Boeing Markets New Version of Digital Troubleshooting Tool

The Boeing Company today begins marketing an advanced version of a digital troubleshooting tool that helps airline maintenance personnel return airplanes to service quickly.

The Portable Maintenance Aid (PMA) is a software product consisting of key maintenance information contained in just a few compact disks that can be loaded into a laptop computer and taken directly to an airplane. Part of a family of Boeing Digital products and services, the new version of the PMA allows airlines to customize the troubleshooting information that it contains and provides vastly enhanced search, navigation and networking capabilities.

Earlier versions of the PMA have been used by 35 airlines around the world.

The PMA significantly reduces troubleshooting time because mechanics don't need to make repeated trips to a crew room or technical library to look up information on paper or microfilmed documents. A powerful search capability and "hyperlinks" that connect related references in text allow instant access to any part of the Fault Isolation Manual, Aircraft Maintenance Manual, Aircraft Illustrated Parts Catalog and other documents.

"Our newest PMA takes troubleshooting to a higher level of efficiency," said Rich Higgins, Boeing Commercial Airplanes Group vice president - Maintenance Engineering and Publications. "By using intelligent graphics technology, the PMA provides hyperlinks from illustrations to text. Mechanics can point-and-click on a highlighted area of a drawing and instantly bring troubleshooting information into view. That same technology also speeds up fault isolation by instantly displaying the next choice of options at each step in a fault-tree diagram."

Higgins said another major advantage of the new PMA is that customers can add their own airline-specific maintenance information to the Boeing documents and have full access to it through the PMA search engine. In addition, customers can insert their own hyperlinks.

Another feature of the new offering is that it is network compatible, enabling multiple users to easily access the software, via a local server. At the same time, customers have complete control over the information and features available to each individual user. Besides airplane mechanics, the software also is extremely useful to maintenance and engineering staffs in completing many technical assignments.

The new product is offered on a three-year contract, with pricing based on fleet size. Revisions will coincide with the Aircraft Maintenance Manual revision cycle for each airplane model.

The first of the new PMAs now being released covers the Next-Generation 737 models. That will be followed in sequence by versions for the 747-400, 737-300/ -400/-500, 767, 777 and, by late September, the 757. Boeing plans to offer versions for the MD-11 and MD-90 by early 2000.

The PMA is one of several Boeing Digital information tools, which include both online and media-based products and services supporting airplane maintenance.

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