



Destination inspiration takes off on in-flight entertainment

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Digital destination marketing is taking off on aircraft with the integration of interactive city-guides on in-flight entertainment systems.

This enables the booking of tours and events on aircraft with internet connectivity.

Airlines and in-flight entertainment and connectivity suppliers large and small are finding new ways to help airlines generate revenue.

The big players in the IFE sector, **Panasonic** and **Thales**, have introduced digital solutions which can help airlines boost airline revenue through targeted advertising, digital retail and destination services.

But the big players are not alone in this sector.

Lufthansa Systems features destination guides and shopping on its **digital Board Connect** wireless IFE system:

Norbert Müller, senior vice president BoardConnect at Lufthansa Systems says:

“Our digital BoardConnect platform is far more than just a pure IFE solution. Airlines can use it to significantly improve their passengers’ digital experience and further personalize their services.”

The digital BoardConnect platform uses open architecture which lets airlines run their own applications and applications from brand partners.

Lufthansa has also added destination content to its new FlyNet connectivity service, powered by Inmarsat's Global Xpress, which is currently being deployed in Europe.

Flight-specific destination guides are available on the FlyNet portal even off-line, but connectivity gives passengers access to more information and would allow for sales of destination activities during the flight.

Content specialists

Independent French media firm, PXCom, has found a special niche in destination content as a revenue builder, offering software platforms with destination-guides which can be installed on a broad range of IFEC equipment.

The company handles content creation, aggregation and management, including updates of the dedicated in-flight apps. Airlines can customize the appearance and the UX of the apps to fit their brand.

In its latest development, PXCom has introduced tags management which allows content to be personalized to passenger preferences. Content-viewing history can be stored on passengers' personal electronic devices ensuring they find relevant content each time they fly with the airline.

Olivier Heliot, PXCom's chief technology officer says:

"From one flight to the next one, on the same airline, the passenger can browse tailor-made content.

"Personalizing the inflight experience is a fantastic challenge."

The company has also introduced a flight review feature to the platform called 'SkyHi Reviews' which allows passengers to rate their destination activities and the points-of-interest they visited during their holiday on the return flight home.

The review data is downloaded from the aircraft on the ground and used to fine-tune future content.

PXCom's XPlore platform bundles destination content with special offers and services, and has been adopted by 11 airlines around the world.

The company is also focusing on building a strong catalogue of region-specific content.

During the APEX Expo in Singapore last year, PXCom announced a new partnership with Ctrip's Bamboo Compass, which broadened the scope of Asian destination content available through PXCom apps.

At the Aircraft Interiors Expo (AIX) in Hamburg this week, PXCom will introduce a new interactive app designed for pilgrims for Hajj and Umrah.

This new content was developed in response to airline demand for content which would appeal to the 15 million people who make the pilgrimage each year and the two million people who visit Mecca.

Cyril Jean, PXCom's chief executive, explains:

"Hajj and Umrah is an important journey for all Muslims in the world. It's a once in lifetime experience, but involves an important preparation from the pilgrims to perform the rites in the right way."

Wireless revenue

French technology company Vision Systems and PXCom are collaborating on a wireless audio video on-demand in-flight entertainment (IFE) system, Visi-Stream, which will also debut at this year's AIX.

It will include entertainment content like movies, music, games, and daily news, combined with extensive tourism information.

When using a Wi-Fi connection, passengers can buy tickets to events and passes for museums, or similar destination activities. The system also offers airlines revenue opportunities with global or local advertising.

Catherine Robin, group managing director, says:

“Vision Systems is committed to a permanent innovation approach, constantly looking for ways to provide cutting-edge solutions.

“The successful integration of XPlore allows us to offer IFE systems with further flexibility in terms of design and content.”

The system lets airlines update content for new cities or seasons with a simple GUI interface.

Jean says:

“Airlines can now choose to change both the UX and the content management, in a few clicks.

“For example, let’s imagine that during the Chinese New Year celebrations our airlines expect a change in the background and additional editorial content, it’s now a matter of minutes.”

Window shopping

Vision Systems will also exhibit the latest version of its Acti-Vision Window at the Aircraft Interiors Expo, designed to boost airline ancillaries through digital window shopping.

The company’s innovative window touch-screen interface lets passengers find information about landmarks outside their window on interactive maps, catch up with the latest news, order snacks and drinks on-board, and see tourist information for their destination.



A flight attendant panel on the window can transmit special announcements, including personalized advertising based on airline passenger data.

Vision Systems also makes dimmable windows for aircraft, a technology which allows the background of the Acti-Vision windows to be adjusted from clear to dark for improved contrast and readability.