

Comeback for Lufthansa's in-flight Internet

From mid-2010 Lufthansa's will be relaunching FlyNet, its onboard broadband Internet service, which will enable passengers to communicate via the Internet during flights.

In addition, the new service will permit in-flight data transfer over standard GSM/GPRS mobile networks. Thanks to FlyNet, Lufthansa passengers will soon not only have WLAN Internet access, but will also be able to send SMS messages by mobile phone and transfer data via smartphones such as PDA, iPhone or BlackBerry devices. Together with its new business partner, Panasonic, Lufthansa aims to equip a major portion of its long-range fleet with FlyNet within the first year of operation.

“Top-tier in-flight service”

"In terms of communications, Lufthansa customers can look forward to a top-tier in-flight service," said Lufthansa CEO and chairman Wolfgang Mayrhuber. "On long-haul routes, we offer business travellers, in particular, a range of communications options on a par with those available at powerful hot spots or upmarket hotels."

"We are thrilled to be working with Lufthansa as the launch customer for Panasonic's new broadband service, exConnect." said Paul Margis, CEO of Panasonic Avionics Corporation. "Lufthansa's previous experience with passenger connectivity makes them the ideal launch customer for the exConnect service. Lufthansa was a true pioneer with their FlyNet branded service. We are proud to bring FlyNet back to their passengers."

Focusing on high bandwidth

Lufthansa is deliberately focusing on high bandwidth as the main requirement for the unrestricted use of such services as web surfing, email/file transfer, including attachments, and the Virtual Private Network (VPN). In addition, only wide bandwidth will enable potential future operational applications, such as telemedicine for the transmission of a patient's vital parameters to a ground station.

FlyNet is impressively user-friendly. Passengers with a WLAN or GSM/GPRS-compatible device can log on from any point in the aircraft cabin, just like at any public hot spot. Depending on the device they are using (a laptop, mobile phone or a smart phone), passengers can choose to be billed via a mobile service provider or pay by credit card. Various different price models are planned - ranging from a rate by the hour to a monthly flat rate. Passengers should also be able to redeem Miles & More award miles for the use of WLAN Internet connections. The exact price for specific products will be announced at a later date. The service will gradually become available on all Lufthansa's long-haul flights worldwide.