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Finnair CEO reveals connectivity plan for Airbus A330s

By Seth Miller →

In yet another example of how Panasonic Avionics continues to win inflight connectivity business on a **subfleet by subfleet level**, Finnair has selected the firm's eXConnect Ku-band solution for its Airbus A330s, after selecting Panasonic's linefit IFEC solution for its Airbus A350 XWBs.

During a face-to-face conversation with RGN in New York, Finnair CEO Pekka Vauramo revealed:

We have wifi on [the A350] and it will be standard on all A350s. We, of course, are introducing it to the rest of the [widebody] fleet as well. Panasonic will be the solution for our widebodies.... [Installation timing] depends a bit on the maintenance schedule but within two years we will have it across the board.

When Finnair confirmed that Panasonic would provide connectivity for its A350s in March, the carrier **insisted to RGN that it had not made a decision for its A330s or narrowbodies**. But some airlines are making connectivity decisions in increments (Qatar Airways immediately springs to mind), and this appears to have been Finnair's approach for the A330s, with Vauramo telling RGN that eXConnect will be installed on the carrier's eight A330s.

Finnair – which took delivery of its first A350 last month – also operates seven A340s. Because the aged A340s are being retired, they will not see upgrades to the IFE system nor will they receive the wifi solution.

Separately Vauramo said the airline continues to study connectivity options for its narrowbody fleet; a decision on technology or provider has not yet been made. The hybrid Inmarsat/Telekom ATG/S-band solution being rolled out in Europe could be an option as could other satellite-based solutions, he indicated.

Many of Panasonic's Ku customers – including but not limited to Emirates, Qatar, Singapore Airlines, All Nippon Airways, United Airlines, etc – have selected eXConnect for subfleets, even as they offer alternative connectivity solutions on other aircraft.