Entertainment



Halls B2 to B4 at the Hamburg Messe were home to a vast array of inflight entertainment products, and each day the IFEC Zone provided visitors and media a glimpse of the present and the future in a segment of the industry that is constantly evolving.

Content service providers, games suppliers, graphic-user-interface creators joined app developers, IFE hardware companies, and inflight communications and connectivity companies of all varieties. Organizers at the Aircraft Interiors Expo listed 139 companies present in the IFEC Zone this year. Many will be taking their products and services to Singapore in October of this year for the Airline Passenger Experience Association's yearly event.

Over the next four years, estimates from the firm MarketsandMarkets show that the inflight entertainment and connectivity will reach US\$5.8 billion per year in sales by 2020 and grow at a compound annual rate of 15.23% from 2015 to 2020.

Companies large and small brought new products and service to Hamburg. Among the most active are companies that build inexpensive solutions that can be easily installed and avoid costly regulatory

expenses and time.

Bluebox Avionics did just such and approach, bringing its new wireless inflight entertainment product called WOW for Walk-on wiFE. WOW is a lightweight portable product that can be taken onboard fully loaded and charged and can be adapted by the airline for free-to-seat and pay access. WOW has a battery life of up to 15 hours and can support up to 50 devices simultaneously.

Bluebox has given WOW the ability to interface with the company's Bluebox Hybrid units that are approved by Hollywood studios to host pre-loaded early-window content movies.

This year, digEcor showed visitors updates to its Integrated Flight Experience products. The company's GLIDE embedded inflight entertainment system has been certified and has been delivered to a seat manufacturer for installation on EuroAtlantic Airways, which is the company's first European customer.

The company has been expanding its product line with an LED lighting system, passenger service system and a USB 110Volt PC Power system.



Searching the skies of the future will be the new Airconnect Global Ka high-speed antenna that Global Eagle Entertainment showed visitors last week.

GEE developed the new antenna in partnership with [Quantenelektronische Systeme GmbH](#) (QEST). The partnership adds Ka-band capability to the current Airconnect Global antenna platform.

“By offering Ku- and Ka- band capability on a single antenna platform, GEE's open architecture will allow customers to select the most efficient satellite solution for global flight operations,” said a release from the company. The design of the Airconnect Global Ka antenna is compatible with GEE's current installation architecture and Supplemental Type Certificates (STCs), and meets the requirements for future line fit installations.

In 2015, GEE announced the development of its next generation Airconnect Global Ku antenna. The antenna operates at all latitudes on Ku networks worldwide with high connectivity speeds and global coverage. The expansion adds Ka-band compatibility to the core antenna architecture, with target certification for Ka-band capability in early 2017.

The IFE giant also showed visitors its Entertainment, Information, Communication and E-commerce platform called Entice, which is powered by the company's Airtime platform that is now flying on more than 700 aircraft.

Entice brings a beefed up offering that can accommodate more than 10,000 hours of content. It profiles users, making recommendations of content from flight to flight. With the information, airline customers can gain a greater knowledge of passenger preferences to target advertising and offers.

Entice is bundled and sold with a single, all-inclusive monthly recurring charge for hardware, software, content and services, thus removing management complexities for airlines.

The BoardConnect wireless platform and the BoardConnect Portable product from Lufthansa Systems now offers features that allow airlines to place offers from partner companies for revenue generation. Also, the company has a new crew app for its mCabin system that is available for Windows 10 users.

Eurowings is one of the most recent customers for the BoardConnect Portable that the company introduced at last year's AIX. The Lufthansa subsidiary will board the product for its short- and medium-haul flights.

Panasonic Avionics Corp. announced in Hamburg two new airline customers and an update its ancillary revenue offering.

Singapore Airlines will have the company's immersive entertainment offering on its 787-10 and A350. Panasonic will deliver connectivity and inflight entertainment solutions for an enhanced KrisWorld system. The eX3 system used by Singapore Airlines is Panasonic's most advanced IFEC system.

Saudi Arabian Airlines will be adding the company eXO system for 30 A320 aircraft on order. The system is Panasonic's overhead solution with 12-inch retractable monitors. It also interacts with the passenger, streaming content to personal electronic devices. It supports a wide variety of AVOD configurations including overhead video, wireless IFE, full AVOD and hybrid, cabin class-specific systems.

Saudi Arabian Airlines will launch a hybrid installation with audio/video-on-demand in the premium cabin and overhead video in the economy cabin.

The company's other innovation is a new near field communications (NFC) reader that is available for in-seat production at multiple OEMs. The reader is compliant with MasterCard and Panasonic is in discussion with Visa and China Union Pay as well as Discover and American Express.

In addition to several news announcements Rockwell Collins had on board industry

veteran of the company started in Hamburg company vice President of Air Transport Cabin Solutions Sales and Marketing. Sare will lead a sales and marketing team focused on Rockwell Collins' complete portfolio of PAVES™ IFE and connectivity solutions.



Also in Hamburg, the Cedar Rapids, Iowa-based company showed the fine points of its new virtual training simulator for its PAVES™ seat-centric and overhead IFE systems. The solution allows cabin personnel to practice operating a PAVES system without the expense of extra equipment or schedule time on an aircraft.

The company's PAVES™ Passenger Service System (PSS) has been certified by the European Aviation Safety Agency for A330 aircraft. Rockwell-Collins has teamed with Air France Industries and KLM Engineering & Maintenance to design, install and achieve the STC as part of a cabin upgrade for an A330.

The company's Paves PSS is a standalone reading light and cabin crew call system with USB charging ports. It is designed to replace discontinued or unsupported systems.

Finally, Rockwell Collins announced in Hamburg that it would be the supplier of onboard broadband connectivity for Air Astana. The airline will install the associated Inmarsat Global Xpress (GX) high-speed connectivity system on its fleet of 767s in September 2016.

In addition to a new customer for its AVANT In-Flight Entertainment System, Thales is in the process of working on a new on-demand feature for its STV+ live television product.

The customer of the InFlyt Experience from Thales is Hainan Airlines, which is a long-time purchaser of Thales hardware. The AVANT product will be aboard its A330 fleet. The aircraft will be equipped with high-definition monitors.

The company is also enhancing its STV+ streaming television with features that will allow the inflight system to be used much like a home environment. Programming could be saved in much the same way as a home digital video recorder. The development is still in the early stages. However, with the system, airline could tailor record shows from prime time to air at other times of the day.