

Wi-Fi Equipped Aircraft are Taking to the Skies

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As a number of industry insider and tech gadget bloggers are reporting, Wi-Fi services will soon be offered as an in-flight service on select aircraft. The first out of the gate is JetBlue, who will be taking off this month with a single aircraft equipped with free Wi-Fi service. Unfortunately, JetBlue's service is to be severely crippled, only allowing access to e-mail via a Yahoo! account and a Wi-Fi capable RIM Blackberry device. The good news is American Airlines ("AA") will be following soon after with a far superior Wi-Fi product, the details of which are explained in a memo Hyperion received from an AA insider.

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In early 2008, AA will be equipping 15 of the Boeing 767 aircrafts with Aircell broadband Wi-Fi service during the testing phase of this new offering. The product will be available in all classes for a fee and, unlike JetBlue's free service, will allow unfettered access to the internet, e-mail, and VPN. Furthermore, AA's service offering promises to deliver network speeds far greater than those of JetBlue's, comparing itself to "DSL" and JetBlue's to "dial-up".

While JetBlue has been able to offer Wi-Fi for free due to the partnerships made with Research in Motion ("RIM"), the makers of Blackberry devices, and Yahoo!, AA's pay service is destined to be far more successful. Because AA's Wi-Fi will be available to any mobile device with 802.11 wireless capabilities and allows access to services from any provider, users will not be required to switch carriers and equipment merely to make use of in-flight Wi-Fi. AA's product is sure to be the model on which other airlines base the inevitable move to Wi-Fi equipped aircraft.

For more details on this new technology and to ensure your business is taking advantage of future enhancements, contact Hyperion for a consultation on mobility solutions today.