**Business Travel: Wi-Fi Sky High**

For business travelers who need to stay connected to get work done, there’s good news. In-flight Wi-Fi is more available than ever and advances in technology are making the service faster, more reliable and more widespread.

A report issued last month finds that 60 airlines around the world offer in-flight Wi-Fi, up from 52 a year ago.

Medium connections, capable of full web browsing, accounted for 53 percent of miles flown while slower connections, which can only handle basic tasks such as email, accounted for 41 percent. Higher-quality connections that enable passengers to stream video are still relatively rare but growing, jumping from 1 percent to 6 percent of miles flown.

Passengers have at least a chance of getting connected to the Internet on about 36 percent of available seat miles worldwide. But the odds rise dramatically for passengers on U.S. carriers, which offer at least a chance of Wi-Fi on 78 percent of their ASMs. And the number is growing. For example, Virgin Atlantic offers in-flight Wi-Fi on its Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft and is planning to roll it out to the rest of its fleet through 2016.

Among U.S. airlines, Delta Air Lines leads the way with the most available seat miles offering Wi-Fi; all of its mainline aircraft, as well as most of its regional planes, are now equipped with Wi-Fi. United Airlines is increasing the number of aircraft that are equipped. Both Delta and United also allow business travelers to connect seamlessly to their corporate network if they’re using a Virtual Private Network (VPN) client and a firewall.

The two carriers are also among those using Internet service provider Gogo. The company’s advances in technology hold the promise of providing passengers with better in-flight Wi-Fi. A newly developed satellite system offers a faster connection and is a boon to business travelers flying longer routes that take them outside the range of air-to-ground service.

Delta is continuing to upgrade its in-flight Wi-Fi, extending the service to passengers flying from the United States to Latin America and the Caribbean and upgrading long-haul domestic aircraft to satellite-based technology. The addition of in-flight Internet access to nearly 150 aircraft will bring the total to about 1,000, offering the most global Wi-Fi access of any carrier.

Like Delta, United is expanding Internet access across its fleet, with Wi-Fi being installed on more planes every month through the first part of 2016. The carrier offers in-flight Wi-Fi on more than 700 aircraft, including United Express regional service. In addition, United has announced plans to allow passengers to redeem their award miles for in-flight Wi-Fi.

International carriers have been slower to offer in-flight Wi-Fi, typically doing so only on long-haul aircraft. KLM for example, has Wi-Fi on a small portion of its fleet, including a Boeing Dreamliner that began flying in November. Etihad Airways, based in Abu Dhabi, and Emirates, based in Dubai, are among the international leaders when it comes to in-flight Wi-Fi. Emirates, which is close behind Delta and United when it comes to available seat miles with Wi-Fi, offers it for free on more than 100 of its planes.

For help planning a business trip anywhere in the world, contact your travel agent.