ETIHAD AWARDS CLOUD COMPUTING CONTRACT TO IBM

News / Airlines

Etihad Airways has signed a US$700 million deal with **IBM** to provide **cloud computing** services that the airline says will make air travel easier for passengers.

The 10-year technology services agreement will mean IBM provides new information technology services to Etihad and its partner airlines via a new cloud data centre in Abu Dhabi.

Etihad said the centre – which IBM will develop and operate – would be one of the most sophisticated technology facilities in the Middle East.

Global competition among airlines is encouraging a wave of investment in IT solutions as airlines turn to technology in an attempt to reduce queue times, improve security and make life easier for passengers while reducing costs.

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Etihad is the latest global airline to adopt cloud-based collaborative decision-making systems which are intended to help share information such as flight departure and arrival times, passenger and baggage information.

Last year, Lufthansa signed a €1 billion (Dh4.181bn) IT outsourcing deal, while British Airways signed a deal with Red Hat to build up its cloud computing capabilities.

IT providers say new technologies could include better luggage drops with label printing and self-boarding gates based on data generated from check-ins, enable airlines to order, replace and maintain aircraft components more efficiently, better estimate travel times, and better manage loyalty programmes.

“This is a game-changing agreement for Etihad Airways, for our partners and employees, and for Abu Dhabi,” said James Hogan, Etihad’s president and chief executive. “This is a long-term, strategic partnership which will allow Etihad Airways and its partners to harness the latest technologies as we deliver our services.

As part of the deal, IBM and Etihad will also create a joint technology and innovation council in Abu Dhabi to develop more personalised travel solutions.

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