

Alaska Airlines ties together North American system with FirstClass Intranet Server

Alaska Airlines, one of the fastest-growing U.S. carriers is using FirstClass Collaboration for email and conferences across its geographically dispersed system spanning western North America.



Alaska Airlines chooses FirstClass over Microsoft Exchange

In 1996, FirstClass was chosen over Microsoft Exchange because of its cross-platform capabilities. "We just didn't see any other product that offered the same features no matter what sort of machine we were using," says Barbara Burrill, Senior Office Systems Analyst for the airline. "We didn't want the people with old Macintosh machines to be second-class citizens technologically, not doing what everyone else could."

FirstClass solves a major communications problem

The system totals 5,200 users at 45 locations. Email traffic at Alaska alone has soared to 375,000 messages per week since Alaska Airlines and its commuter subsidiary, HorizonAir, fully implemented FirstClass in early 1997. Alaska Airlines is completing its migration to Windows® 95 and NT. "FirstClass is reliable, and it was a big step to have Alaska and Horizon on the same email system," Burrill says. She describes the airline as "very lean - a few people doing a lot of work, with shifts going around the clock at dozens of locations, across many time zones. We use FirstClass for company-wide and departmental communications, announcements and policy changes."

A company in motion benefits from flexible communication tools

Burrill praises the new FirstClass features, especially its internet mail connection," which is really simple. When we move to a single server soon - we have six at Alaska right now - we'll be able to take advantage of even more of the features, like email history, resumes, and unsend for all users."

With FirstClass, flight attendants and instructor pilots are using conferencing frequently. "Conferences are something we couldn't take advantage of with our old mail systems - a way to virtually place everyone at one location to communicate and solve problems without using huge mailing lists," Burrill says. "With varying schedules and time differences, flight attendants and pilots rarely see each other in person, so they've taken advantage of conferencing," Burrill explains. Flight attendants access email either from machines at larger flight attendant bases or remotely with Internet access.

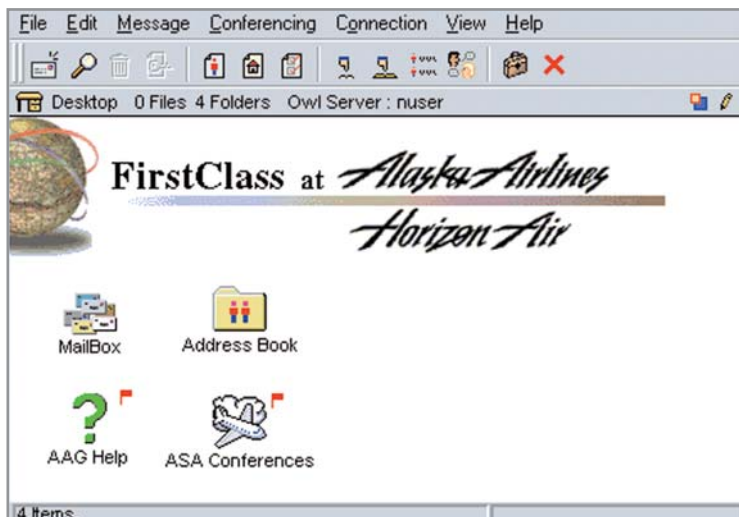
FirstClass simplicity and adaptability

Burrill likes FirstClass because "it has a small client. That's a major reason why we went with it. We don't have a lot of time for training, and employees don't have a lot of time for learning, so the simplicity of FirstClass is a big plus. Many employees have been using both Macs and PCs on the job, and with FirstClass it's the same feature set on both platforms".

Burrill finds that FirstClass works well with both network and remote connections, using TCP/IP. FirstClass makes it easy to troubleshoot problems, she comments. "Remote users usually come in through dialup networking or through an ISP. Most users on the system are corporate network users.

Ease of use makes FirstClass a winner

Burrill uses her department's help desk to do as much of the user and conferencing set-up, but adds that there's little to do administratively with FirstClass. She has considerable experience with software support, and says FirstClass is "easy to work with and understand. I'm not an NT guru by any means, but you don't have to be that technical to work with it", Burrill summarizes.



"You can set it up and forget about it. FirstClass does everything you need to do without having to spend time trying to figure it out. A lot of people in the Seattle area haven't heard about it, and that's a shame. It's a great alternative to Exchange."

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