



# How airlines around the world are deploying the Apple iPad

The iPad, which began primarily as an entertainment device when it was launched in 2010, has captured the imagination of many other industries in ways that Apple never even imagined. We have reported several times on [airlinetrends.com](http://airlinetrends.com) how airlines are increasingly making Apple's versatile iPad device available to passengers in their lounges, rent them out in the air, or use them as self-service kiosk, customer survey tool, and food ordering tool.

As the list of applications continues to grow, here is the latest overview of how airlines and airports are deploying the iPad worldwide.

## 1. Book, check-in

Cathay Pacific in July 2010 became the first airline to launch a dedicated application for the Apple iPad that lets users book Cathay Pacific flights, manage their flight booking, check the status of their flight, and check-in. Similar apps are today offered by American Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, THAI, and Alitalia.

In June 2010, Malaysia Airlines, in cooperation with SITA, introduced the world's first airline kiosk that uses the iPad. Passengers can use the 'MHkiosk' to search and book flights and check-in online. The kiosks are installed at the airline's ticket office at Kuala Lumpur's central station.

## **2. Airport service**

Spanish airline Iberia has equipped its customer service staff at the airline's Madrid-Barajas hub with iPads that provide them with real-time access to the information they need to make decisions and to keep passengers informed. Iberia's so-called IBPad is loaded with 30 different applications which together put the entire airport in the palm of the employee's hand. Iberia says the IBPad has improved everyday operations and dealings with customers, boosting communications and staff decision-making autonomy, while eliminating the use of paper.

## **3. Airport lounge**

To keep passengers entertained whilst waiting for their flight, several airlines have made iPads available in their lounges. Since July 2010, KLM offers 8 iPads in each of its two lounges at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport. Lounge guests can use the device to access the Internet, watch content from the airlines's IFE programming, play games, view KLM images and use a series of pre-installed apps.

Cathay Pacific, meanwhile, offers 21 Wi-Fi enabled iPads in its 'The Cabin' lounge, which opened in early October 2010. The devices come pre-loaded with apps such as newspapers, magazines and games. Other airlines, such as ANA and airBaltic, also make iPads available upon request to lounge guests at respectively Tokyo Haneda and Riga.

Furthermore, as passengers that frequent airline lounges are an interesting demographic for advertisers to reach, airlines often receive the devices for free (especially from iPad competitors like the Samsung Galaxy), a concept dubbed ['tryvertising'](#) by trendwatching.com. For example, Virgin Atlantic's premium

passengers could try out one of eight Samsung's Galaxy Tabs at the Virgin Atlantic Clubhouse lounge at Heathrow in November 2010.

## **4. Airport library**

In the 'Airport Library' at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, visitors can read books, watch short movies and listen to music. The 90 m2 library features several 'reading towers' filled with Dutch literature translated in 29 languages, laid-back reading chairs and seats with integrated listening devices, as well as a reading table equipped with 9 iPads. Visitors can use the iPads to see the collection, or watch videos about Dutch culture.

## **5. Airport F&B**

Delta Air Lines and airport restaurant operator OTG Management in late 2010 launched a novel restaurant concept at New York JFK and LaGuardia airports that allows passengers to order food and drinks via one of 200 iPads installed at dining areas at the gate. A server then delivers the food to the customer's seat in 10 minutes or less. Food can also be taken to go or brought onboard.

The iPads are affixed to the booths and counters at the gates and also offer other applications that allow travellers to check flights, read articles, play games, etcetera. OTG says the wireless Internet connection for the iPads is free, there isn't a time limit on customers' use and travelers don't have to buy food to use the devices. Delta and OTG will also installed iPad-enabled dining stations at at Minneapolis-St Paul Airport in 2012.

## **6. Media bar**

Delta and OTG have also announced another innovative concept that is build around the iPad, called the 'OTG Media Bar'. At what looks like a traditional

magazine stand, except filled with Apple iPads, passengers can flip through the iPads to see what publications, movies, and music they like, download the content of their choice, and then rent the device for their trip.

Once the passenger reaches his or her final destination, they use a pre-paid postage box received at time of rental to return the iPad. Passengers with their own iPads will be able to download material as well. The OTG Media Bar will open at Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport in 2012.

### **7. In-flight entertainment**

In June 2010, Qantas low-cost subsidiary Jetstar became the first airline in the world to offer the iPad for rent in a month-long trial on two routes out of Melbourne. As the pilot was a success, the airline announced it would roll out the offer across its fleet, but it has been facing multiple delays. However, a Jetstar spokesman just confirmed the iPads would be available to passengers within weeks, following the airline's recent purchase of more than 2,000 iPad 2's. The rental fee will be around AUD10.

Jetstar reportedly will fit the iPads with a purpose-built case which includes a bracket that lets passengers hang the device at eye level on new 'Pinnacle' slimline seats from B/E Aerospace. Alternatively, a flip-stand on the case lets passengers rest the iPad horizontally on the seat's tray table.

The custom case for the iPads will also contain a second battery to allow the device to run for over 20 hours between recharges, as well as RFID tags to prevent theft. The cases will be swapped out during the aircraft's turn-around time, so the iPads themselves will remain on

board, receiving freshly charged battery packs.

Icelandic low-cost airline Iceland Express and Latvian-based airBaltic are currently the only airlines that rent out iPads to passengers in-flight on a regular basis. Since November 2010, Iceland Express has been offering passengers the option to rent an iPad for around EUR10 on transatlantic flights between Reykjavik and North America.

AirBaltic, meanwhile, in June 2011 introduced the iPad 2 for rent on flights longer than 2.5 hours. The fee for Economy class passengers is EUR9.00 per one-way flight, while Business class passengers can use the device free of charge.

British Airways from mid-May to mid-June 2011 has been trialling iPads on a B777-200 aircraft, replacing the portable devices that are currently used by First Class and Business Class passengers. The B777-200 was one of 18 aircraft without on demand (AVOD) entertainment, which will be fitted with new AVOD systems from September 2011 on. As the retrofit will last around 12 months, BA is planning to offer premium passengers iPads with pre-installed entertainment in the meantime.

*Samsung Galaxy, Google Chromebook*  
Meanwhile, iPad competitors Samsung (Galaxy) and Google (Chromebook) have partnered with airlines to let passengers try their devices in-flight. American Airlines will provide Samsung's Galaxy Tabs to its business and first class passengers on selected routes that are served by B757 and B767 aircraft. The carrier will roll out a total of 6,000 Galaxy Tab 10.1 tablets in the next months to replace the current personal entertainment devices.

Google has teamed up with Virgin America to allow passengers to 'test-fly' the search giant's new Chromebook computers for free. Virgin America's passengers can use the computers onboard their flight and at select airport gates from July 1 through September 30, 2011. Flyers who borrow a Chromebook also receive a free WiFi session onboard Virgin America. The Chromebooks can be returned at the passenger's arriving gate and Google Chrome Staff is also on hand to assist passengers.

### **8. In-flight magazine**

In order to become more appealing to advertisers, airlines in recent years have made their in-flight magazines available to a wider audience, for example publishing the as e-magazines and dedicated iPad apps (both for free and for a small fee). Airlines such as Lufthansa, TAP, Finnair, airBaltic, United, Air New Zealand, ANA and Malaysia Airlines, have developed free iPad apps for their in-flight magazines, which often also contain extra features such as videos, photo galleries and animations.

### **9. Passenger surveys**

As part of its Rethink Quality initiative, Finnair in a one-month pilot in November 2010 offered passengers free use of iPads on board select flights between Helsinki and Hong Kong. In addition to entertaining content, the iPads contained a bespoke customer research application developed by the airline, which invites passengers to "explore a few ideas" and give their opinion. Passengers could rate their interest on a 1 to 5 scale on ideas such as the option to order food and drinks from the IFE system, whether they want to learn more about the background of wines served onboard, or their preferred selection of items available for sale inflight.

On a similar note, from June to August 2010, KLM used three iPads for a survey among passengers on its regional subsidiary KLM Cityhopper to test the feasibility of the device for passenger research. The iPads were dedicated for the survey with no entertaining content offered.

### **10. Cabin crew, pilots**

KLM will also provide a group of 50 senior pursers and 50 pilots with iPads on board as part of a 6-month trial project starting in October 2011, with the aim of bringing various operational functionalities together in a single digital tablet. KLM feels it is essential that cabin crew have easy access to the latest information for personal contact with passengers, as personal contact with passengers on the ground is becoming rarer due to the increased deployment of self-service kiosks.

In the USA, where the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in March 2011 approved the use of iPads in the cockpit, Alaska Airlines is currently transitioning all 1,400-plus of its pilots to company-issued iPads, the first airline in the world to do so. The iPads will improve fuel economy by cutting back on the weight on board and also allow for documents to be updated more frequently. Alaska pilots are asked to charge up their units before arriving to work. And there are two iPads in the cockpit, just in case. Delta, American and Qantas, among others, are considering similar initiatives.

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