Easyjet to Fly Paperless Plane

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easyJet, the UK's largest airline with a fleet of 220 Airbus aircraft, will complete the fitting of Panasonic Toughpads, in place of laptops and printed navigational charts, in all of its cockpits by the end of this month. This means that the airline is already nearing a completely paperless plane. These tablets will also make easyJet one of the first airlines to use this type of device in all phases of flight and on the ground.

New 'e-paper' technology, like the Digital Paper created by Sony, could see easyJet completely eradicate printed forms in the cabin; this would mean an entirely paperless plane. This new device is the latest lightweight design from Sony which makes it feel like the user is writing on paper. Completed forms can be quickly saved into a central database enabling the airline's operational team quick and easy access to information when on any of the aircraft.

Each aircraft currently carries about 25kg of paper, encompassing forms, checklists and detailed manuals. By removing paper completely, we can improve our efficiency and costs, by reducing fuel burn and production and subsequent distribution to easyJet's 24 bases. This will save around half a million dollars in fuel costs alone. It will also reduce the cost of printing and distributing the paper versions of the manuals and forms.

Captain Brian Tyrrell, Head of Flight Operations for easyJet said;

"easyJet will this month complete the first phase in its journey toward a paperless aircraft by fitting all of its existing fleet with Toughpads.

“Eradicating paper, including the cumbersome manuals with thousands of pages on-board, by providing access to the same information via these devices is an important step in reducing weight but it also means we can improve the speed and efficiency of our communications by remotely saving information and providing crew with up to date information.”

The Panasonic Toughpad is engineered to perform in any environment; it offers unrivalled reliability and requires minimal maintenance making it an ideal solution for easyJet's pilots.

Russell Lane, Sales Manager for Panasonic said;

“The FZ-G1 is the first fully rugged device to use the latest IPS? Panel technology, providing new levels of viewing quality for tablet users working in bright sunlight. It offers extra wide viewing angles, strengthened glass, high contrast ratio and high brightness paired with a Panasonic anti-reflection layer, the 10.1 inch hi-res screen is purpose built to perform in any light conditions. The Toughpad is built to be highly resistant to dust and water.”

Sony's digital paper is the world's lightest and thinnest e-paper solution. The device has a 13.3 inch screen, the equivalent to A4 and it is as easy to read and write on as paper. The technology is currently mainly used by university students and tutors in Japan. The device has a battery life of up to three weeks.

Chris Clifton, Divisional Director and Chief Technology Officer, Semiconductor & Electronic Solutions, Sony Europe said:

“Sony's innovative Digital Paper offers a true replacement for the vast amounts of paper that continue to clutter many professional environments. It is very easy to use and is optimised for reading and annotating. Digital Paper offers a simple, intuitive experience and gives professionals portability and flexibility coupled with the ability to wirelessly access the material they need. This collaboration with easyJet showcases just one example of how Sony's Digital Paper could deliver significant benefit to an organisation looking to increase productivity and streamline collaboration in paper-intensive environments.”

The airline has always scrutinised all aspects of its operation to ensure it runs in the most efficient way.

Last year easyJet introduced a raft of measures which improve fuel efficiency and reduce CO2 emissions. Our pilots led the way by devising and implementing measures such as; one engine taxiing, delayed engine starts, continuous descent approach and minimising use of the Auxiliary Power Unit

when on the ground. Our engineers also delivered savings through lighter passenger seats, lighter cabin trolleys and by washing the engines' compressor regularly. Aerodynamic improvements have also been achieved by installing sharklets, an enlarged wing tip which makes the wing more efficient.

easyJet's annual fuel bill is around £1.2bn. Due to easyJet's simple, efficient operation, an easyJet passenger's carbon footprint is already 22% less than a passenger on a traditional airline flying on the same route and aircraft.

easyJet employs 2500 pilots operating on its 220 Airbus aircraft across its network of more than 680 routes.

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