

Evolution of ticket booking

By Benon Ojiambo

Nothing beats the convenience of booking a flight from the comfort of your home or office. With the advent of online booking, travelling has never been easier.

One no longer has to physically walk to a travel agent's office in order to get a ticket, thanks to introduction of online booking in Uganda.

More than a decade ago, when Internet connectivity was a rarity, this was unheard of. However, in June 2004, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) set an industry target of 100% e-ticket in four years.

According to IATA, the introduction of e-tickets for air travel will result into a global saving of \$3b annually and an estimated \$9 per ticket in savings could be made by airlines when an e-ticket is issued instead of a paper ticket.

Globally, the genesis of online booking dates back to 1946 when American Airlines installed the Reservisor, the first automated airline booking system. A new machine with temporary storage based on a magnetic drum, the Magnetronic Reservisor, soon followed.

The system proved successful and was soon adopted by several airlines and other service providers like hotels such as Sheraton hotels and



Travellers can now book their tickets from the comfort of their homes to avoid queuing

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automate their side of the process by accessing the various automated reservation systems directly to make reservations for their clients.

In 1976, United Airlines began offering its Apollo system to travel agents, but could not allow the agents to book tickets on United's competitors, the marketing value of the convenient terminal proved indispensable.

In the 1980s, European airlines also began investing in the field, initially by deploying their own reservation systems in their homeland, propelled by growth in demand for travel, as well as technological advances.

In 1987, a consortium led by Air France and West Germany's Lufthansa developed Amadeus modelled on SystemOne Amadeus Global Travel Distribution was launched in 1992.

In 1990, Delta, Northwest Airlines, and Trans World Airlines formed Worldspan, travel technology provider and in 1993, another consortium (including British Airways, KLM, and United Airlines, among others) formed the competing company Galileo International based on Apollo.

Numerous smaller companies such as KIU, Systems Solution, providers of Airline Solutions have also formed, aimed at niche markets not catered for by the four largest networks, including the low-cost carriers and small and medium-size domestic and regional airlines.

Goodyear for inventory control.

Other airlines soon followed suit. Delta Airlines launched its Delta Automated Travel Account System in 1968. United Airlines and Trans World Airlines followed in 1971, with the Apollo Recreation System and Programmed Airline Reservation System (PARS), respectively.

Soon, travel agents began pushing for a system that could