Boeing Sees Information Technology as Key to Jet Fleet Support

A top Boeing Company official said yesterday that timely, accurate, data-rich information will be crucial to supporting the commercial jet fleet in tomorrow's world of the "virtual airline."

"Our ultimate goal is to offer airlines a single source of integrated technical data - online, 24 hours a day," said Brad Cvetovich, vice president and general manager - Customer Support at Boeing Commercial Airplanes Group.

Cvetovich spoke at the Aerovision 2000 Symposium held in conjunction with this week's Aerospace North America trade show in Vancouver. He told the audience of aviation officials that new applications of digital technology would help carriers cope with their rapidly changing industry while focusing on core competencies.

"Airlines want to shed cumbersome, disruptive activities - or at the very least they want help in streamlining the way those activities are carried out," Cvetovich said. "There is a whole new market segment growing up around many of the service-related functions. At Boeing, we recognize that information technology is the key to keeping up with this changing market."

He cited several new digital products and services, including a family of information tools that carry the trade name Boeing Digital. They replace paper and microfilmed maintenance documents with digitized versions that are on compact disks or accessible online. They reduce search time up to 60 percent, simplify or eliminate management of the documents by airlines, and speed up aircraft troubleshooting.

Cvetovich also said Boeing has been on the forefront of electronic commerce. He noted that the Boeing PART Page was the first web site of its kind, offering airlines the ability to order and track spare parts shipments over the Internet. The site processes about 16,000 transactions daily, including orders and inquiries.

He said Boeing is working on several new digital offerings. These include software applications that will speed up routine maintenance checks between flights, enhance troubleshooting proficiency of mechanics, identify the most probable causes of malfunctions, and streamline the fault-reporting process.

"What we foresee beyond the digital tools now in existence or under development is an even greater integration of computing power," Cvetovich said. "By integrating all of the digital information, Boeing will help airlines, suppliers and repair firms 'mine' the data in ways that will offer unprecedented opportunity to save money and enhance productivity."

He added that the Boeing integrated data system of the future would amount to "information empowerment" that would provide for the total care and support of airplanes in real time. He predicted airlines would begin accessing the new system well before the end of the first decade in the new century.

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