

MARKETPLACE

**++ Northwest Airlines** has agreed to firm up 30 Airbus A320 family options, including 18 A319s and 12 A320s, for delivery between January 2002 and 2004. The deal for the CFM International CFM56-powered aircraft takes the airline's A320 family orders to 150 aircraft, of which 70 have been delivered. **++ Air Transat** has leased a Rolls-Royce Trent 700-powered Airbus A330-300 from **International Lease Finance (ILFC)**, for delivery in October. **++ British Airways** has sold and leased back a new R-R RB211-powered Boeing 757-200 to **CIT Group**. **++ Indigo Aviation** has bought its first aircraft directly from the manufacturer – a new Pratt & Whitney PW2000-powered Boeing 757-200 that has been placed on an 18-year operating lease with **TWA**. Indigo has also bought two Boeing 737-400s from **Braathens**, which are leased to **Virgin Express** until 2004. **++ SAS Commuter** has added two Bombardier Dash 8 Q400 firm orders, bringing its total to 19. **++ Horizon** has increased its Bombardier Canadair Regional Jet 700 options from 15 to 25. **++ AvAero** has announced further sales of its Boeing 737-200 Stage 3 hushkit: to **Pegasus Aviation** (two firm, for Access Air, and six option); **Bahamasair** (two); **Cayman Airways** (two); **Southwest Airlines** (two); **WestJet Airlines** (two); **First Air** (one); **International Air Leases** (one); and two executive aircraft owners. **++ Garuda** has won approval for \$280 million-worth of financing from the US Ex-Im Bank for 11 Boeing 737-300/500s that the carrier had been leasing for \$346 million. The asset-based finance leases involve the Indonesian finance ministry, which serves as lessee and subleasing the aircraft to Garuda to address any credit risk. **++ Emirates** has signed a deal with ILFC to take a Boeing 777-300 on lease next September. **++ British World Airlines** has leased two more British Aerospace ATPs from the manufacturer. The ex-British Airways aircraft will be delivered in October.



Eight Condor A320s will be used to test the Rockwell Collins data transfer system

# Condor and British Airways to plug airliners into cyberspace

EMMA KELLY/LONDON

CONDOR FLUGDIENST is activating Rockwell Collins' Integrated Information System (IS) on two Airbus A320s this month as part of a project to test technologies linking an aircraft-based intranet to airline terminal area databases. At the same time, British Airways is equipping the first of two Boeing 747-400s as part of a similar programme.

Condor's Aircraft Integrated Network project will involve transfer of data between the flightdeck and airport terminal when the aircraft is on the ground. Applications include maintenance diagnostics, navigation databases, flightplans and weather data via low-power microwave airport gatelink.

Gatelink infrastructure is installed at Palma de Mallorca Airport in Spain, and additional installations are planned at

Germany's Berlin Schönefeld and Leipzig-Halle airports.

Eight Condor A320s are to participate. Applications will be phased in over eight months, starting with crew e-mail, web browser, document library and viewer, leading to ARINC 615-3 automatic flight management system dataload, quick-access recorder software functionality, technical logbook and advanced maintenance ground notification.

Meanwhile, British Airways is equipping two aircraft with wireless local area network capability as part of SITA's Gatelink project. One is due to be equipped shortly, while the second will be outfitted by the end of this year, says SITA marketing director Gerard Collin.

The trial, which includes Rockwell Collins and Penny & Giles, will involve communications between the aircraft and London Heathrow Terminal Four.

(LHR T4) SITA is installing access points at LHR T4, which will be connected to its communication network.

Initially, two applications will be explored in the BA trial – flight recorder data and in-flight entertainment data – but the technology has many applications, including updating navigation databases, uploading full passenger profiles, reloading software and flight manuals, says Collin. The trial will allow BA to access information on passenger usage of Rockwell Collins Total Entertainment System, being installed on BA's long haul fleet.

Rockwell Collins, Condor and SITA are involved in a Eurocontrol paper project led by the UK's Defence Evaluation and Research Agency studying the feasibility of and interest in wireless aircraft communications at airports. The results are due in January. □

# African Express takes on international routes

KENYAN START-UP African Express Airlines (AEA) has begun to bite into Kenya Airways' domestic market, and has taken its first step into international services with a flight to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The Nairobi-based carrier began scheduled operations two months ago, after winning licences to fly Nairobi-Mombasa. AEA has started the first scheduled service from Mombasa to the Middle East, with a weekly flight to the UAE. The service, operated by a Boeing

727-200, routes via Oman's capital, Muscat, to the UAE city of Sharjah, next to Dubai.

AEA's domestic route between Nairobi and Mombasa, until now the preserve of Kenya Airways, has been regarded as a high-yield operation, but AEA broke tradition when it introduced special low fares for Kenyan citizens only. Its fare is \$60 one way or \$123 return, compared to Kenya Airways' fares of \$100 one way and \$195 return. The airline expects to introduce similar special fares to Ugandan

and Tanzanian citizens travelling between Nairobi and Mombasa.

Kenya Airways admits that AEA "has minimally eaten" into its market, but adds: "AEA fares are just slightly higher than those on the railways, but we doubt if they are sustainable."

AEA, which operates a diverse fleet, including Fokker F28s, Boeing 707s and 727s and Yakovlev Yak-40s, has also been licensed to operate to other Kenyan cities, and plans to increase frequencies between Nairobi and Mombasa. □