AIRBUS NEWS

GDCM 49/2004R

15th September 2004

AIRBUS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETES FIRST MOBILE-TELEPHONE FLIGHT TRIAL AND MULTIPLE WIRELESS-CABIN TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION

Airbus has successfully completed the first in-flight trial of GSM personal mobile- telephones aboard an airliner, paving the way for their future widespread use. The trial, which took place aboard an Airbus A320 flight-test aircraft flying from, and back to, Toulouse, is part of an ongoing technical development project to provide an in-flight mobile telephony service to airline passengers.

In addition to tests for measurement purposes, functional tests were performed in which several different GSM telephones were used simultaneously for both voice communications and text messaging. The trials demonstrated successful communications to and from personal mobile telephones onboard to mobile and fixed telephones on the ground, and to another mobile telephone aboard.

The prototype equipment and software used in the trials were developed by Airbus supported by the telecommunication specialist Icarelink. The signals from the mobile telephone went first to a "picocell" inside the aircraft, next to a computer server that routed them through the Globalstar satellite communications network to the ground, and finally to ground-based telephone networks.

The tests are a major milestone in the offering by Airbus of personal mobile telephones aboard commercial aircraft from 2006. A key objective of Airbus is to provide passenger connectivity at affordable prices. This will mean implementation of affordable technologies, as well as cost-effective, flexible and personalised services for passengers in line with current international mobile-telephone charges.

Additionally, Airbus has successfully completed flight-trials of multiple simultaneous wireless technologies on board an A340-600. The trials culminated a two-year research programme by the Wireless Cabin consortium, led by the German Aerospace Centre DLR and supported by the European Commission.

They used technologies based upon emerging standards - GSM/UMTS for mobile telephony, wi-fi (IEEE 802.11) and Bluetooth for mobile computing services. Inmarsat SWIFT64 was the satellite link to the ground.
GSM service, web browsing, email, and virtual private network (VPN) were all flight tested. Intranet from onboard servers was also demonstrated, as were personal digital assistants (PDAs) for crew use. In addition wireless telemedicine, including a simulated emergency, demonstrated priority communication over other services.
When personal mobile telephones are implemented in Airbus aircraft in 2006, they will complement the email and SMS messaging that is already offered. The technologies demonstrated by the Wireless Cabin research are a further step, and will be considered for incorporation in commercial aircraft as they become mature and affordable.
Airbus is an EADS joint Company with BAE Systems.

* * *

AIRBUS, AN EADS JOINT COMPANY WITH BAE SYSTEMS
MEDIA RELATIONS
1 ROND-POINT MAURICE BELLONTE
31707 BLAGNAC CEDEX, FRANCE
PHONE +33 (0) 5 61 93 33 87 / 34 31
FAX +33 (0) 5 61 93 49 55 / 38 36
E-MAIL media@airbus.com
WEB SITE www.airbus.com