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Viswanathan Natarajan
Managing Director, India and SARRC,
CommScope Enterprise Solutions

Sri Lankan Airlines’ Network Infrastructure Evolves with High Performance CommScope Solutions

Network reach and performance at Colombo hub are boosted by new SYSTIMAX® TeraSPEED® Links

Summary: Business success has steadily increased traffic on the networks at Sri Lanka’s national airline. With single source, end-to-end SYSTIMAX solutions, adding more capacity to the 15,000 outlet network infrastructure was a straightforward task.

Sri Lankan Airlines, established as the national carrier in 1979, serves 44 destinations in 29 countries. Its workforce of more than 5,000, operating a fleet of Airbus A340, A330 and A320 aircraft, have established a strong reputation for service quality. Among their many accolades are the Travel Trade Gazette ‘Best Airline in South Asia’ award won in three consecutive years.

The Airline’s services to Europe, the Middle East, South Asia and the Far East are centered on its global hub at Colombo’s Bandaranaike International Airport. Since 1999, its operations here, and at offices in Katunayake and Colombo, have been served by systems connected via SYSTIMAX structured cabling. Over the years, this infrastructure has been regularly upgraded to improve the Airline’s efficiency and support its growing business.

Together, the Airlines’ operations use more than 40 networked applications including reservations, check-in, cargo handling and Enterprise Resource Planning. These are accessed via 15,000 data and voice outlets located throughout the airport and offices in Katunayake and Colombo.

Most of these outlets are now connected via SYSTIMAX GigaSPEED XL UTP (Unshielded Twisted Pair) horizontal cabling. In the network backbones, risers and cross campus links, nearly all connections were until recently via SYSTIMAX OptiSPEED® singlemode fiber.

The performance and reliability of these solutions, combined with strong support from the local BusinessPartner, have kept network users and managers happy. However, growing numbers of users and new applications have steadily increased data flow in backbone and trunk connections.

To meet the new demands, the airline decided to upgrade heavily loaded links in its networks with new, high performance fiber connections. The cabling it chose was the SYSTIMAX TeraSPEED® Solution. This singlemode fiber operates over the full 1280 to 1625nm wavelength range and, as a result, it has a useable bandwidth 50 percent greater than conventional singlemode fiber.

The TeraSPEED Solution benefits from the same end-to-end channel assurance and 20-year extended applications warranty as all SYSTIMAX products. It is also a globally supported and recognized brand that has been proven at thousands of sites worldwide. Its record of success gave the airline’s management the confidence they needed to entrust mission critical data connections to TeraSPEED links.

Because the new fiber comes from the same supplier and product portfolio as existing SYSTIMAX infrastructure, end-to-end performance is guaranteed. System users in all departments can be sure they will have the network bandwidth they need, even at times of peak load.

“Implementation of SYSTIMAX solutions is a leap forward in our IT infrastructure, giving almost 100% availability and flexibility to change,” said Kamal Nanayakkara, Head of IT at the airline. “Our next step is introducing intelligence to the network physical layer, adding flexibility in managing the cable plant. This will also strengthen governance aspects of projects such as upcoming new airports and end user broadband solutions”.

Laying the 12 Core TeraSPEED armoured cable across the large sites and over the 40km distance to offices in Colombo presented installers with a challenge. To meet this challenge, the Airline chose its established system integrator, JIT (Just In Time Holdings) Pty Ltd, a CommScope BusinessPartner based in Colombo.

JIT handled design of the network extension and integration with existing systems, as well as supply and installation of the new fiber. It also has three certified technical staff providing 24/7 on-site and help desk support for all the Airline’s network infrastructure including the TeraSPEED link.

The new link, built by a 50-strong team from JIT, now connects all Sri Lankan Airlines’ main facilities. The installation work included connections from the data center to the airport terminal building, flight operations center, Cargo Village, training center and 747 hanger. Within these facilities, there are TeraSPEED connections between the IT rooms and communications rooms throughout the building complexes.

In each case, Just In Time worked with the customer to optimise the network design and configuration. The levels of redundancy they built into each section of network infrastructure were designed according to the importance of the applications supported. To terminate the new TeraSPEED connections in the 12 main communications rooms, Just In Time installed SYSTIMAX 600 G2 fiber shelves and accessories. These sit alongside SYSTIMAX PATCHMAX patching hardware for GigaSPEED copper connections.

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“As Sri Lankan Airlines’ business and its systems have evolved to become larger and more sophisticated, CommScope and its local BusinessPartner have supported them every step of the way.”



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