
WestJet selects Panasonic for inflight entertainment and connectivity

By **Tanya Filippelli** on February, 18 2014 | Inflight Entertainment



WestJet recently announced it has signed a multi-year agreement with Panasonic Avionics Corporation to provide the airline with a new inflight entertainment system with the ability to feature wireless satellite internet connectivity, live streaming television, on-demand movies, magazines and more.

Guests will be able to use their own personal electronic device (PED) or laptop computer to receive live and stored content streamed wirelessly from a server on board each WestJet Boeing Next-Generation 737 aircraft. Airtime packages will also be available to surf the internet or access email. Tablets will be available for those guests not travelling with a device.

"We are very excited to take the next step in the evolution of our inflight entertainment system," said Marshall Wilmot, WestJet Vice-President, Product and Distribution. "We were proud to be the first Canadian airline to offer live television on board our aircraft beginning in 2004, and today we are announcing a completely new system designed to offer WestJet guests a broader selection of entertainment options than ever before."

The addition of WiFi is a strategic step forward to enable guests, especially business travellers, to make their time in the air as productive as possible.

"We know that roughly 75 per cent of our guests are bringing their own devices on board today," said Wilmot. "They tell us they want the opportunity to connect to check their email, put the finishing touches on a presentation or keep in touch with family and friends. Our continually improving schedule and network, now combined with wireless connectivity, along with our WestJet Rewards program and our Plus package with more space to work and additional amenities is part of our ongoing effort to enhance our value proposition for business travellers."

WestJet will also install USB/110 volt power outlets in new, slimmer seats on its aircraft to enable guests to charge their devices or keep them charged while using the entertainment system. And, with a mix of free and paid content, the new system offers the airline additional ancillary revenue opportunities.

There are currently 275 airlines around the world using a Panasonic inflight entertainment system. Panasonic will install the system on one WestJet Boeing Next Generation aircraft before the end of 2014 at which time the airline will perform tests to fine-tune the system. When installed on WestJet's fleet over the next several years, guests will be able to access live television, movies, magazines and the internet throughout North America, the Caribbean and Central America, Europe, as well as future WestJet destinations.