
Panasonic unveils largest economy seatback screen and holds in-flight ‘Tweetathon’

By **Maryann Simson** on April, 17 2013 | Inflight Entertainment



Established in 1979, Panasonic Avionics Corporation, a U.S. corporation, is a subsidiary of Panasonic Corporation of North America, the principal North American subsidiary of Panasonic Corporation. The top-tier provider of in-flight entertainment and communication systems made several announcements last week to coincide with the Aircraft Interiors Expo in Hamburg, Germany.

A conceptual 14-inch monitor for Economy Class seats integrated into a Quantum Seat designed by Encore Aerospace was a feature at Panasonic’s tradeshow stand. This integrated seat demonstrated Panasonic’s vision of delivering the largest monitor ever to debut in Economy Class. The collaboration with Encore Aerospace helped drive a thinner bezel design for the seat and a new concept for downward collapsible arm rests to help accommodate the display. It also contributed to new space provisioning and harness channel designs.

“Since the debut of project Fusion in 2009, we have engaged in dozens of integrated seat programs with our latest generation IFEC solutions,” said Paul Margis, President and Chief Executive Officer of Panasonic Avionics Corporation. “Working with Encore Aerospace, we were able to apply the experience we’ve gained and create a solution that delivers an even more incredible entertainment experience while actually increasing passenger comfort.”

The Quantum Seat was designed to decrease weight for less fuel burn and to maximize living space for passengers. It has a thin design that includes a carbon fibre seatback and pan, a retractable arm, and a hidden raceway that simplifies the installation and maintenance of wire harnesses. The monitor shroud is designed to integrate a wide range of Panasonic monitors in sizes ranging from 9 to 14 inches.

At the Expo, Panasonic also announced the latest enhancement to its Global Communications Service – the eCommerce Partnership Program.

“The eCommerce Partnership Program leverages the broadband connectivity available from Panasonic’s Global Communications Suite to transform passengers’ personal devices into business platforms that help drive ancillary revenue for airlines,” said Scott Scheer, Director of eXTV and Ancillary Services for Panasonic Avionics Corporation. “It also offers 3rd party business partners the opportunity to engage a captive audience on board aircraft flying all over the globe.”

The program can be pre-integrated into an in-flight Wi-Fi portal, and is available without obligation for Panasonic's Global Communications Service customers. There are currently three vendors who have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in order to participate in the program.

TripAdvisor®, a hub of travel information and research, will provide a streamlined version of its site to passengers with content that can be airline or route driven. Also participating in the Panasonic's eCommerce Partnership Program is GuestLogix™, already a partner with Panasonic for payment processing infrastructure. Finally, Choose Digital will provide an online marketplace with digital goods such as ebooks, audiobooks and music. Airlines will be able to customize the content categories and offer items for as little as \$1.00 USD for purchase



Highlighting Panasonic's devotion to better connecting passengers with airlines, services and social media, the company heavily promoted the achievement of a historic milestone, connecting passengers flying over five continents via Twitter in the first ever global in-flight Tweetathon.

The conversation, hashtagged #High5Live, took place between 10:00 and 15:00 CET on Tuesday April 9 (opening day for Aircraft Interiors Expo), as passengers on five aircraft flying over five continents charted their journeys and interacted with earthbound Twitter users 35,000 feet below. Passengers used Twitter to compare in-flight menus, share the results of live sports matches, plan itineraries and compete for the most Twitter mentions, using mobiles and tablets to access high-speed wireless broadband available via Panasonic's eXConnect technology.