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In Flight Phones Disappearing

By Laura Quarantiello

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IN FLIGHT PHONES DISAPPEARING

By Laura Quarantiello

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If you expect to be able to phone home from 35,000 feet the next time you fly, think again. American Airlines has removed in-flight phones from its domestic fleet. American has used AT&T Wireless phones onboard their 654 domestic route aircraft since 1996, but found that fewer than three calls per day per plane were being made. This may have something to do with the fact that passengers are charged \$7.60 plus tax for each minute of airtime, plus a \$2.99 connection fee for each call. Passengers have found it cheaper to make calls from airport pay phones or their own personal cellular phones before boarding. Cell phone use is also allowed aboard planes before the cabin doors are closed. Removing in-flight phones is nothing new: Southwest Airlines did it in August of 2001, and with the airline industry sinking into financial trouble, more airlines are expected to follow suit and yank the plug on their in-flight connections. According to an American spokesperson, removing the phones will reduce maintenance costs and lower aircraft weight.

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To further stir the waters, AT&T has reported that it is closing its in-flight phone business, citing the growing use of cell phones. Air carriers who use AT&T service, such as Alaska and Northwest, will be forced to switch to another service or remove their in-flight phones as well. All is not lost, however; even though phones aboard aircraft are losing popularity, passengers are asking for Internet access. Verizon Airfone is testing high-speed Internet access with United Airlines aboard Airbus aircraft. So even though you may not be able to make phone calls from the sky you can send e-mails.

(end)

Laura Quarantiello is the author of "Air-Ways: The Insider's Guide To air Travel."
<http://www.tiare.com/airways.htm>

Cell Phones and Planes: A Bad Mix?

By Arnie Jacobsen

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Cell Phones and Planes: A bad mix?

If you have spent anytime flying you are aware that the use of cell phones on planes has been taboo. The reason given is that aviation authorities are concerned that cell phone transmissions will somehow interfere with the proper operation of the airplane. The question has always been though, do cell phones really cause a disruption. "...Many (including pilots) ... question whether a genuine problem exists," the CAA says in a cell phone safety study. There have only been a few reported incidents of mobile cell phone radiation, and these were very minor like setting off a smoke detector in a baggage compartment.

Well, now that stance is changing, at least when it comes to the British Civil Aviation Authority. Recently the CAA changed the rules recently to allow wireless communications devices on airplanes.

This decision has been made as a result of an option on many phones called "flight mode" which disables the radio portion of the phone. As a result, passenger are allowed to use their phones much as they do their game boys, computers and other such devices.

In fact, in a few years, many of the world's airlines will be offering cellular service and wireless internet on their flights.

So those that worry about cell phone use on planes, may need to get over it in rather short order.

And, just like other places in the world, we all will be putting up with people sharing intimate details of

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their lives with the rest of us. Progress marches on for better or for worse.

Cell Phones and Planes: A Bad Mix?

Are Cellular Phones Just a Fashion Accessory?

Go For A Charter Flight

Cellular Phone Buyers Information

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