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## Singapore to Equip A380s, 777s With Internet Access

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(Adds that A330s won't be equipped in 11th paragraph)

Oct. 5 (Bloomberg) -- Singapore Airlines Ltd., the world's second-largest carrier by market capitalization, said it will equip long-range wide-body planes with Internet and phone- message access to meet growing demand from business travelers.

The carrier signed a contract with OnAir NV, an onboard- communications provider part-owned by aircraft maker Airbus SAS, to install Wi-Fi Internet and mobile-phone links on the planes in 2011, Singapore Airlines said today. The company will make the services available on Airbus A340-500s and A380s and Boeing Co.'s 777-300ER models.

Singapore Airlines will become the first major carrier in Asia to offer connectivity on board. Dubai-based Emirates, the Arab region's largest airline, said in July that it plans starting in 2012 to offer in-flight communications on all 90 of its A380s, also using Geneva-based OnAir as the supplier.

"This is not a revenue-focused move," Nick Ionides, a Singapore Airlines spokesman, said today by phone. "Our customers would expect this sort of thing from us as the world becomes more connected."

Passengers will be able to use their laptop computers, mobile phones or smartphones such as Apple Inc.'s iPhone and Research In Motion Ltd.'s BlackBerry device. Initially, only text-message service will be available for the phones, Ionides said, adding that Singapore Airlines hasn't decided whether to enable voice calls.

Fees for Wi-Fi connections haven't yet been set, Ionides said. Mobile-phone messages will be charged to customers' accounts with their existing providers.

### OnAir Customers

OnAir has about two dozen airline customers allowing in- flight mobile-phone roaming links via 200 network operators globally. British Airways Plc offers both voice and data on a single business-class route linking London City airport with New York.

Inmarsat Plc, the world's biggest provider of satellite services to the maritime industry, will supply communications access via so-called L-band frequencies. OnAir said the airline will gain access to more bandwidth as passengers use the service more often.

"Following the Emirates deal earlier in the year and now with Singapore, it's really confirmed that L-band technology is the right technology today," OnAir Chief Executive Officer Ian Dawkins said in a telephone interview.

### Phone-Traffic Growth

OnAir expects less than one-third of passengers to use the services initially, Dawkins said. Higher-capacity Ka-band frequencies will be available in 2014, and "airlines like Emirates or Singapore may want to progress to it" once they see a need, Dawkins said. Almost all the equipment is the same for both sets of frequencies, Dawkins said.

Singapore Airlines aims to equip 43 aircraft with the services before 2013, Ionides said. The carrier is also likely to install the technology on the planned Airbus A350 and Boeing 787 planes it's buying, he said. The company won't install services on its Airbus A330s, which it's flying only for a few years until the A350s are ready, he said.

OnAir is 30 percent-owned by Airbus, the world's largest planemaker, and 70 percent by SITA, the world's biggest provider of air transport-related applications and communications.

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