

Fast Network for Use on Trains and Planes

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Business travelers on the go want to use the same state-of-the-art communication options they can access in their offices and at home. That's why Siemens has developed solutions to meet this demand and is offering the technologies that make it possible to surf the Internet while sitting in a train or have a cell phone conversation aboard an airliner.

Now it's possible to enjoy a stable broadband internet connection aboard a high-speed train, via satellite. For this project, Siemens integrated the broadband network in the passenger rail car and created the entire management system, including user identification and billing. While riding the rails at 300 kilometers per hour, a data transfer rate of four megabits a second for website downloads was achieved. That's easily 30 times faster than an ISDN connection with 128 kilobits per second — and it makes surfing the Internet a pleasure.

The Belgian-French rail company Thalys will be testing the wireless Internet connection for three months in one of the company's high-speed trains. After the project's successful completion, Thalys is planning to equip all of its trains on the Brussels – Paris route with the fast Internet access.

And air travelers can also expect to be talking on their cell phones and surfing the Internet in the future — provided their devices are equipped with WLAN, Bluetooth or GSM. The German Aerospace Center (DLR), Siemens and Airbus have joined forces to build a mobile communications system that combines these different data transfer technologies and contacts base stations on the ground via satellites. An

antenna extending along the entire length of the plane's ceiling will ensure mobile communications by phone, PDA or PC for passengers in every seat. WLAN will make it possible for the travelers to access websites and e-mail accounts, and GSM will ensure they can use their phones. Plans call for this exciting new world of communications to become reality in Airbus planes beginning in 2006. A first airborne test has already been successfully conducted.

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