

Hamburg will again play host to the cabin interiors, in-flight entertainment and passenger comfort industries.



Finding order in Messe

As Aircraft Interiors Expo touches down in Hamburg, the *Inflight* team looks at some of the expected highlights.

It's that time of the year when the in-flight entertainment and connectivity (IFEC) industry descends upon Hamburg, Germany for the annual Aircraft Interiors Expo (AIX, 4-6 April).

"This year AIX welcomes 55 new exhibiting companies, including Adient, Bombardier and airtango. They will join more than 500 companies at the event including longstanding exhibitors, such as Airbus, B/E Aerospace, Boeing, Inmarsat, Panasonic Avionics and Zodiac and newer entrants such

as Acro, and Mirus Aircraft Seating," says Polly Magraw, event director for AIX.

Magraw adds, "Aircraft Interiors Expo is a unique opportunity for your business to exhibit your product innovations in front of more than 1,000 key airline buyers. The event will provide the opportunity for business networking as well as hearing and discussing the latest issues and trends within the industry."

As passengers, but particularly millennials, demand an at-home connectivity experience

in the air, airlines are under increasing pressure to invest to meet the evolving needs of passengers.

This is reflected in the continued growth of the IFEC Zone, which is now firmly established as one of the world's largest events dedicated to content and service providers. There are 18 new showcasing companies, including LiteAir Aviation Products, Otonomy Aviation and Philotech, alongside 100 existing exhibitors in the Zone.

Some 20,000 visitors are expected to register to attend Passenger Experience Week, which also includes the World Travel Catering and Onboard Services Expo, co-located at the Hamburg Messe.

The week begins with the eagerly anticipated Passenger Experience Conference (PEC) on 3 April. The event is dedicated to the future of the passenger experience industry and incorporates a broad choice of presentations and panel



An expanded IFEC zone bears testimony to the growth of content and service technologies.

discussions on the key themes of generating revenue, the connected journey, and comfort and wellbeing. Leading speakers on these topics come from inside and outside the passenger experience industry, including Dick Powell, the chairman of design agency Seymourpowell; Paul Edwards, head of industrial design at Airbus; and Blake Emery, direction differentiation strategy at Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

New to the PEC this year is the Airline Breakfast Forum. This addition presents an opportunity for airline attendees to network, debate informally with their peers about issues relevant to improving the passenger experience in their businesses and to share best practice insights. Attendees at the Airline Breakfast Forum will also be invited to a keynote by Jeff James, vice-president and general manager of the Disney Institute.

Another addition is CabinSpace LIVE, a theatre-style series of seminars where visitors can “learn and be inspired on a variety of pressing issues within the IFEC, interiors and MRO sector”.

IN THE ZONE

One familiar name returning to the IFEC Zone is Lufthansa Systems. Visitors to its booth will be able to see new features on its in-flight entertainment (IFE) solution, BoardConnect Portable. According to the company, the user experience stands at the heart of new developments. This includes a new user interface, which is even more intuitive to use, and an architecture that will become even

more flexible, making it “the best platform for the connected aircraft”. A fully modular approach will enable use cases for cabin, cockpit and crew, in addition to IFE.

Unwilling to share more details, Lufthansa Systems has teased with news of an extension to its existing partner network. The company is set to announce new partnerships, which will provide additional services and functionalities. During the show the company will give an update on current roll-out projects, which include the first airlines within the Lufthansa Group, for connectivity services and announce new customers for both BoardConnect and BoardConnect Portable.

“As IFE’s presence at the Aircraft Interiors Expo is rapidly expanding, it’s more important than ever that we are there to showcase our brand and services to leading airlines all over the world,” says content services provider Global One Media. “Our booth for 2017 is our largest ever for this reason.”

Encouraging visitors to check out their latest creative content concepts, along with exciting new developments, the company adds, “As AIX sets the agenda for our industry and the future of the aircraft interiors, it’s a great chance for us to meet our core customers and discuss the latest developments and future capabilities in in-flight entertainment.”

It is these future capabilities that Axinom is keen to showcase. “In the future, we will continue providing the core foundation of digital platform products to connect services,

assets, and people with proven industry-specific architectures and technologies and create an open platform that is extensible and adaptable to customer needs. Therefore, our platform approach keeps a constant consideration of innovative solutions in order to meet customer’s requirements in any industry, and builds a foundation that that can be further developed in the future,” says Sara Pepic, marketing manager.

“Our mission is to reinvent the way people consume media and services at home, at work and while travelling. As for 2017, there is no doubt that the content management in the cloud will be one of the most dominant topics. While the business decision for a cloud or on-premises solution is still a tough one to make, we already simplified this choice by making our Axinom Content Management System (CMS) support deployments both in the cloud and on premises.

“Furthermore, the ability to provide a studio-grade DRM protection in offline environments and cover different usage scenarios on board is one of the core requirements for modern IFE systems and this requirement will be further emphasised in the future.

“Our Axinom Digital Rights Management (DRM) service is the first multi-DRM product that can operate in a disconnected fashion, enabling premium video on board of more than a hundred aircraft in the world today. And with Axinom Content Delivery System (CDS), we will continue bringing new and future-proof aspects of synchronisation to different industries using standardised communication protocols and mediums.”

According to Phil Brace, IFEC and airborne power solutions at DDC Electronics, “The Aircraft Interiors Expo at Hamburg is considered to be one of the key industry trade shows for the cabin electronics and interior vendors and airlines. We can expect to see all of the IFE, connectivity, seat, monument and materials suppliers exhibit at this show in early April.”

He adds, “For DDC Electronics, we expect to see continued interest in our airborne

power solutions from the OEMs [original equipment manufacturers] that we have supported for more than 23 years”.

The Pascall product line has shipped in excess of 165,000 power supplies in line replaceable units and embedded forms to its core focus markets of IFE, connectivity, personal electronic devices (PEDs), power and seat actuation.

“In an industry that faces ever-increasing competition, DDC’s power solutions continue to offer high efficiency and industry-leading reliability in multiple form factors.

“We can expect to observe ongoing trends at the Expo in the areas of seatback IFE, wireless BYOD [bring your own device] IFE, high-bandwidth connectivity and PED power provision. In addition, next-generation seat designs will be exhibited,

all of which are focused on improving the passenger experience.

“As always, Expo visitors can expect to receive a warm welcome at the DDC booth in Hall 2, where a range of power and cabin system solutions will be on show,” Brace asserts.

Having been acquired by ViaSat in November 2016, Arconics will have a strong presence at AIX 2017. Along with colleagues from its parent company, it will display a full suite of connected apps for aviation, from high-capacity satellite connectivity for W-IFE to the AeroDocs safety and compliance document management system for airlines.

VIRTUAL EXPERIENCES

When a passenger enters an aircraft, they don’t only expect the latest movies and TV

series to be available, bridging a long flight time. Passengers, especially those travelling on business, want to be well connected and able to be productive, ideally not noticing any difference to working in the well-equipped office premises of their company.

The challenge facing airlines, and therefore aircraft manufacturers and all their suppliers, is making all this possible and offering their customers maximum comfort. Especially in the business-, first-class and VIP aircraft sectors, a customised and well-equipped flying conference room is needed.

In order to provide such an individual cabin, it takes more than a good interior designer. Such projects are usually highly complex, time consuming and very expensive. The sooner the OEM can present the cabin to his customer, the airline, the



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quicker he can implement all requirements and individual adaptations to start production.

Dassault Systèmes' Passenger Experience allows designers, engineers, and customers to virtually experience the aircraft's interior even before the first physical prototype is built. The 360-degree view lets them explore all cabin features under any lighting condition or in any environment to assess and validate shape, function, reflection materials, colour, trim, and comfort.

What differentiates Passenger Experience is that it fully automates the cabin design and layout process using unique knowledge, based on 3D applications that capture and apply companies' expert know-how. It incorporates a company's own design and manufacturing rules and Intellectual Property (IP), as well as industry regulations to make

sure the finished product will meet all safety and certification guidelines. By automating these various functions, companies are able to reduce the time it takes to engineer custom configurations that create whatever environment customers want to achieve.

At AIX, Dassault is offering visitors the opportunity to try Passenger Experience and explore how it feels to be inside their own cabin.

Another company taking innovation a step further is AIM Altitude. In the run-up to Hamburg, the company has given a sneak peek on what visitors can expect to see on its stand, which it says "will provide a metaphor for what the company does best: taking complex design visions from concept through to certified reality, while maintaining the design integrity and brand identity."

Ross Burns, group lead industrial designer at AIM Altitude's Cabin Interiors division explains, "The Virtual Experience Studio will be a creative area where customers and visitors can customise an aircraft scene to their own taste. This 'white space' virtual-reality model uses state-of-the-art technology to bring to life the interior space. Visitors to the stand will experience physical feedback blended with digital customisation of an array of units. Trim and finish, as well as 'feature' possibilities, will be enabled for visitors to see in real time how different products could look within the cabin architecture."

Based around a 'development project', the stand will consist of two areas that illustrate AIM's design, engineering and manufacturing techniques and capabilities. The first is a creative element – a Door 2

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entrance concept. Being the main entrance to the plane for most airlines, Door 2 is the first impression that the passenger is likely to receive. This makes it particularly important for this area to create a brand image and differentiation from other airlines. It is also the space in which many airlines choose to include a bar, lounge, or display monument.

The second is a practical product that has potential for commercialisation. According to the company, this physical product is an exciting proposition too, with numerous new features, some of which AIM Altitude describes as 'revolutionary'. These developments to the product have, says Burns, come about from customer interaction, where AIM Altitude has designed and engineered features to meet specific customer demands.

The exact details, however, will remain under wraps until the show itself.

Bucher Leichtbau expects 2017 to be an exciting and positive year as it intends to introduce a range of new products. At this year's AIX, Bucher will be showcasing several new and improved products as well as a virtual cabin walk-through.

At their booth visitors can experience one of these products first hand – a complete aft galley, which is part of Bucher's new galley system for the Airbus A330neo. This galley, known for its lightweight and reliable design, has been optimised for additional storage space.

Also part of the exhibit will be the newly designed entry area complex, which will include a galley featuring the new and innovative SkyDrinx beverage dispenser. Part of this exhibit will also be a space-saving combination between a self-service counter and a business-class front row monument.

For aircraft seating applications, a variety of in-flight-entertainment and tray table

deployment systems with 'improved reliability, simplicity and feel' will also be presented.

"The market is very buoyant and we see growth for 2017, both in the global aircraft seating market and within our business. Exciting times ahead!" says Alan McInnes, head of sales at Acro Aircraft Seating. "The overall economy-class seating marketing is expected to grow year on year between now and 2032 (Airbus/Boeing data) with 39,620 new aircraft built by 2035, 78% of which will be single aisle.

The company will be exhibiting its new Series 6 economy-class seat, the Series 7 premium-economy-class seat and the Series 3 ST.

"The breakthrough in the evolution of the Series 6 seat, has been to simplify the structure in order to maximise living space for the passenger and to replace the traditional seatback with a composite that is both as beautiful as it is efficient. The simpler configuration and customisation offers increased passenger comfort, a more

sophisticated appearance, unequalled legroom, 13% lighter weight than the current-generation seat, 50% reduction in parts, greater durability and lower costs of operation."

Having successfully supplied seats for line-fit since 2015, the company signed a contract with Airbus during January for Acro products to be included in their BFE (Buyer Furnished Equipment) Catalogue. "This agreement with Airbus is the latest milestone achievement that reflects how hard we've worked to grow Acro by investing in our staff, product innovation and supporting infrastructure.

"Appearing in the Airbus Catalogue extends our reach and accessibility to scheduled flag carriers, enabling our growth and pursuing our vision of perfect comfort for passengers," McInnes says.

Elsewhere, LIFT by Encore and Rebel.Aero have indicated they will be making some highly anticipated product announcements. We await further details. ■

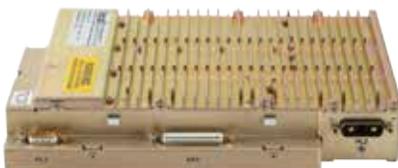


Dassault's Virtual Passenger Experience offers visitors the opportunity to explore cabin concepts.



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