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MASMedia: Shaping the future of IFE

New and enhanced applications include In-flight Communicator, iXplor, Seat-to-Seat Messaging, Live Text News 3.0, and Connecting Gate

Seattle, WA (9 September 2003) – Matsushita Avionics Systems Corporation (MAS)'s strategy for its evolving suite of MASMedia In-flight Solutions aims to dazzle airline passengers while simultaneously addressing airline desires. The ongoing results of that strategy are on display this week at the World Airline Entertainment Association's Conference and Exhibition in Seattle, in Booth #1605.

MASMedia has assembled a team of experienced marketing and technical personnel with backgrounds ranging from the airline, IFE and the entertainment industries. MASMedia understands both passenger and airline desires and is working diligently to deliver solutions which satisfy both, adding value to MAS IFE systems.

"Our team is constantly searching for ways to develop and enhance the solutions we deliver," said Charles Ogilvie, MASMedia Business Development Manager. "MASMedia's unique stakeholder-centric approach ensures that both airline and passenger desires are addressed."

MASMedia maintains a global presence that affords it the flexibility it needs. For example, MASMedia launched an Application Development and Integration Center in Singapore in May of 2002. This facility enables MASMedia to tap into the rich pool of interactive applications and content providers in the region and offer a realistic simulation environment for evaluation and testing of in-flight products.

ASMedia's current product offerings are just the beginning of the series of strategically crafted solutions. Current products and respective highlights are:

MASMedia's In-Flight Communicator

MASMedia will launch the latest version of its In-Flight Communicator, which includes Reply, on two international carriers later this year.

In-flight Communicator is a software-based application that answers passengers' in-flight communication needs through in-seat e-mail and mobile phone text messaging (SMS). In-flight Communicator features a virtual screen keyboard that accepts touch screen, handset control and handset telephone keypad input (similar to mobile phones). Initially, In-flight Communicator was released to support Send-Only messaging from the air when it was launched last year (August 2002).

Reply functionality was added in the latest version. Reply allows for responses to SMS (Short Messaging Service) messages and short e-mails sent from the air. Additional features include canned messages and an inbox and outbox to track messages.

"Reply gives the passenger another piece they desire – the answer to a question or simply a confirmation of a request sent via our SMS messaging service," said Paul Bauer, MASMedia In-flight Communicator Product Manager, "We all want to stay connected as we fly; In-flight Communicator provides the means to do that."

Passengers enjoy the ability to communicate with business associates, surprise friends or loved ones, or coordinate travel-related activities such as arrival pickup, all from the comfort of their own seat. Airlines also benefit from incremental revenue and promotional opportunities.

MAS has successfully deployed this product in collaboration with leading satellite communication service providers and ground network operators.

In-flight Communicator is supported on MAS System 2000E, System 3000, and System 3000i.

MASMedia's Seat-to-Seat Messaging Service

Passengers and flight attendants traveling on aircraft with Seat-to-Seat Messaging Service installed will find they have a whole new way to communicate in-flight.

Through simple interaction with a virtual keyboard, using either a touch screen or handset interface, Seat-to-Seat Messaging Service users are able to transmit messages between one another with relative ease. In-flight "chats" between individuals can now be accomplished. Passengers traveling with companions are able to exchange messages without getting up and moving through crowding aisles. Likewise, crew members will be able to address and communicate with either individual passengers or groups of passengers.

"Passengers actually find messaging fun," said Rich Barker, MASMedia Seat-to-Seat Messaging Service Product Manager. "Seat-to-Seat Messaging Service gives passengers another entertainment option, something that many passengers are familiar and experienced with on the ground."

Seat-to-Seat Messaging Service requires no additional airline equipment investment. Eventually, Seat-to-Seat Messenger will be expanded to include a gateway to a ground-based instant-

messaging service. (As mentioned above, MASMedia has a ground-based messaging product, In-Flight Communicator, which allows passengers to transmit and receive text e-mails and SMS messages.)

“Seat-to-Seat Messaging Service is an easy and inexpensive way for existing MAS customers to give passengers a truly unique entertainment and communications option,” noted Alan Pellegrini, MAS Vice President of Marketing and Operations. “We think they’ll leave the plane with the “wow” factor – saying to their travel companion or business associate something similar to, ‘wow, that was a fun flight!’”

MASMedia’s iXplor System

Using high-resolution satellite images of the earth’s surface, iXplor displays flight status, current position, flight path, and selectable flight information, including but not limited to altitude and time to destination. In iXplor’s interactive mode, passengers can control their viewing experience by selecting view and zoom levels themselves.

MASMedia’s iXplor system separates itself from others through the level of passenger customization that it offers. Unlike other offerings, iXplor delivers flight tracking information in the format the passenger desires.

“iXplor isn’t just another moving map,” said Sue Luxem, MASMedia iXplor Product Manager. “Passengers on airlines flying with iXplor now find their flights to be more enjoyable and entertaining, as they have the ability to both track their flight’s progress and explore the world right from their seat. Plus, no additional investment in hardware is needed.”

Future versions of iXplor are under development which further address passenger desires. “We fully intend to maintain iXplor’s position as the preeminent in-flight tracking system through constant innovation,” said Mr. Pellegrini.

iXplor is supported on MAS System 3000, System 3000i, and eFX.

MASMedia’s Live Text News 3.0

This enhanced version of Live Text News allows airlines to pull news from multiple sources, giving passengers a wider array of news selections from international sources. In addition to the ability to obtain news from more sources, airlines can now offer passengers full-length news stories that they can peruse at their leisure.

“Airlines can now offer passengers complete news stories from multiple sources and regions with greater ease,” said Ms. Luxem, MASMedia Live Text News Product Manager. Additional enhancements planned for Live Text News will be capable of even greater customization by airlines. A Ground Based Web Interface, for example, is under development that will afford airlines the ability to monitor and customize their news content, frequency of delivery and presentation options.

“We have built the capability to deliver more of what is desired by passengers into this latest version,” said Pellegrini. “We’re excited that airlines will now have additional tools to provide passengers with an even more incredible in-flight experience.”

LTN is supported on MAS System 2000E, System 3000, and System 3000i.

Connecting Gate Service

Airlines who use Connecting Gate find they almost immediately benefit from a reduction in workload on both their in-flight and ground-based personnel. Likewise, passengers have indicated that Connecting Gate Service makes them more efficient, allowing for the pre-planning of activities before arrival.

“When passengers know they must transit they oftentimes dread it,” said Mr. Barker, MASMedia Connecting Gate Product Manager. “Connecting Gate really takes the mystery and confusion out of the transit process, making the passenger’s trip and the airline’s business significantly easier by efficiently informing the passenger of where he or she needs to go once they touch down.”

Connecting Gate is a software-based product designed to work in tandem with other MASMedia products. For example, data obtained from Connecting Gate Service can be used to alert ground-based parties (via MAS’ In-Flight Communicator) or used to guide the passenger visually with an interactive airport terminal map (in conjunction with an airport map database).

“Airlines recognize that the Connecting Gate Service makes passenger connections more efficient, enhancing the overall transit process,” said Pellegrini.

About Panasonic Avionics Corporation:

Panasonic Avionics Corporation Panasonic Avionics Corporation is the world's leading supplier of in-flight entertainment and communication systems. Headquartered in Lake Forest, CA Panasonic Avionics Corporation employs approximately 2500 employees based in over 70 locations worldwide.

Panasonic Avionics Corporation is a subsidiary of **Panasonic North America** (PNA). Based in Secaucus, NJ, PNA is the principal North American subsidiary of **Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd.** (NYSE: MC) and the hub of Panasonic’s US marketing, sales and service operations. Additional information on Panasonic Avionics Corporation is available at www.panasonic.aero. Additional information on Matsushita Electric and Panasonic is available at www.panasonic.com.