Boeing To Provide Maintenance Documents Via World Wide Web

In a move that will extend the benefits of electronic commerce to more of the world's airlines, The Boeing Company today began a pilot program to provide direct access to airplane maintenance documents over the World Wide Web.

"The speed and security of the Internet have improved enormously over the past couple of years," said John J. Gibson, director of Maintenance Engineering Digital Data Systems. "The time has come for us to upgrade our existing client/server-based online system to a simpler, less costly and easier-to-access web-based system."

In 1995, Boeing was the first airplane maker to provide online access to digitized maintenance information from a central database. That service, known today as Boeing On-Line Delivery (BOLD), is based on an older software standard called "X-Windows." It requires customers to be trained on the use of custom search and retrieval software and to purchase specialized computing hardware and network connections.

By taking advantage of web browser technology and newer software standards, Boeing has repackaged BOLD for use on the web.

"Our ultimate goal is for our customers to obtain all the information they need to operate and maintain their Boeing fleets through a single network connection," Gibson said. "Now we're very close to reaching that goal."

Access to the web-based BOLD will require only a personal computer, standard Internet connection, web browser and Boeing password account. Customers no longer will need lengthy user training, special software or costly equipment.

Initially, web access is limited to the 95 current BOLD customers in a pilot program that runs until next spring. These customers may use the web to access service bulletins, maintenance tips, configuration change data, in-service fleet reports and other documents.

As the system evolves, web access will be expanded to include detailed technical drawings, all major maintenance manuals, product standards and other information. The web-based BOLD system will also accommodate more features, including self-paced training programs and e-mail communication between the customer and Boeing.

Another benefit is the ability to join with other web-based applications supporting Boeing customers. One of these is a web site known as FTS Online, developed by the company's Flight Technical Services organization. With BOLD and FTS Online accessible through a common portal, customers will have a convenient way to quickly retrieve engineering, flight, operations and maintenance information.

By next spring, at the conclusion of the pilot program, Boeing will designate the web-based BOLD as the standard offering and make it available to all customers worldwide. Boeing will continue to support the original version of BOLD until the end of the year 2000.

A key benefit of going online is that customers eliminate the need to distribute, store, file and retrieve huge quantities of paper and microfilmed documents. In addition, the BOLD database is updated daily, providing customers with the latest, most accurate information for airplane maintenance, repair and operations.

BOLD is part of a family of digital information products and services offered under the trade name Boeing Digital. These digital tools are provided through the Customer Support organization of Boeing Commercial Aviation Services, which offers the industry's most comprehensive portfolio of aviation support products and services.

###

For further information:
Dick Schleh
206-544-9528