

Boeing improves customer access to B2B portal, sets new industry standard

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Southwest Airlines first to implement

Working with Southwest Airlines, Boeing [NYSE: BA] has deployed a software capability that seamlessly integrates its secure business-to-business web portal, MyBoeingFleet.com, with the airline's intranet environment. The software allows Southwest employees to view maintenance data on MyBoeingFleet using their Southwest computer IDs and passwords.

"With a single sign-on, Southwest employees can move between information that is provided on their company's intranet and information located on the external, password-protected Boeing customer site," said Barb Claitman, director of Information Systems at Boeing Commercial Aviation Services.

Airline benefits include reduced account administrative costs and the ability to offer web resources to more employees such as mechanics on the maintenance floor.

"Significant cost savings and process improvements are being immediately realized at our maintenance locations," said Barry Smithley, manager of Maintenance Programs at Southwest. "We've reduced maintenance manual distribution and revision control, while putting the information that our engineers and mechanics need at their fingertips."

The pilot program with Southwest is one of the first commercial applications of a single sign-on between secure web sites, according to Claitman.

The single sign-on is achieved using security assertion markup language (SAML), which enables disparate computing environments to exchange authentication and authorization information about users. SAML was developed by the Security Services Technical Committee of the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS), a global e-business standards consortium. Approved as an OASIS standard in November 2002, SAML provides an interoperable, secure mechanism for passing user credentials and other related information among web sites.

Following the successful implementation at development partner Southwest Airlines, Boeing is making the single sign-on available to other users of MyBoeingFleet, said Claitman.

MyBoeingFleet is a secure business-to-business site on the World Wide Web that provides airline customers with a single point of entry to Boeing information and services. It offers continuous access to an ever-increasing number of engineering drawings, flight operations materials, maintenance documents and other types of information essential to the ownership, operation and maintenance of Boeing commercial airplanes. The site registers more than six million hits per month, with more than 263 gigabytes of data passing through the portal -- an amount equivalent to nearly 54 million pages of text.

Dallas-based Southwest, the fourth largest U.S.-based carrier in terms of customers boarded, serves 58 cities in 30 states. It operates nearly 2,800 flights daily.

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