

Guest column: IdeaNova highlights untapped potential of legacy IFE systems

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IdeaNova believes legacy IFE can deliver far more than its original design ever envisioned

As airlines pursue next-generation connectivity and AI-driven personalization, a quieter shift is reshaping the cabin: the reinvention of legacy inflight entertainment. These older systems still anchor the passenger experience, yet they were not built for today's digital expectations. Replacing them is expensive and lengthy. Letting them stagnate is not an option.

Modernizing them is the smarter path.

Across the industry, carriers are taking different approaches. Some are removing seatback screens on select fleets and leaning into personal device streaming with free Wi-Fi. Others, including Delta Air Lines and United Airlines, are doubling down on seatback IFE because of its proven impact on satisfaction and loyalty. But no matter the strategy, every airline faces the same challenge: how to extract more value from hardware already flying.

This is where software driven innovation is shifting the equation. [IdeaNova](#) has spent nearly two decades showing that legacy IFE can deliver far more than its original design intended. Modern interfaces can run on decades old displays. Contemporary DRM and content workflows can operate on older processors. Even modest hardware—devices with Raspberry Pi level capability—can support fast, responsive experiences when engineered with precision.



Juraj Siska, CEO, IdeaNova Technologies

Delta Air Lines' recent modernization arc is a clear example. Working with specialists including IdeaNova, Delta elevated the performance of aging seatback systems—some as old as Panasonic's EcoV1—without a costly hardware refresh. The result: faster interfaces, new features, and a more personalized experience delivered through engineering ingenuity, not new screens.

As Delta's Glenn Latta noted, the work achieved "what no one thought could be done," proving modernization is a long-term strategy, not a temporary fix. The next question: can older hardware embrace the industry's biggest shift: AI. The world—including our industry—is AI focused, yet most aviation systems were never built to run AI locally. Even new hardware cannot deliver AI without connectivity: no connection, no personalization. Until now! Inplay AI changes the equation.

Now, cabin ready AI runs directly on existing servers—fully offline, no hardware upgrades—enabling personalization at scale without connectivity. The takeaway is simple. Legacy IFE is not a burden—it is untapped potential. With the right engineering and the right approach, airlines can transform yesterday's hardware into tomorrow's digital platform, efficiently—and at scale.