

# Narrow-body, big IFE

This is a special feature from *PAX Tech's* [2022 Seating, IFE & Connectivity](#) issue, on [page 15](#).



Demand for the latest innovations in the living room and home office has spilled onto the aircraft

Embedded inflight entertainment (IFE) is more than a library of music, magazines and movies. For airlines, it represents an opportunity for greater revenue and passenger engagement, from buy-on-board shopping and e-commerce marketplaces to advertising opportunities and add-ons.

[Panasonic Avionics](#) has been closely tracking consumer trends and tells *PAX Tech* that these IFE experiences are also becoming more important for the passenger. Working remotely is the new norm and passengers expect a similar connection in the sky - with a large, high-quality screen, Bluetooth connectivity and all the conveniences of the at-home office to which so many have become accustomed.

## **Narrow-bodied IFE takes off**

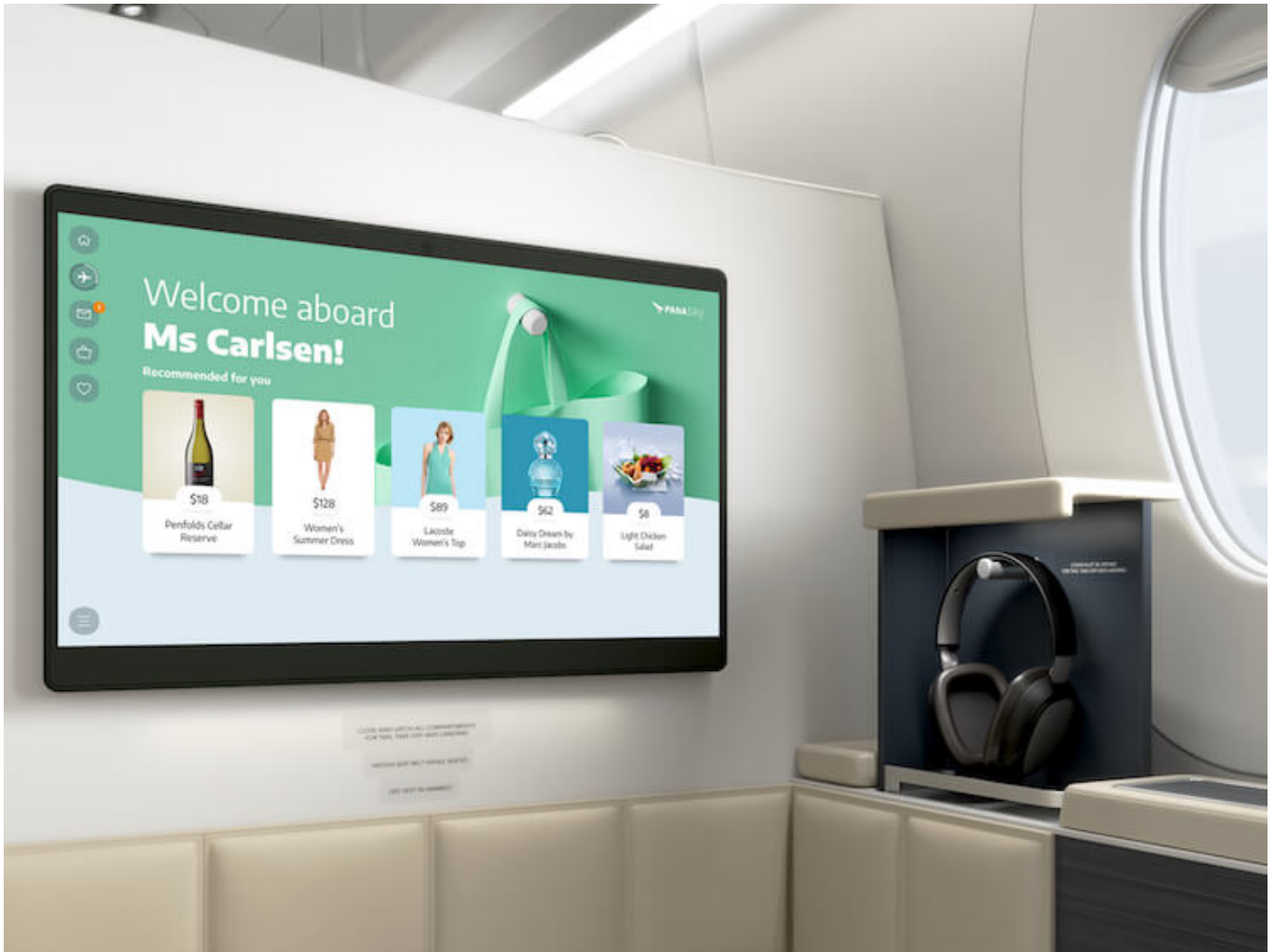
Narrow-body aircraft for long-haul routes are now living up to their predicted potential. They are competing with wide-bodies for fuel efficiency and range, causing a shift in how airlines think about the inflight experience on those aircraft.

"The biggest trend we see today as our industry recovers is narrow-body aircraft, especially in Asia and the US, embracing the value of in-seat IFE solutions," says Andy Masson, Vice President of Product Development at Panasonic Avionics, adding that connecting and working remotely has become a proven concept for many passengers.

## **Tech-savvy solutions for tech-savvy passengers**

Masson says that people working from home has enabled passengers to become far more "tech savvy" and the demand for the latest innovations in the living room and home office has spilled onto

the aircraft.



Panasonic's First Class NEXT IFE solution features a 4K UHD screen up to 43 inches, digital quality HD audio, wireless charging, USB and AC-power options, and support for wellness services

Panasonic Avionics' [NEXT Series](#) solution delivers advancements through superior cinematic displays, Bluetooth audio, high-power USB charging for passenger devices, and simplified seat integration for every cabin class. NEXT Series enhances that experience by delivering immersive entertainment to every passenger, improved operational efficiencies with hardware reliability and multiple layers of redundancy, and faster load times. It also generates business opportunities with revenue-creating service offerings.

The Economy Class NEXT system features a 4K UHD screen up to 13 inches, integrated multi-pin analog audio and USB charging, AC-power options, and marketplace services with a chip-reader. First Class features the same screen up to 43 inches, digital quality HD audio, wireless charging, USB and AC-power options, and support for wellness services.

### **Already plugged in**

Before the pandemic, having embedded IFE and connectivity on a narrow-body aircraft was a 'nice to have' feature for some customers, but today Masson says many are seeing it as more necessity than luxury, and all of its customers are re-evaluating the opportunities that IFE brings.

"Whether it's improved customer engagement, higher Net Promoter Scores (NPS), or increased

revenue, the potential of embedded IFEC has become a must have," he says.

This was borne out by United Airlines in 2021 who have installed embedded IFE, including Bluetooth audio, on their new 737MAX fleet. Panasonic Avionics also partnered with [Singapore Airlines](#) and [SAUDIA](#) to provide its 4K and Bluetooth IFE on several of its new aircraft.

"Post-pandemic IFE has evolved to mirror what passengers expect to do on the ground," says Masson. "IFE is now becoming available on narrow-body aircraft. The economic consequences of the pandemic, combined with the great strides OEMs have made, have resulted in greater use of narrow-body aircraft on long-haul routes, and this has driven a shift in thinking about the inflight experience on those aircraft."

Masson says Panasonic Avionics' approach is to always be leading the technology curve in IFE.

"This is an interesting time in the evolution of inflight entertainment as we grow to a more engaging solution set."