United Airlines Orders Advanced Software Tool from Boeing

United Airlines is the latest -- and largest -- customer of The Boeing Company's [NYSE: BA] Portable Maintenance Aid (PMA), a powerful software tool that helps airlines improve airplane dispatch reliability. The Chicago-based carrier will use the software to support maintenance control activity for its fleet of more than 400 Boeing airplanes.

PMA software is a digitized library of key technical information contained in a few compact discs. Boeing developed the software in the mid-1990s and began marketing it four years ago to Boeing and McDonnell Douglas fleet operators. Boeing also produces a version for operators of Fokker aircraft.

PMA software offers several significant time-saving advantages for aircraft troubleshooting, which Boeing estimates can reduce the time needed to search and retrieve information by as much as 40 percent:

- The software can be loaded in a mechanic's laptop computer for quick access when servicing an airplane in the airport gate environment. This eliminates the need for mechanics to make repeated trips to a crew room or technical library to search for information on paper or microfilmed documents.
- Advanced search capability and hyperlinks connect related references in text, allowing instant access to any part of the Fault Isolation Manual, Aircraft Maintenance Manual, Aircraft Illustrated Parts Catalog and many other documents.
- Intelligent graphics technology enables users to point-and-click on a highlighted area of an illustration and instantly bring troubleshooting text into view.

PMA software is available in both read-only and customizable versions. It also is network compatible, allowing access by multiple users on a local server. Engineering staffs find it particularly useful for analyzing technical problems and issuing work orders.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration accepts PMA and Boeing Digital Technical Documents -- another Boeing digital product -- as equivalent to paper or microfilmed documentation. This further saves airlines time by streamlining the process for obtaining regulatory approval of digitally based information.

Other recent PMA customers include Aero Continente, Lima, Peru; Eurocypria Airlines, Larnaca, Cyprus; Lequois Airlines, Okinawa, Japan; and Mandarin Airlines, Taipei, Taiwan. In total, 87 airlines worldwide use PMA software.

"We're very pleased that airlines are finding our Portable Maintenance Aid an important tool for improving productivity in their daily operations," said Lou Mancini, vice president of Maintenance Services at Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "We're always looking for ways to add value for our customers."

PMA software is one of several information technology offerings from Boeing Commercial Aviation Services. These offerings include both online and media-based products and services for airplane maintenance and operation.

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