

Delta picks Microsoft for pilot tablets

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In this Sept. 23, 2013, file photo, Microsoft's Surface Pro 2 is introduced, in New York. Delta Air Lines plans to buy 11,000 Microsoft Surface 2 tablets for its pilots to replace the heavy bundles of books and maps they haul around now. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan)

Delta Air Lines plans to buy 11,000 Microsoft Surface 2 tablets for its pilots to replace the heavy bundles of books and maps they haul around now.

Other airlines, including American and United, have been buying

Apple's iPad for that purpose.

Delta says the Surface [tablets](#) will save it \$13 million per year in fuel and other costs. Right now, each pilot carries a 38-pound [flight](#) bag with manuals and maps.

Delta plans to test the tablets on its Boeing 757s and 767s, which are flown by the same group of pilots. The airline is hoping for Federal Aviation Administration approval next year to use the tablets throughout a flight, and it hopes to be using the devices on all of its other planes by the end of next year.

One reason Delta picked a Microsoft device was that it's easier to give pilots separate sections for company and personal use, said Steve Dickson, Delta's senior vice president for flight operations.

Pilots will be able to install personal software and keep their own items such as photos on the personal section of the devices, while another portion will be dedicated to Delta's software, Dickson said.

"We trust them to manage that side of the device," Dickson said.

Another reason for picking the Surface tablet is that Delta's training software also runs on the same Windows operating system as the tablets, reducing the need to redo that [software](#) for another device, Dickson said.

Delta has already done a test program where pilots could bring their own devices, including iPads.

In August, Delta said its flight attendants will get Windows phones to process in-flight sales of food, better seats, and other items.

Microsoft announced last week that it is updating its tablet line, which

includes the Surface 2s that Delta is buying. The Surface 2 is the cheaper of the two versions sold by Microsoft, retailing for \$449 each. Dickson declined to say how much Delta is paying.

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