Telesat explores how multi-network connectivity reshapes inflight experience

This is a special feature from the November 2026 APEX FTE EXPO issue of *PAX Tech* on page 24.



Airlines can meet evolving passenger expectations by leveraging multiple networks

As passenger expectations evolve, and low-latency LEO connectivity becomes more widely available, airlines are reimagining the uses of inflight connectivity in supporting the passenger experience.

Philippe Schleret, Vice President Aviation, Telesat, says the biggest shift is that airlines are no longer evaluating connectivity solely as a passenger Wi-Fi service.

“They are increasingly viewing it as a strategic platform that supports passenger experience, operational efficiency and future digital initiatives across their aircraft,” he tells *PAX Tech*.

Copyright DutyFree Magazine. All rights reserved.



Philippe Schleret, Vice President Aviation, Telesat

Telesat Lightspeed, Telesat's advanced LEO global satellite broadband network, was designed with that evolution in mind. It fits into a broader connectivity ecosystem, giving airlines the flexibility to evolve.

"Our enterprise-class architecture enables service providers to deliver a highly consistent passenger experience while also supporting secure operational applications on a separate circuit," he explains.

Prioritizing passenger perception
Telesat takes a multi-network approach to IFC, but Schleret emphasizes that passenger perception of the service is the most important marker of success.

"Passengers do not think about satellite orbits. They simply expect their connection to work," he says.

Copyright DutyFree Magazine. All rights reserved.



Telesat Lightspeed fits into a broader connectivity ecosystem, giving airlines the flexibility to evolve

Airlines can meet those expectations by leveraging multiple networks in their solutions. For passengers, it provides multiple layers of assurance for a seamless online experience. For airlines, it can improve operational flexibility and support the digital applications onboard that require a reliable connection.

“The industry is moving toward a model where connectivity is judged more by whether passengers and crews experience reliable service throughout the journey,” Schleret explains.

Multi-orbit networks, new opportunities

Telesat and Viasat signed a multi-year contract for Telesat Lightspeed Low Earth Orbit (LEO) services in April 2025, with Viasat planning to integrate Telesat Lightspeed into its services portfolio.

For Schleret, the significance of partnerships between IFC providers is that they shift the conversation from competing to complementary architectures. While airlines once had to make a choice between different connectivity approaches, today’s solutions combine the benefits of multiple networks.

Copyright DutyFree Magazine. All rights reserved.



Telesat takes a multi-network approach to IFC

“By incorporating Telesat Lightspeed into its portfolio, Viasat gains a high-performance low-latency connectivity layer that can be used alongside existing assets to create a more flexible and resilient service offering,” he explains.

He believes the future of inflight connectivity is likely to be defined by how effectively individual networks can come together to support emerging passenger and airline applications that are increasingly sensitive to latency and performance consistency.

En route to APAC

As Telesat heads to APEX FTE EXPO, Schleret says the Asia-Pacific region represents one of the most exciting opportunities in commercial aviation thanks to strong fleet growth, rising passenger demand and increasing investment in digital passenger experiences.

He says the connectivity opportunity in the region is far from fully realized.

“Many airlines across Asia-Pacific are still evaluating how best to modernize their connectivity strategies and meet rising passenger expectations,” Schleret says. “That creates a significant opportunity for next-generation networks that can support both passenger broadband and increasingly sophisticated airline operations.”

The APAC region is diverse, with airlines operating across vast geographies, regulatory environments and business models. Schleret says this makes flexibility a priority: a solution that works well for a premium long-haul carrier may not be the right fit for a rapidly growing low-cost carrier.

“We believe airlines and service providers will increasingly value open, future-ready architectures that allow them to incorporate new technologies and network resources over time rather than locking themselves into a single approach,” he says.

As Telesat Lightspeed enters service, Schleret points to APAC as a region where its flexibility could create significant long-term value.

Copyright DutyFree Magazine. All rights reserved.