
Lufthansa Systems adds shopping above the clouds to BoardConnect

By **Lauren Brunetti** on September, 18 2013 | Inflight Entertainment



At this year's APEX expo, Lufthansa Systems has presented a shopping module and a highly interactive moving map for its award winning wireless WiFi based IFE solution, BoardConnect. This will in turn, create new opportunities for airlines to generate ancillary revenues, the company said.

Last year, BoardConnect was given the prestigious APEX Avion Award for Best Achievement in technology. The solution is suitable for single aisle commercial aircraft on short- and medium-haul operation as well as for wide body jets.

While most airlines still rely on traditional onboard catalogue sales, BoardConnect offers a contemporary shopping experience and helps to boost revenues generated in flight. The new online shop excels through a clean and well-structured interface design. Passengers are able to quickly find and purchase products. The shopping platform has the ability to host multiple, individually branded shops. Payments for this and other services onboard are handled with highest security measures.

The moving map allows passengers not only to follow their flight with a high degree of accuracy and individually change the view of the map. They also can select points of interests and receive further information on them, including the ability to place advertisements related to a certain POI.

BoardConnect sets a new standard in many respects. Movies, music, duty-free shopping, electronic magazines, destination information, passenger announcements and much more - everything that touches on entertainment and information can easily be integrated into the wireless infotainment platform. Additionally BoardConnect can be integrated with high-speed broadband connectivity so passengers have full access to the Internet.

Unlike conventional in-flight entertainment systems, BoardConnect does not require any complicated wiring for each seat. Instead, it works with a regular WLAN. Depending on aircraft size only two to five access points in the cabin are needed to deliver a broad variety of high quality content including lagging-free streaming media to every passenger.

The solution is user-friendly and impressively versatile. It can be used with iOS, Android and conventional Windows devices including Windows 8 operating system. Thanks to its Digital Rights Management BoardConnect features the latest movies. It has won Hollywood approvals for early window content on airline owned devices and late window approval for devices passengers bring onboard. An easy to access parental control system allows strict control over the accessible content and prevents damage to an airline's reputation.

The Crew Panel enhances services and improves customer interaction. It streamlines processes on board, reduces the amount of printed materials, and creates a valuable channel for dialogue and passenger feedback. The Maintenance Panel interface enables quick access to the component status control functions for easy and efficient troubleshooting. Updating IFE content via a data loader or 3G is easy and can be completed during the shortest turnaround.

BoardConnectis less complex than conventional IFE systems and uses of-the-shelf components. This leads to high reliability and low maintenance cost. Compared to legacy IFE systems it offers a 50 percent reduction in initial system investment, 50 percent less operating costs and even 70 percent lower maintenance costs. Due to its lightweight components, the installation on a typical single-aisle jet like an Airbus A321 with 190 seats is 390 kilograms (860 lb) than a conventional IFE system. This means an airline will save about 54.3 metric tons of fuel per aircraft per year. On a 345 seat Airbus A340-600 the weight reduction is almost 780 kilograms (1,700 lbs), which translates into annual fuel savings of 107.5 tons.

The installation doesn't need an extensive downtime like a major overhaul or a cabin refurbishment. Instead it can be done overnight during regular maintenance checks. This saves costs and allows a fast rollout of the product.