

AirFi harnesses the power of “because” at AIX



Job Heimerikx, CEO and Founder, AirFi, at AIX 2024

The focus for [AirFi](#)'s exhibit at the [Aircraft Interiors Expo](#) (AIX) this year was the lightweight LEO connectivity solution and its patent-pending, window-mounted antenna, a solution that connects to the AirFi box and provides connectivity to the ground.

“This year we're really showing what the LEO product is, stability of the LEO product and what kind of stuff you can do with it,” Job Heimerikx, CEO and Founder, AirFi, tells *PAX Tech*.

The product can be set up in an overnight installation and it connects, via a window-mounted antenna on each side of the aircraft, to the Certus network from Iridium®, which is a global network offering consistent connectivity from pole to pole. It allows passengers to connect with their loved ones over WhatsApp and other messaging services from 30,000 feet.

Beyond communication inflight for passengers, the lightweight antenna allows airlines to perform online payment validation for inflight card purchases, which Heimerikx notes is in high demand due to fraudulent activity.

"The biggest thing that's undermining inflight services and airline profits in our industry is fraud and payment fraud when it comes to ancillary sales and onboard sales," he explains. "The level of fraud is somewhere between two and ten percent depending on which airline and which operator, MPOS, point-of-sale operator or catering company you're dealing with."

He adds that the LEO connectivity solution is already flying and providing payment validation on several aircraft, with a total of 50 aircraft signed up and further expansion on the horizon. Heimerikx says the goal is to help airlines eliminate the fraud entirely, a prospect he hopes will fuel the investment in the antenna.

The power of "because"

On display at the booth was AirFi's response to the question of why it continues to innovate connectivity, IFE and point-of-sale technology solutions: "Because."

"The answer to every 'why' is 'because,'" says Heimerikx. "Because: you want to know. Because: we want our customers to understand their business better. Understanding what happens in the cabin is critical to driving better engagement and improving revenues. Our technology is designed to give airlines the insight they need to execute successful programs and improve the passenger experience."

He explains that AirFi is striving to deliver insight to airlines regarding passengers' interests; what they are watching, what they are looking at on onboard retail platforms and what they are buying.

"We do the payment, we know exactly which seat the payment comes from," Heimerikx adds. "All that information is 'because you want to know'. That's the key message that we're transmitting."

IFC partnerships and the future

In addition to showcasing its LEO connectivity solution, AirFi also highlighted its portable streaming IFE system at this year's AIX. The AirFi box, now in its third generation, is the most widely used portable IFE solution on the market. It provides 24 hours of battery life and has the option for semi-embedded fully powered installation. The box offers airlines touch-free operation, more than one terabyte of storage, app-less DRM and 3G/4G capabilities.

The company also announced its partnership with [IndiGo](#) at the show, a three-month trial of AirFi's wireless portable IFE solution. AirFi inked a deal with [Vietnam Airlines](#) back in September 2023 to equip 37 of the carrier's A321 aircraft with wireless inflight entertainment under a two-year contract.

"We'll be back next year with heaps of new innovations that we have up our sleeve," Heimerikx teases.