

Airplane cabin simulator tests new connectivity projects

Boeing's Product Development team designed the vCabin simulator to test new methods of connectivity and smart working for improved flying experiences.

United States / October 2016



Boeing's Commercial Airplanes' Product Development team is examining ways to take the connectivity of today's daily life into the skies. Ideas are tested in the vCabin, a mock-up of a networked airplane interior. Recent smart cabin tests include using tablets, smartphones and smartwatches to order food and drinks, check bathroom availability and manage lighting options. Passenger devices link up with the airplane cabin system via secure chips located near each feature. The chip system doesn't require wifi and isn't connected to the electronics used for flight – it's a completely separate system. Ideally, the chips would automatically inform on-the-ground service teams about any additional maintenance needed, allowing work to be scheduled for the plane's arrival time.

With smart robots automating baggage check, and connected business class seats remembering flight preferences, which parts of the flying process are still in need of a technology makeover?

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