

Cathay Pacific plans on-board web, phone service

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A mother and child wait at a check-in desk for Hong Kong-based carrier Cathay Pacific in the Chinese territory. The airline has announced plans to fit its entire fleet with full broadband Internet access, a mobile phone service and even live television.

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In a deal with Panasonic Avionics, the eXConnect broadband system will have speeds of up to 50 megabytes on the Hong Kong flag-carrier's aircraft by early 2012. Flights will also have a call and data service for mobile phones.

The system will be accessible through all passenger devices and seatback screens and will include a range of content updated during the flight, plus live television with a pay-per-view capability for special events.

"We believe that being connected is now an expected part of everyday life, not just for business purposes but also to stay in touch with family and friends," said Alex McGowan, head of product for

Cathay Pacific.

"This system will allow passengers to be as 'in touch' as they wish to be while enjoying the great Cathay Pacific and Dragonair service."

It will not, however, be free. The airline will announce the pricing structure when the system is rolled out.

The crew will also be able to monitor and transmit airline operational data in real time.

Cathay says it is the first airline in Asia to announce its intention to deploy the Panasonic [broadband](#) system and the first airline in the world to announce its use across its full fleet.

Several other [airlines](#), including Delta and Virgin, are also updating their fleets with Wifi systems.

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