

A MAGAZINE FOR AIRLINE EXECUTIVES

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EXTREME AIRLINE MANAGEMENT

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# Improving Interline Electronic Ticketing

*Two new solutions enhance airlines' ability to better develop and utilize electronic interline agreements.*

By Darren Henley | Ascend Contributor

Electronic ticketing solutions enable airlines to improve business processes and reduce ticketing costs. As more airlines mandate the use of paperless processes, interline capabilities become critical. Implementing interline electronic ticketing increases the market opportunity by enabling multi-carrier itineraries. Responding to this need, Sabre Airline Solutions has developed the *Interline Electronic Ticketing Hub* to streamline interline implementations.

Interline electronic ticketing gives a carrier the ability to seamlessly transfer coupons to its interline partners and to streamline revenue accounting processes by expediting revenue recon-

ciliation and reducing the process of scanning paper documents. During irregular operations, IET facilitates the transfer of coupons to alternative flights on other airlines.

In the past, each IET implementation has been a unique and customized project requiring a dedicated link connecting each bilateral airline. The project can be complex; implementing all carriers can be a lengthy process.

The *Interline Electronic Ticketing Hub* is a multilateral product that virtually eliminates the necessity for individual bilateral carrier implementations. With this new product, all participating airlines are linked to a reciprocal inter-

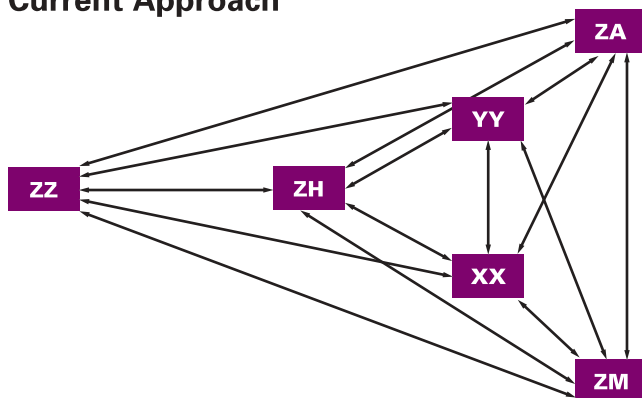
line electronic ticketing system.

The hub verifies agreements between an inbound carrier and the receiving carrier and transforms this ticket into a neutral message using the receiving carrier's maps and rules.

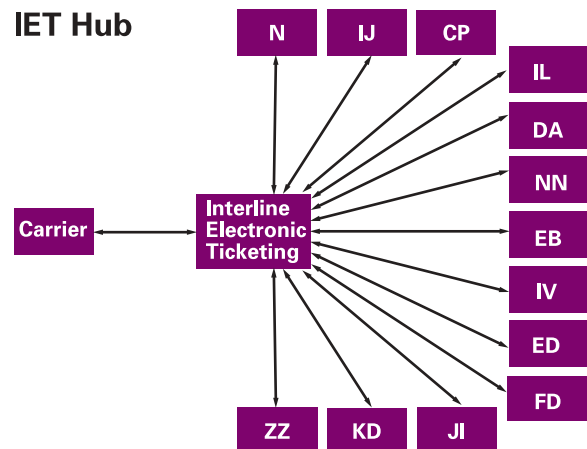
The hub is not just a routing mechanism; it supports and translates, if necessary, all EDIFACT releases and versions. If carriers implementing an IET connection utilize different EDIFACT versions, the hub will translate those messages into a format the receiving carrier can process. This translation process eliminates extensive development that was once required for carriers to establish the interline connection.

Many airlines, such as the fictional airline ZZ, currently build individual bilateral connections with each of their interline partners. However, with the new *Interline Electronic Ticketing Hub*, all participating airlines are linked to a reciprocal system that routes and translates ticketing messages.

## Current Approach



## IET Hub





All unique carrier requirements can be supported with the initial connection to the hub. Once a carrier is connected,

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access is available to all other linked carriers through selective or universal activation.

A vast array of diagnostic tools in the hub gives carriers the ability to more closely monitor interline traffic. These tools enable carriers to set notification thresholds through a graphical user interface. For example, if a link goes down and error messages are generated, an e-mail notification is sent notifying the carrier. Before the inception of these tools, someone physically had to discover such incidents.

A number of airlines have carrier-to-carrier interline connectivity through the Sabre® Passenger Reservation System:

- Alaska Airlines,

- Aloha Airlines,
- America West Airlines,
- American Airlines,
- ATA Airlines,
- Continental Airlines,
- Delta Air Lines,
- Finnair,
- Hawaiian Airlines,
- LanChile,
- Midwest Airlines,
- Northwest Airlines,
- United Airlines,
- US Airways.

The *Interline Electronic Ticketing Hub* also enables IET connectivity between two carriers not hosted within the *Passenger Reservation System*. Until now, at least one of the carriers was required to be hosted in the system.

Another key tool that helps airlines adapt to electronic commerce, the Sabre Airlines Solutions *Electronic Ticket Hosting* product enables a carrier to stay hosted on its existing system while acquiring the ability to issue electronic tickets and retain those records within the electronic ticketing database.

This solution eliminates both the need for carriers to build a costly system to distribute tickets electronically and the activities related to maintaining the electronic ticketing database. The product not

only delivers electronic ticketing capability but also the increasingly valuable option of interline electronic ticketing connectivity.

The electronic ticketing solution provides airlines the most cost-effective and efficient solution for issuing, refunding, exchanging and settling all transaction types. Additionally, the product provides functionality to expand electronic ticketing for the host carrier as well as its interline partners. This solution delivers substantial cost savings to the airline while simultaneously enhancing customer service and increasing relationships with its global interline partners.

“The benefits of moving to electronic ticketing are two-fold — first, we’ll be able to reduce the costs incurred by processing paper tickets, and second, we’ll be able to improve efficiency and customer service levels,” said Kevin Hartigan-Go, vice president information systems of Philippine Airlines. “With this implementation, we are well placed to facilitate electronic document exchange with other airlines with whom we have interline relationships, fulfilling the requirements of some U.S. carriers to support e-ticketing by 2005.”

*Darren Henley is a senior product manager for Sabre Airline Solutions.*

## +count it up

**53.33** — Seconds required by a team from the Metropolitan Police to pull a British Airways 747 a distance of 100 meters at Heathrow Airport in London: a world record, according to the Guinness Book of World Records.

**22,370,000** — Number of kilometers flown by Fred Finn as of June, the most air kilometers flown by an individual, according to the Guinness Book of World Records. The U.K. resident also holds the record for most number of supersonic flights as a passenger with 718.

**2,646** — Number of minutes required to circumnavigate the world using scheduled flights, by David Springbett in 1980, to set a world record. During that time, he covered 37,124 kilometers (23,068 miles).