



Turkish Airlines launches online reservations with S/390 software

In the fiercely competitive airline industry, offering superior customer service is the best way to stay ahead of the competition. Successful carriers, such as Turkish Airlines, know that fast and convenient access to flight information and reservations is a surefire approach to maintaining customer loyalty.

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–Aycan Serez, Vice President, EDP, Turkish Airlines

Founded in 1933, Turkish Airlines carries over 11 million passengers annually to 32 domestic and 66 international destinations. Since the 1970s, the airline has used IBM Airline Control Systems (ALCS) to perform flight booking. ALCS is a real-time, high-volume, high-availability transaction processing application that automates and accelerates reservations and ticketing operations. Today, a new Web server component of ALCS is enabling Turkish Airlines to increase direct customer contact and expand its services by providing information and reservation capability over the Internet.

Compared to other Web server solutions, the ALCS Web server offers considerable savings because it leverages Turkish Airlines’ existing software and hardware.

The IBM Travel and Transportation group helped Turkish Airlines design and implement the ALCS-based online reservation system and the associated HTML pages in less than four months. “With our new e-business solution from IBM, everything has happened much faster than we expected,” says Aycan Serez, vice president of electronic data processing at Turkish Airlines. “We’re averaging a 5-second response time on our reservations site, and our session logs indicate that the site is a great success—approximately 1,500 people access flight schedule information daily.” Serez adds that the vast majority of those who book flights on the Internet actually follow through by purchasing tickets.

Application	Online reservation system
Business Benefits	Better customer service; utilization of existing hardware, software, and expertise
Software	IBMALCS, IBMALCS Web server, IBM MVS® IBM AIX®
Hardware	IBM® S/390® IBM RS/6000™
Services	IBM Global Network™ Web hosting, IBM e-business solution design and implementation



Turkish Airlines customer service starts on the ground, with fast, convenient online flight booking

Connecting with customers 24 hours a day

Turkish Airlines had already set up an informational Web site, hosted by IBM Global Network (IGN), to give customers electronic access to its flight schedules, special promotions, and general information. But allowing customers to make reservations online—24 hours a day, seven days a week—was far more challenging. One of the reasons was that while the informational site could be hosted and maintained by IGN at its facilities, the reservations system was a core business application that ran on the airline's IBM S/390. That implied the need to install a separate Web server to link the mainframe to the IGN point of presence.

Installing a separate server would have introduced additional complexity into the system, and more importantly, it would have somewhat degraded performance. That was a problem, because the airline's main objective for the new online reservation system was to keep the response time on par with its existing phone-based reservation system.

ALCS Web server on mainframe leverages existing resources

This is where the IBM ALCS Web server made the difference. Unlike traditional Web servers, the ALCS Web server runs on the same MVS host as the airline's reservations and other operations systems. That not only speeds up response time, but also allows Turkish Airlines' MVS administration staff to support the Web server with minimal additional training. "The IBM ALCS Web server allowed us to leverage the expertise of in-house resources already familiar with the system to develop the Web interface applications," explains Serez.

Making reservations online is as easy and secure as making them through a travel agent. Travelers logging onto the Turkish Airlines reservations system use pull-down menus to check flight and seat availability, and they reserve seats by entering their names into the system. The reservations

system ensures the information that passengers enter cannot be accessed by other Internet users.

Since all the information is centralized in ALCS, the airline doesn't need to maintain copies of information on other databases or to transport information from ALCS to another system. In addition, with the Web server on S/390, Turkish Airlines benefits from the performance of a mainframe and eliminates the need to purchase separate hardware for its Web server.

IBM's global Travel and Transportation organization worked with Turkish Airlines to implement both the informational Web site and the electronic reservation system. In addition to the ALCS Web server on the S/390, the IBM team helped Turkish Airlines to set up one RS/6000 server. It acts as a firewall between the mainframe and the Internet.

IBM Global Network key to good response time

Internet users can access Turkish Airlines' reservations system on the Web at www.turkish-flightbooking.com or through a link on the airline's informational Web site, located at www.turkishairlines.com. IGN also supplied the data link between Turkish Airlines' reservation system and the Internet.

"We are happy to be connected to IBM Global Network because our main target is the international customer, and IGN helps us provide good response times for international users," Serez comments.

Currently the Turkish Airlines online reservation system handles domestic flights, but passengers reserving seats on international flights will also be able to take advantage of the online system when the second phase of the project is completed. In the future, Turkish Airlines will implement electronic ticketing, adding a new level of customer service to its ALCS system.

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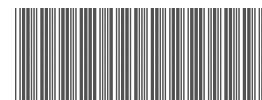
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