

Canadian North

Maximizes its Communications System with AvFinity's AIRS™ Solution

The airline transforms its business, achieving improved efficiency, security, and reliability.



Canadian North is the largest provider of scheduled passenger and cargo services from Edmonton and Ottawa to points throughout the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. The airline also provides non-scheduled charter flights beyond Northern Canada for industrial clients, sports teams, and large groups.

The Business Challenge

Due to extreme and changing weather conditions and its impact on airport conditions, Canadian North needed a reliable system that would allow the airline to electronically file flight plans and access continuous current Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) that report airport situations in these remote regions.

During the last decade, the airline employed software that originally was designed to run on an operating system from the early 1990s. At that time, it was the only software compatible with the airline's flight planning system and had not been tested with newer operating systems. As time passed, and the airline upgraded its server environment, Canadian North experienced crashing or stalling systems on a regular basis.

To prevent shutdowns at critical times, dispatchers scheduled a reboot of the server every night in order to keep the system running. Although this procedure worked temporarily, utilizing key human resources this way was neither cost-effective nor productive.

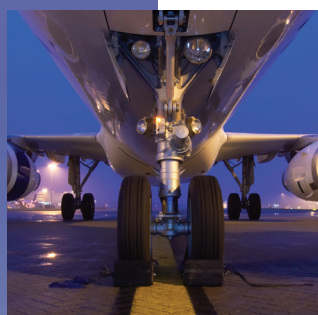
Canadian Northern began researching various alternatives that would enable the airline to have reliable filings of flight plans, and more importantly, obtain assurance that all NOTAMs were being received. And, given the remote routes that it serviced, the NOTAM issue needed an immediate resolution.

AvFinity's Solution

As part of its due diligence in selecting a technology solution, Canadian North began its search for a system that met the following criteria: First, it needed to be an affordable solution, both in direct and indirect costs. Second, Canadian North wanted a solution to complement and integrate well with its existing IT architecture. And, finally, the system had to work with Canadian North's flight plan filing system. After considering several alternatives, Canadian North chose AvFinity's Integrated Router Solution™ (AIRS™), which was the only system that met all the airline's criteria.

AIRS contains AvFinity's patent-pending software technology on a Cisco Integrated Services Router (ISR). With AIRS, aviation users benefit from:

- Powerful software that solves every communication problem that may occur in connecting to multiple partners. The result is seamless backend integration, assured message delivery, constant real-time data transfer and state-of-the-art data security.
- Lower costs of operation through connectivity features that eliminate multiple dedicated circuits, allowing for vendor consolidation while economizing the task of managing multiple contracts.
- Hardware backed by the global presence of Cisco, whose brand has become synonymous with productivity improvements. AvFinity is a Registered Cisco Developer and a member of the Cisco Development Network.
- More than a century of combined knowledge about how aviation communications impact all operational functions. AIRS transfers this knowledge to an aviation company through its elegant technology. In this way, AIRS is the ideal aviation solution to bridge legacy hardware and applications with modern IT so that costs of adoption remain extremely low.



As an added benefit of AIRS, the other service modules including Advance Passenger Information System (APIS), weather, Type B messaging, Collaborative Decision Making (CDM) messages and much more can be added when an airline is ready for them.

AIRS™ has operated flawlessly. It hasn't hiccupped; it hasn't missed a beat.

— James Redeker, Manager of Flight Dispatch,
Canadian North Airlines

Achieving Immediate Business Results

In May 2010, AIRS was deployed in the Canadian North Operations Control Center in Calgary. Today, Canadian North is efficiently filing flight plans and receiving Canadian NOTAMs with the assurance it needed. According to James Redeker, Manager of Flight Dispatch at Canadian North, "AIRS has operated flawlessly. It hasn't hiccupped; it hasn't missed a beat."

Immediately upon implementation, it was confirmed that AIRS met Canadian North's requirements of affordable direct and indirect costs. AvFinity's NOTAM Express™ and Flight Plan Direct™ services are competitive with any similar product due to AvFinity's low-cost direct connections into the FAA and NAV-Canada. Although some customizations were required for Canadian North, the AvFinity team expedited these requests. "AvFinity was great to work with. They met all of our needs and customization requirements quickly and professionally," Redeker said.

In addition, AvFinity's patent-pending scripting function available with AIRS enables Canadian North to customize its system even further, allowing the airline to make changes on the fly to adapt their data requirements to changing conditions whenever the need arises. Incorporating AIRS into the Canadian North system required no additional software or hardware, meeting the airline's demands for minimal switching costs to implement the solution. In fact, since AvFinity's software technology resides on a Cisco router, the appliance occupies a much smaller footprint in the airline's datacenter than a traditional server-centric solution would, economizing on space, carbon emissions and energy usage.

The final requirement, that AIRS worked with the airline's current flight plan filing system, was achieved through flawless system integration. Within days of implementing AIRS, Canadian North improved its security situation through receipt of timely NOTAMs, and its flight plan filing was immediately more efficient, focusing its dispatch team on planning and monitoring the progress of its aircraft, rather than on IT maintenance.

The transformation has impressed outside partners as well. "Our flight plan system provider has told us that based on our version of our dispatch software and the level of programming that we use in it, Canadian North at the present time is probably the most advanced customer that it supports," Redeker said. "That's due, in part, to our association with AvFinity. I now have colleagues from other airlines calling me to ask how they can improve their systems. And I can tell them how even though they've been working with these kinds of issues longer than I have."

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— James Redeker, Manager of Flight Dispatch, Canadian North

To find out more about the **AvFinity Integrated Router Solution**, visit www.avfinity.com.

This case study is based upon actual solutions provided to Canadian North by AvFinity LLC. It describes Canadian North's results from having implemented the AvFinity Integrated Router Solution (AIRS™). Results may vary for other customers using a combination of other AvFinity solutions.



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